



George Stephenson High School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Last revision 1st September 2026

Policy Compliance & Governance This statutory policy applies to all staff, children, parents, Governors, volunteers, and visitors at George Stephenson High School. The Governing Board is legally accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and our multi-agency compliance.

Governance / Audit Field	George Stephenson High School Details
Accountable Governance Body	GSHS Governing Board
Responsible Policy Officer	Deputy Headteacher
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SECTION	WHO	DATE	FEEDBACK AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

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Key Safeguarding Contacts

George Stephenson High School Staff Contacts

Role	Name & Title	Contact Email
Headteacher	Peter Douthwaite	Pdouthwaite@gshs.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Louise Dunn	ldunn@gshs.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Alex Lunn	ALunn@gshs.org.uk
Chair of Governors & Link Governor	Andrew Elliott	AElliott@gshs.org.uk

Key External Safeguarding Contacts

External Agency	Full Contact Details	Hotline / Email
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	North Tyneside Council Children's Social Care, Quadrant East, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY	0345 2000 109 LADO@northtyneside.gov.uk
Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	North Tyneside Safeguarding Hub Initial Response Service / Emergency Duty Team	0345 2000 109 childrenandadultscontactcentre @northtyneside.gov.uk
Police / Law Enforcement	Northumbria Police (GSHS Local Beat)	Emergency: 999 Non-Emergency: 101
PREVENT / Anti-Terrorist Hotline	North Tyneside Community Prevent Team	0191 6432777 (Adults) 0345 2000109 (Children) prevent@northtyneside.gov.uk Anti-Terrorist: 0800 789 321
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline	Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London, EC2A 3NH	0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
Disclosure & Barring Service	PO Box 3961, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 4HF	03000 200 190 customerservices@dbs.gov
Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA)	Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Rd, Coventry, CV1 2WT	0207 593 5393 misconduct.teacher@education .gov.uk
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education	0300 1233 155 whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
Independent Schools Inspectorate	ISI Administration Office	0207 6000 100 concerns@isi.net

Guidance and Statutory Advice Framework

This policy has been written in strict accordance with the law and relevant national guidance governing safeguarding and child protection in England. It has regard to the following guidance and statutory advice:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026) (DfE statutory guidance)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children (2026) (HM Government statutory guidance)
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (HM Government, July 2020) (Statutory guidance)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance (DfE September 2025) (Statutory guidance)
- Children Missing Education (DfE 2024) (Guidance for Local authorities and schools)
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (DfE 2024) (Statutory guidance)
- Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales (HM Government 2023) (Statutory guidance)
- Guidance (non-statutory) for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium February 2022)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government, May 2024)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HM Government March 2015) (Advice for practitioners)
- Working together to improve school attendance (guidance on school attendance enforcement)
- Mobile phones in schools guide (DfE 2026) (Non-statutory guide for mobile-free environments)

George Stephenson High School operates in total alignment with the local multi-agency safeguarding partnership guidelines set out by North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Policy Statement

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is of paramount importance and is everyone's responsibility at George Stephenson High School. It is the responsibility of every member of staff, volunteer, and regular visitor to our school to ensure they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of all of the pupils. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture where racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other forms of discriminatory and prejudice-based harm are actively recognised, challenged, and addressed.

We recognise that staff at our school play a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide early and targeted help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. All staff are advised to maintain an active attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members must always act in the best interests of the child.

Our school will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to, and are safe. Children will be able to talk freely to any member of staff if they are worried or concerned about something. All staff and regular visitors will, through training and induction, know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure, and how to record and report this information. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know that an adult will have to share and follow procedures with any information they have chosen to disclose.

Definitions of Safeguarding, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

As defined by Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge;
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online;
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is the specific activity undertaken to protect children who are suspected to be suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation:

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse, neglect, or exploit a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in school, inside and outside of the home, and online. Abuse, neglect, and exploitation can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Harms may be extra-familial (outside their families), taking forms such as sexual abuse, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, radicalisation, and teenage relationship abuse.

Procedures for Responding to Concerns about a Child's Welfare

All staff must immediately report any concerns they have about a child and not see these as insignificant. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action. Concerns often accumulate over time, and building a contemporaneous record on CPOMS is critical to allowing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to form a picture of cumulative harm. Staff must immediately report any bruises, suspicious explanations, behavioural changes, signs of neglect, or disclosures.

If a child makes a disclosure, staff must listen without showing shock, use open questions, explain they must refer the information to the DSL, and complete a Cause for Concern form on CPOMS immediately. Staff must never investigate or make promises of confidentiality.

Recording and Actioning Discriminatory and Prejudice-Based Harm

In compliance with 2026 standards, staff must recognise that racism, faith-targeted abuse (including sectarianism and islamophobia), and other forms of discriminatory and prejudice-based harm are serious safeguarding issues. These incidents can have a devastating impact on a child's wellbeing, mental health, and physical sense of safety. All such incidents must be formally recorded on CPOMS and escalated as safeguarding concerns to ensure targeted emotional support and proactive disciplinary actions are implemented.

Alternative Provision Safeguarding Mandates

George Stephenson High School remains legally responsible for the safeguarding of any pupil placed in Alternative Provision (AP). The school strictly enforces the following statutory controls as mandated in 2026 guidance:

- Obtaining written confirmation that the AP provider has conducted all mandatory safer recruitment and safeguarding checks on all of their staff;
- Reviewing each AP placement at least every half-term to confirm the child's academic attendance and physical safety;
- Always knowing where a child is based during school hours, maintaining an up-to-date record of the address of the alternative provider and any satellite or subcontracted sites the child may attend; and
- Immediately reviewing, suspending, or terminating the placement if any safeguarding concerns arise, until they are satisfactorily addressed.

Early Help & Family Help Systems

Early intervention provides support as soon as a problem emerges. In line with Working Together 2026, George Stephenson High School has integrated the local targeted early help framework known as 'Family Help'. Where a child's needs do not meet the threshold for

statutory Children's Social Care but require co-ordinated multi-agency support, the DSL will lead on initiating a community-based Early Help assessment or direct the family into the targeted Family Help pathway. The school will follow North Tyneside Council's residing local authority assessment processes to ensure proper access to early support.

Statutory children's social care assessments and services

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, the DSL will make an immediate referral to North Tyneside Children's Social Care (and if appropriate the police). For children under an active Child in Need (Section 17) or Child Protection (Section 47) plan, the school will liaise closely with social workers, provide comprehensive written reports in advance of conferences, and attend all multi-agency meetings. All staff working with the child will actively contribute to report-writing under the supervision of the DSL.

Child on Child Abuse (including Harassment and Violence)

George Stephenson High School operates a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. It will not be tolerated or dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Staff will immediately stop and challenge inappropriate peer behaviours, particularly those of a sexual nature. Child-on-child abuse can manifest as sexual violence/harassment, physical abuse, bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying), teenage relationship abuse, county lines, gang-associated violence, and the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes (including AI-generated images).

Each incident will be recorded on CPOMS, investigated by the DSL, and individual risk assessments and safety plans will be put in place. The school will provide tailored support to both the victim and the perpetrator, working in partnership with external multi-agency partners.

The Use of Reasonable Force

Staff may only use 'reasonable force' in extremely limited, emergency circumstances to control or restrain a child to prevent violence, injury, or immediate harm. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means using no more force than is necessary for the shortest amount of time. Staff must exercise professional judgement and must be highly conscious of the additional vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), mental health problems, or medical conditions. All instances of physical restraint must be recorded, reported to the Headteacher and DSL, and shared with the child's parents/carers.

Mobile Phones and Smart Technology

In accordance with Department for Education (DfE) expectations, George Stephenson High School is a mobile phone-free site by default during the school day. Pupils are not permitted to access or use mobile phones, smartwatches, smartglasses, or other cellular smart technology throughout the school day—including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes, and lunchtimes. All staff will consistently enforce this policy. Phones brought onto school



grounds must be switched off and secured in phone pouches. Unauthorized devices will be confiscated, logged, and returned in accordance with our School Mobile Phone Policy.

Consensual and Non-Consensual Sharing of Nudes, Semi-Nudes and AI-Generated Deepfakes

The non-consensual creation, manipulation, or sharing of intimate images under the age of 18 is illegal. In compliance with 2026 updates, this policy explicitly covers self-generated images and/or videos, as well as those generated, altered, or manipulated using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, commonly known as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'. The creation of such images is treated as a severe form of child-on-child abuse and sexual harassment.

Initial Response and Viewing Protocols

- Confiscate the device immediately, switch it to 'flight/airplane mode' to prevent remote data deletion, and refer the case and device immediately to the DSL;
- Staff must never view, copy, print, share, or store intimate images or AI-generated deepfakes, as doing so is illegal. The DSL may only view an image in highly exceptional circumstances where it is absolutely necessary to establish facts or to report it to a takedown app;
- If viewing is unavoidable, it must be performed on school premises, by a DSL of the same sex as the child in the image, with another senior staff member present in the room (who does not look at the image), and the decision must be fully documented and signed; and
- The child will be supported in reporting the image online via Childline's 'Report Remove' tool and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) to secure swift removal from social media and internet databases.

Cybercrime Prevention and the Cyber Choices Programme

Cybercrime is categorized as 'cyber-dependent' (such as DDoS attacks, malware creation, and illegal hacking of school networks) or 'cyber-enabled' (such as online fraud and sexual exploitation). George Stephenson High School is vigilant in identifying pupils with advanced technological skills who may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent activities. The DSL will make referrals to the 'Cyber Choices' programme—a national police programme led by the National Crime Agency (NCA)—to divert at-risk young people toward positive, legal uses of their technical talents.

Children with SEND or Medical Conditions

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) face disproportionate safeguarding risks and are significantly more likely to suffer abuse. Barriers such as communication difficulties and the misattribution of abuse indicators to the child's disability require enhanced vigilance. The DSL and SENDCO will coordinate closely on all cases involving SEND pupils.

In accordance with 2026 standards, having a medical condition (such as severe allergies or conditions requiring delegated healthcare tasks) is not in itself an indicator of safeguarding risk. However, in the event of a clinical incident taking place on school grounds, the responsible healthcare professional, in conjunction with the DSL, must actively consider whether a safeguarding duty has been triggered or if there has been any failure in our statutory duty under 'Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school'.

Mental Health Concerns

Mental health problems (such as self-harm, eating disorders, or suicidal ideation) can be indicators of abuse or neglect. School staff are well-placed to observe day-to-day changes in behaviour and must immediately refer safeguarding-linked mental health concerns to the DSL. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a clinical diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff can also make internal referrals to our school mental health lead, Duncan Jarvie, to coordinate early support, counseling, and referrals to specialized external NHS services.

Contextual Safeguarding (Local Contextual Risks & GSHS Response)

Contextual safeguarding recognizes that environmental factors outside the family home can pose significant threats to children's safety. George Stephenson High School is committed to identifying local risks and has established specific operational responses to mitigate them:

Local Contextual Factor	George Stephenson High School Response
Geographical: Proximity to Lake & Water Risks The school is located in close proximity to a lake. Our main school entrance leads out toward local church grounds and a secluded graveyard where students have been known to gather before and after school.	• Communication is sent to parents/carers each Winter regarding the extreme dangers of walking on the frozen lake. • Active leadership team presence and duty cover are maintained in the graveyard and church grounds at the start and end of the school day. • Close liaison and joint patrols are conducted with Northumbria community police for support where required.
Social & Economic: Shopping Centre and Bus Station The school campus is situated immediately adjacent to a local shopping centre and bus station.	• Personal safety and making safe behavioral decisions beyond school grounds are taught throughout the curriculum. • Structured tutorials and assemblies on anti-social behavior, trespass, and criminal damage are delivered. • Standardized recording of local incidents is maintained with local business owners, youth leaders, and inclusion officers.
Peer Group: Sibling Influence & Peer Pressure Many children have older siblings in the community who may exert negative or antisocial influence on younger family members.	• The PSHCE curriculum explicitly teaches pupils how to recognize and resist 'peer pressure', building assertiveness. • High-profile 'anti-bullying' weeks and peer workshops are run annually. • Support is provided to encourage children to 'talk it out' with a trusted adult in school.
Home Factors: Internet Connectivity & Online Gaming A high proportion of pupils are connected to the internet and utilize gaming consoles to interact with peers online at home.	• Pupils and parents are required to sign Acceptable Use contracts. • Online safety is embedded deeply within the Computing curriculum. • The school's Digital Leader/advisor regularly conducts parental safety workshops and drop-in sessions on device privacy settings prior to Christmas.

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, and decisions must be recorded in writing on CPOMS without delay. Each record must include a clear, factual, and comprehensive summary of the concern, verbatim disclosures from the child, actions taken, and follow-up outcomes. Only child protection information is kept in the child protection file (stored securely within CPOMS), separate from the main academic file.

When a child transfers to a new school, the DSL is responsible for securely transferring the child protection file within 5 days (either for in-year transfers or at the start of a new term), obtaining written confirmation of receipt. Fears about sharing information must never stand in the way of protecting a child's safety.

Procedures for Handling Concerns about Staff or Volunteers

George Stephenson High School maintains an open and transparent safeguarding culture. Any concern or allegation that an adult working in or on behalf of the school (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) has harmed a child, committed a criminal offense, or poses a risk of harm to children must be reported immediately to the Headteacher (the 'case manager'). If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, it must be reported directly to the Chair of the Governing Board, Andrew Elliott. All allegations meeting the harms threshold will be investigated in close coordination with North Tyneside LADO Haley Muir within 24 hours.

Low-Level Concerns Policy

A 'low-level' concern is any concern—no matter how small, and even if causing no more than a sense of unease or a nagging doubt—that an adult has acted in a way inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, but does not meet the statutory harms threshold. Examples include being over-friendly, having favorites, taking photos on personal mobile phones, or using inappropriate language. All low-level concerns must be reported immediately to the Headteacher or DSL, recorded on CPOMS, and reviewed periodically to identify and address potential patterns of inappropriate behavior.

Safer Recruitment and Statutory Vetting Checks

The Headteacher and at least one member of the Governing Board have completed formal Safer Recruitment training. The school maintains a comprehensive Single Central Record (SCR) of all vetting checks carried out on staff, governors, and volunteers.

In strict compliance with the Crime and Policing Act 2026 and KCSIE 2026, the school has removed the 'supervision exemption' from guidance around regulated activity. This means that any work carried out in specified places (such as a school) by supervised staff or volunteers now legally falls under regulated activity. Consequently, all supervised volunteers, regular visitors, and support staff must undergo full enhanced DBS checks with barred list information

before commencing work. The school strictly prohibits unsupervised access to children by individuals without a completed barred list check.

Visitor Management and Lanyards

All visitors must sign in via VisiPoint, present valid photo ID, and confirm their DBS clearance on arrival.

- DBS Cleared Visitors: Must wear a Black Lanyard and are permitted to walk on school premises as required;
- Non-DBS Cleared Visitors: Must wear a Red Lanyard and must be accompanied by a member of school staff at all times.

Managing Safeguarding & Leadership Responsibilities

The Governing Board, Headteacher, and DSL share strategic and operational responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) Role Expansion:

In alignment with 2026 guidance, the role of the Virtual School Head has been extended to include a non-statutory responsibility for oversight of the academic attendance, attainment, and progress of children with an active social worker, as well as those living in kinship care arrangements. George Stephenson High School actively engages with the VSH to support these vulnerable student groups.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Availability:

Louise Dunn (DSL) or a deputy DSL (Alex Lunn) will always be available during school hours to discuss safeguarding concerns. In exceptional circumstances where a DSL is not present on-site, they will be accessible via phone and digital media, in line with Annex B of KCSIE 2026. The DSL will actively participate in local multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements and case conferences.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Safeguarding Induction Sheet for New Staff, Supply, and Volunteers

Welcome to George Stephenson High School. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you have any concerns about a child's safety, wellbeing, hygiene, or behavior, you must report it immediately to the DSL, Louise Dunn, or Deputy DSL, Alex Lunn, on CPOMS or via a written Cause for Concern form. In an emergency or direct disclosure, do not let the child leave your sight—locate a DSL immediately. If you suspect poor practice or failure by an adult, report it to the Headteacher, Peter Douthwaite, or use the Whistleblowing Policy.

Appendix B: Definitions and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

Staff must be vigilant to the physical and behavioral indicators of the four core categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse: Hitting, shaking, burning, non-accidental bruising, or inducing illness;
- Emotional Abuse: Persistent belittling, criticism, conveying worthlessness, domestic abuse exposure, or severe bullying;
- Sexual Abuse: Penetrative or non-penetrative sexual contact, online exploitation, grooming, or exposure to pornography; and
- Neglect: Failure to meet basic physical, medical, or emotional needs, including inadequate shelter, clothing, food, or supervision.

Appendix C: Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), CSE, and County Lines

CCE and CSE involve exploiting children for financial gain, status, or sexual acts. County Lines refers to gangs using dedicated mobile phones to export illegal drugs, exploiting children to transport and store drugs and cash. Key indicators include excessive missed school, unexplained money, new possessions, changes in emotional wellbeing, or relationships with older, controlling individuals. Victims of CCE/CSE may not recognize their own exploitation; the school will always treat them as victims in need of targeted support.

Appendix D: So-Called 'Honour'-Based Abuse, FGM, and Forced Marriage

Honour-based abuse is committed to protect family/community 'honour' and includes Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage. Teachers are under a mandatory reporting duty since 2015 to report directly to the police (via 101) any visual evidence or victim disclosure of FGM on a girl under 18. Signs of FGM include prolonged school absence, difficulty sitting, bladder problems, or talking about a 'special ceremony' before trips abroad. Forced Marriage

involves physical or emotional coercion to marry without free consent; signs include sudden performance decline, anxiety, and extreme home restrictions.

Appendix E: Preventing Radicalisation (Prevent Duty and Channel)

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the school has a statutory 'Prevent Duty' to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. Staff must be alert to behavioral changes, possession of extremist literature, or seeking to recruit others to violent ideologies. The DSL will make Prevent referrals as appropriate. Vulnerable individuals may be supported early via 'Channel', a voluntary, confidential multi-agency support programme.

Appendix F: Private Fostering Arrangements

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone other than a parent or immediate relative (grandparent, sibling, uncle, step-parent) for 28 days or more, under a private arrangement. The school has a statutory duty to inform Children's Social Care of any known private fostering arrangements immediately to ensure the child is safe and properly supported.

Appendix G: Children Missing from Education (CME)

Persistent unexplainable or unauthorized school absence is a critical warning sign of safeguarding risks, including abuse, CCE, mental health issues, or traveling to conflict zones. The school operates robust registration, daily contact checks, and joint investigation protocols with North Tyneside Council's attendance officers to track, locate, and support CME.

Appendix H: Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Violence, and Harassment

Sexual violence (rape, sexual assault, assault by penetration) and sexual harassment (unwanted conduct of a sexual nature online or offline) exist on a continuum and are never acceptable. Staff will challenge misogynistic language, sexual 'jokes', and physical behaviors. Following any report, the DSL will perform an immediate multi-agency risk and needs assessment. Consent is defined as having the freedom and capacity to choose; a child under 13 can never consent to any sexual activity, and the legal age of consent is 16.

Appendix I: Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, and Child Abduction

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking, forced labor, and domestic servitude. Children are trafficked for exploitation (criminal, labor, or sexual); informed consent is not legally possible for a child under any circumstances. Signs include unexplained cell phones, excessive house chores, or not being registered with a GP. Child abduction is the unauthorized removal of a minor; pupils are taught personal safety in the community via the curriculum.

Appendix J: Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass

Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are recognized as victims in their own right if they see, hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse in their homes. George Stephenson High School is an active 'Operation Encompass' school. When Northumbria Police attend a domestic incident where a child was present, they inform the DSL before the child arrives at school the next morning. This allows the school to put immediate, sensitive emotional and practical support in place.

Appendix K: Homelessness and Housing Stress

Homelessness (including living in temporary B&Bs, hidden homelessness, or couch surfing) presents a critical threat to a child's welfare. Indicators include sudden unkempt appearance, physical exhaustion, emotional stress, rent arrears, or persistent lateness. The DSL will coordinate immediate referral pathways with the Local Housing Authority and North Tyneside Children's Social Care.

Appendix L: Safeguarding Forms, Body Maps, and DSL Checklists

The school utilizes standardized digital CPOMS reporting forms to log all cause for concern details. Written body maps are utilized by the DSL to record any visible non-accidental injuries verbatim. The DSL Checklist is utilized on every case to track actions, parental communication, and multi-agency consultations.

Appendix M: Safeguarding Online (Filtering, Monitoring, and Remote Education)

The school implements a comprehensive whole-school approach to online safety, categorized into Content, Contact, Conduct, and Commerce risks. Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems (compliant with DfE standards) are reviewed annually by the Governing Board to limit exposure to harmful material without over-blocking educational access. All staff are trained on filtering and monitoring escalation procedures. Remote education is conducted strictly via approved school channels (Google Classroom/Microsoft Teams), and Acceptable Use policies apply.

Appendix N: Statutory Support Protocols for Social Transition

In strict compliance with 2026 statutory updates, George Stephenson High School has established a clear, structured framework for responding to pupil requests regarding gender identity and social transition:

1. **Process Initiation:** The school will not proactively initiate social transition. Staff will only respond to explicit, documented requests made by a child and/or their parents/carers.
2. **Parental Involvement:** Actively engaging parents/carers is a legal priority. Any decision regarding social transition must be a collaborative multi-agency process, except in the

highly exceptional circumstance where there is robust evidence that involving the parents poses a direct risk of significant harm to the child.

3. Best Interests and Peer Welfare: The statutory duty to safeguard the child and their peers remains paramount. Decisions must be made based on the child's objective 'best interests', which may not always align with their subjective wishes.

4. Legal and Single-Sex Space Constraints: In accordance with the School Premises Regulations 2012, the Education Regulations 2014, and the Equality Act 2010, any agreed social transition will strictly preserve biological sex-designated spaces. Under no circumstances will a pupil be granted access to toilets, changing rooms, or residential accommodation designated for the opposite biological sex. Furthermore, pupils will not be permitted to join PE classes or sports designated for the opposite sex where safety or competitive fairness reasons for single-sex sport exist.

5. Administrative Records: A child's biological sex must remain accurately recorded on all official school registries. All decision-making processes, meetings, and multi-agency agreements must be formally documented. Any transition support plans must remain highly flexible and subject to regular, formal review, with clear pathways established for pupils who wish to de-transition.