



# HEATHFIELD SCHOOL

## Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

<b>Policy Area:</b>	Safeguarding
<b>Relevant Statutory Regulations:</b>	<p>Independent School Standard Regulations 2014 Part 3 (7a, 7b, 8a, 8b)</p> <p>NMS Part D, Standard 8</p> <p>Children Act 1989, amended Children Act 2004</p> <p>Education Act 2002</p> <p>Data Protection Act 2018</p> <p>Data protection in schools 2024</p> <p>DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024</p> <p>DfE Working together to Safeguard Children 2023</p> <p>The Independent School Standards: Guidance for Independent Schools 2019</p> <p>Prevent duty and guidance: England and Wales 2023</p> <p>Guidance to Safer Working Practice 2022</p> <p>What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners 2015</p> <p>Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers 2024</p> <p>Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2016</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010</p> <p>The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974</p> <p>The Human Rights Act 1998</p>

	<p>Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</p> <p>The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)</p> <p>DfE Statutory Guidance on FGM including Section 5B (11) of the Female Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015</p> <p>The statutory guidance on Relationships and Sex Education (“RSE”)</p> <p>Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (overview) 2024</p> <p>Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021</p>
<b>Key Contact Personnel in School</b>	
<b>Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:</b>	Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding)
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):</b>	Lou Scott (DHPB)
<b>Governor Responsible for the policy:</b>	Anne Lynch
<b>Version:</b>	2024.02
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*This policy is available on the school website and is reviewed and ratified by the governing body annually or following any events or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.*

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## Important Contacts

ROLE	NAME & CONTACT	REMIT
Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Lou Scott 01344 898319/ 07715 085300 <a href="mailto:lscott@heathfieldschool.net">lscott@heathfieldschool.net</a>	<i>To report concerns about pupils or to ask advice</i>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Andy Valner <a href="mailto:avalner@heathfieldschool.net">avalner@heathfieldschool.net</a> Florence Gray <a href="mailto:fgray@heathfieldschool.net">fgray@heathfieldschool.net</a> Julia Hastings <a href="mailto:jhastings@heathfieldschool.net">jhastings@heathfieldschool.net</a>	
Headmistress	Sarah Rollings 01344 898320 <a href="mailto:srollings@heathfieldschool.net">srollings@heathfieldschool.net</a>	<i>To report concerns about a member of staff</i>
Chair of Governors	Alex Popplewell <a href="mailto:apopplewell@heathfieldschool.net">apopplewell@heathfieldschool.net</a>	<i>To report a concern about Headmistress</i>
Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding	Anne Lynch <a href="mailto:alynch@heathfieldschool.net">alynch@heathfieldschool.net</a>	<i>To report concerns about the School's safeguarding practices</i>
<b>Contacts outside of School</b>		
Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Partnership	01344 352005 (Mon-Fri 8.30am - 5pm) <a href="mailto:mash@bracknell-forest.gov.uk">mash@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</a> To make a referral please visit: <a href="http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash">www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash</a> Emergency Duty Services – 01344 351999 01344 786543	<i>Early Help or Safeguarding referrals</i>  <a href="https://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/p_referrals.html">https://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/p_referrals.html</a>
Bracknell Forest LADO	Alison Small 01344 351572 <a href="mailto:lado@bracknell-forest.gov.uk">lado@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</a>	<i>The Bracknell Forest Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for overseeing the management of all allegations against people in a position of trust who work with children in Bracknell Forest on either a paid or voluntary basis</i>
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline	<a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/</a> 0800 028 0285 <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a>	<i>To report any safeguarding concern that you do not feel confident reporting within the School</i>
NSPCC FGM Helpline	0800 0283550	<i>Guidance and advice</i>
FGM reporting	Police 101 or 999 (if an emergency)	<i>Statutory duty to report</i>
Childline	0800 1111 <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>	<i>Guidance and advice</i>
Thames Valley Police (TVP)	Emergency – 999 Non-Emergency - 101	<i>Emergency concerns in local area</i>
TVP Lead Officer for Schools	PC Jake Hynard (P4704)	<i>To report a concern where a law may have been broken</i>

**If you think that a child is at immediate risk, contact the Police immediately by calling 999.**

Further guidance on Bracknell Forest Child Protection Procedures can be found at:  
<https://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/index.html>

## **Introduction**

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Heathfield School (“the School”) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people regardless of age, ability, race, culture, religion, sexuality or class. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. Heathfield therefore expects all staff, Governors, volunteers, visitors and parents to share this commitment with a child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding. This policy is available to staff, parents and pupils on the School website and internal network areas. A maxim for the School, which is underpinned by statutory guidance, is that “Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”. This is a key principle, and everyone must be prepared to challenge unsafe practices and to report concerns immediately in accordance with these procedures.

Safeguarding principles are:

- Nothing is more important than keeping children safe. Safeguarding comes before anything else.
- Everyone has a part to play. It is the job of every member of staff to play their part in making Heathfield a community where young people are safe.
- Everyone must be vigilant. Much though the School wants to believe that other people are well-intentioned, it cannot be complacent. The School ‘it could happen here.’
- Everyone has a duty to report concerns and ensure they are acted upon. This is a moral, professional and legal duty.
- Concerns must be reported immediately.

The School believes clear governance and leadership is central to embedding a safeguarding culture. The Governing Body takes its responsibility seriously under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (section 157 for independent academies and free schools) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; working together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements are in place within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm or whose welfare may be in question. Governors will ensure all staff at the school have read and understood their responsibilities pertaining to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024. They must ensure that there is an auditable system in place to evidence this. The School ensures that all staff are particularly well placed to observe indicators of abuse; this includes personal disclosures from children, significant changes in behaviour or in a child’s health and development. The School establishes its designated safeguarding responsibilities and expertise through regular training and make sure that all adults and children are clearly aware of reporting arrangements. The School educates its pupils so that each child is taught about safeguarding including online safety through Safeguarding talks, PSHEE and computing lessons.

This policy is written in the recognition that Berkshire Child Protection procedures are followed in line with Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Board expectations.

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding**

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When the School talks about **safeguarding**, it means things which are done to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes:

- Protecting children from maltreatment; whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Preventing 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;
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child Protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It means activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside of outside of the home, including online. 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. (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023*)

This policy is applicable to all pupils at Heathfield School.

The Governors take seriously their responsibility under Part 2 of *KCSIE*, to ensure there is an effective child protection and safeguarding policy for the School. Governors undertake an annual review to satisfy themselves that the policy and its procedures are implemented fully in practice. One Governor is appointed as the board level lead on this.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18, but the School has a responsibility to safeguard all pupils in its care, including those 18 years of age or older.

The School is fully committed to safeguarding and all staff, including temporary, supply and ancillary staff, visitors and volunteers, and Governors have a full and active part to play in protecting pupils from harm, and the child's welfare must be their paramount concern. Safeguarding is **EVERYONE'S** responsibility. At all times, staff need to consider, what is in the best interest of the child.

The School recognises that safeguarding incidents could happen anywhere and staff should be alert to possible concerns being raised at Heathfield. All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the School and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. 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 exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

All staff subscribe to the view that the School should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical, moral and spiritual development of the individual child.

All School staff are particularly important, as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

All School staff are trained to recognise that some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Are disabled or have certain health conditions and specific additional needs
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse (including their own) or domestic violence
- Are at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or Forced Marriage
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Are at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family members mental health needs
- Are showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- Are missing or absent from education, or home, for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Has experienced multiple suspensions or is at risk of being permanently excluded from
- Is a privately fostered child

All pupils are educated through PSHEE, RS and other curricular subjects and social activities to respect differences and each play their part in evoking an inclusive School environment. There is a range of support and guidance available in School to counter bullying and abuse. (See Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy).

Definitions of abuse and neglect can be found in Appendix A and D.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Code of Conduct for All Staff
- Data Protection Policy
- Eating Disorders Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- First Aid and Medical Care Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Independent Listener Policy
- Induction Policy
- Intimacy Sexual Relationships between Pupils
- Management of Suicidal Thoughts and Suicide Risk Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Mobile Phone and Portable Device Policy

- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Physical Restraint Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Self-Harm Policy
- Self-Produced Sexual Imagery Policy
- Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

## Concerns About a Child

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Local procedures are set by the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board. The full procedures for Bracknell Forest can be found at <https://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/index.html>. The School contributes to inter-agency working in accordance with the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

Any member of the School community who has concerns about a child being abused, neglected or at risk of being drawn into terrorism must report these concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Lou Scott (Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding)), or to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL), Andy Valner (Assistant Head (Pastoral and Boarding), Teacher of Classics), Florence Gray (Head Houseparent for Lower School Boarding), Julia Hastings (Lead Nurse) or in their absence to a member of SLT. They will report the matter to the MASH for advice. Please note that any member of the School community is at liberty to report their concerns directly to the MASH. Every member of staff has a responsibility to pursue a concern they have about a child. However, the DSL and DDSLs are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL (or the person who made the referral) will press for re-consideration to ensure concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves. All staff should challenge inaction where they perceive it (see Section 5 below). (See Flow Chart in Appendix G)

**If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to the MASH or the police immediately. Parental consent is not needed and anybody can make a referral.**

Advice on how to identify signs of abuse or neglect is included in induction and annual training for all staff. See also Appendix A.

DfE advice is available on their website – see *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for Practitioners*



[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

The NSPCC website also provides useful additional information.

Details of the MASH are as follows:

Contact details for Bracknell MASH

Tel: 01344 352005

E-mail: [MASH@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

Website: [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash)

To make a referral please visit: [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash)

If you want to make a child protection referral please call: 01344 352005 Emergency Duty Services – 01344 786543 Available 5pm - 9am weekdays, 24hrs on weekends and bank holidays.

If you wish to make a referral regarding an adult (over 18 years old)

<https://bfrbwm.safeguardingadultsboard.org.uk/sab/worried-about-an-adult/what-is-safeguarding>

If there are any concerns about a child, the following procedures must be followed (see Appendix C):

- The DSL or a DDSL must be informed immediately. If the DSL or DDSLs are not available, do not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the DSL (or DDSLs) as soon as is practically possible. Options will then include:
  - Managing any support for the child internally via the School's pastoral system.
  - An early help assessment. The DSL (or DDSL) will lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Should it be decided to report the matter to the MASH, the department where the child lives will be advised of the problem, on the same day when possible.
  - A referral for statutory services, for example, as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm. The latter will be reported immediately to the MASH and certainly within 24 hours. The threshold for this referral will be low, with the emphasis on ensuring that a child receives the right help at the right time.
- A concern must be raised on 'MyConcern'; which is linked on the homepage of every member of staff's computer.
- In all cases concerns should be regularly reassessed in order to check whether the situation improves. This is done by the Safeguarding team and a timeline for the actions are recorded on the pupil's chronology.
- All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role that you may be expected to play in such assessments.
- Staff should not assume that somebody else will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge 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.
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- 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.
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services.
- further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.
- to see the child as soon as possible if the decision is taken that the referral requires further assessment.

The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming. If social workers decide to carry out a statutory assessment, staff should do everything they can to support that assessment (supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) as required). 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.

If confronted with a possible case of abuse, or disclosure of abuse, each member of staff should in the first instance follow the simple rules of listening and being supportive, but without asking any leading questions. Contemporaneous notes (as near verbatim as possible) should be kept of any conversation and signed and dated by the member of staff. See Appendix A for further guidance.

If a pupil is deemed to be at risk, or has made an allegation or disclosure of abuse, it must be explained to the pupil that the member of staff is under a duty to report the matter and that a referral will be made to the police if a crime has been committed. The pupil will need to be reassured that only the minimum number of people will need to know in order to keep her safe, and that it is in her best interests that the matter is reported. Staff must not conduct any kind of investigation; staff cannot undertake to keep confidential what the pupil has told them. If a member of staff has concerns about any behaviour towards pupils, they must report these to the DSL or DDSL.

All staff will be made aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information in order to safeguard children. All staff should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. [\*Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers\*](#) supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.

The School has a responsibility to be vigilant to so-called 'honour-based' violence ("HBV") which encompasses crimes which have been committed supposedly to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation ("FGM"), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, all staff should speak to the DSL.

In October 2015 it became mandatory for teachers (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England) to report to the police cases where they discover that an

act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless there is good reason not to, teachers should still consider and discuss such a case with the DSL and involve the MASH. In addition, all staff should follow the school child protection procedures set out in this policy to share their concerns with the DSL if they suspect FGM may have been carried out or that a girl may be at risk of FGM. Signs and indicators of FGM are found in Appendix A.

All staff and Governors should be aware safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child (pupil-against-pupil) abuse and be familiar with the Child-on-child Abuse Policy. The School takes a zero tolerance approach to this form of abuse and will do all it can to support any victims, whether the abuse occurred at School or off site.

- This is most likely to include: sexual violence, sexual harassment, physical abuse, sexting (youth produced imagery), cyberbullying, initiation/hazing type rituals and upskirting. (see Appendix A for further information).
- Child-on-child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'having a laugh or 'part of growing up'.
- Child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and could constitute a criminal offence and will be taken very seriously. Victims of child-on-child abuse will be supported in line with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy where appropriate.
- Child-on-child abuse can happen outside the School. The School will protect a child who has been harmed or is at risk of harm wherever that abuse may have taken place.

Procedures to minimize the risk of child-on-child abuse include:

- Prevention – educating pupils through discussions in assemblies, PSHEE, Inclusion group, school counsellor, tutor reviews, peer mentoring. The aim of these discussions is to give the pupils confidence to discuss such issues so they feel they can communicate any concerns they have. In line with the School's Anti-bullying Policy and Pupil Code of Conduct Policy, pupils are able to express any concerns with their Tutor or another adult, for example the Headmistress, a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the School Nurse, the School counsellor, a Housemistress or any other adult. Pupils also have an independent listener if they feel their concerns are not being taken seriously.
- Ensure that staff understand that SEND pupils are more at risk of child-on-child abuse.
- Procedures to minimise the risk are outlined in the School's Anti-bullying Policy.

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, staff should report their concerns to DSL or DDSL who will inform the MASH. In the event of disclosures about child-on-child abuse all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being 'at risk'.

Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the School may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying. The School's Anti-Bullying Policy, available on the School website, sets out how it deals with allegations. All instances of bullying are recorded on the bullying log against both the alleged victim and accused pupil.

Staff should be alert to the possibility of sexual relationships between pupils, between a pupil and a member of staff or between a pupil and someone from outside the School. If a staff member has any concerns, they should discuss the matter with the DSL. An inappropriate relationship would include a sexual relationship taking place at the School or while a pupil is under the care of the School, or one

taking place at any time which involved a pupil under the age of consent. It is an offence for any member of staff to engage in sexual activity with a pupil of the school, even if that pupil is over the age of consent. All staff and pupils should be familiar with the Intimacy and Sexual Relationships between Pupils Policy.

Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment the DSL will take into consideration any harmful sexual behaviour, the ages and developmental stages of the children. Where an incident between two pupils takes place away from the School, the school's duties remain the same. The initial response to disclosure is important and schools should ensure the victim is taken seriously and supported. Staff should never promise confidentiality. Reports of sexual violence are often complex and require difficult decisions to be made. Therefore, as soon as this type of disclosure the DSL will liaise with Bracknell Forest MASH team and the Police to ensure that the police are present to take the written statement.

Some situations are statutorily clear: a child under the age of 13 can never consent to sexual activity; creating or sharing sexual images or videos of under 18's is illegal, including children making or sharing these themselves. In cases where there has been harm, or there is an immediate risk, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care.

In cases where rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is reported Schools should not wait for the outcome of a police investigation before protecting the victim, perpetrator and other children in the School. The DSL should work closely with police to ensure that the School's actions do not jeopardise the police investigation.

The School has a duty to ensure that relationships between staff and children are conducted in a professional manner at all times, and that all staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and boundaries. As well as keeping children safe, this also ensures that actions by members of staff are not misinterpreted. Useful advice can be found in the Code of Conduct for all Staff Policy, and Guidance For Safer Working Practice for Those Who Work With Children In Education Settings. Any report or observation of inappropriate behaviour regarding a member of staff must be discussed with the Headmistress and will be reported as a Low Level concern. The school will then consult with the LADO before undertaking any actions or investigations. All details will be reported on the staff instance of MyConcern.

All staff are given guidance on how to deal with potential issues in the boarding houses and how to minimise lone working or putting themselves in a vulnerable position with a pupil.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities ("SEND") can provide additional safeguarding challenges. In particular, barriers can exist to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. Staff are asked to be alert to the following:

- it can be easy to assume that indicators of possible abuse, such as behavior, mood and injury, relate to a child's impairment without further exploration.
- children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs.
- there could be communication difficulties and barriers.

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the School and/or can occur between children outside the School. All staff, but especially the designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or

welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors, so it is important that the School provides as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. Please see Appendix A for more information.

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the School's safeguarding duties (under the Prevent Duty). During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. PSHEE lessons, peer mentoring and tutor discussions are used to make a connection through a young-person centred approach, facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction whilst equipping young people with appropriate capabilities, skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet, and the use of social media in particular, has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
- causes serious damage to property;
- or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system.
- The use of the threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Lou Scott, DSL, is also the School's lead / single point of contact ("SPoC") on the Prevent Duty.

Staff are asked to be alert to:

- Disclosures by pupils of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of school, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where pupils have not actively sought these out.
- Graffiti symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images.
- Pupils accessing extremist material online, including through social media.
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance.
- Other schools, local authority services, and police reports of issues affecting pupils in other schools or settings.
- Pupils voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives.
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence.
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with the School's Equal Opportunities Policy, views based on, but not exclusive to gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture.
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others.
- Anti-Western or Anti-British views.
- Particular areas of the school where pupils may be more vulnerable, 'hidden' e.g. corners of the School site and be increasingly vigilant to increasing the safety of pupils in those areas.

Support and advice about extremism are available from:

In the event of concerns about a pupil becoming radicalised, consideration will be given to the local authority Channel process.

### **Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff**

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The School will operate safer recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken according to the government statutory guidance KCSIE 2024 and the Local Authority's Safer Recruitment Toolkit. There will always be a member of Safer Recruitment trained staff on the interview panel.

KCSIE 2024 , Part 4 paragraph, states that these procedures should be followed in any case where it is alleged that a member of staff or other adult in the School has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- This also includes instances of transferable risk: 'incident outside of school which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children'.

If an allegation is made against an adult in the School the quick resolution of that allegation must be a clear priority to the benefit of all concerned. The School must, however, not undertake its own investigations without prior consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer ("LADO"), or in the most serious cases, with the police, so as not to jeopardise statutory investigations. In borderline cases discussions with the LADO can be held informally and without naming the School or the individual. The LADO must be contacted within 24 hours of receipt of the allegation by the School. If a crime has been committed the matter must be reported to the police.

Any concern about abuse by a member of staff, including by the DSL or DDSL, or by a volunteer, or supply staff, or contractor should be reported immediately to the Headmistress; if the Headmistress is absent the report should be given to the Chair of Governors. (See Appendix G). Where the claim is made against a supply teacher, whilst the School is not the employer they will take the lead. The MASH can be contacted on 01344 352005.

If the allegation is not demonstrably false or unfounded it may be necessary to suspend immediately – without prejudice. Where the claim is made against the Headmistress, then it must be reported directly to the Chair of Governors without notifying the Headmistress. Any member of the School community is at liberty to report their concerns directly to the LADO. Every member of staff has a responsibility to pursue a concern they have about another member of staff. All staff should challenge inaction where they perceive it. The LADO will be consulted on any concern raised about an adult and a pupil and no actions or investigations will take part without their approval. Schools will usually have to take the lead while keeping the supply agency fully informed and involved. In no circumstances must schools simply cease to use supply staff for safeguarding reasons.

The LADO will discuss the allegation with the Headmistress (or Chair of Governors) to confirm the details and establish whether or not it is demonstrably false or unfounded. Discussions should be recorded in

writing and communication with both the individual and the parents/carers of the child/children should be agreed.

- There is a potentially criminal act;
- The member of staff poses an ongoing risk to children;
- The member of staff's behaviour is totally unsuited to working with children and such behaviour cannot be prevented.

However, suspension will not be the default position; due weight will be given to the views of the LADO in reaching such a decision.

Procedures will be applied with common sense. There will be a risk assessment of the potential harm the accused person can inflict on pupils by staying in School. If the risk is deemed manageable, so that no pupil will come to harm, then there is no need to suspend that member of staff. The School has a duty of care to its employees: staff will be supported; for instance, they will be advised to contact their union and given advice on possible counselling available. A person will be appointed to keep the subject of an allegation informed of its progress.

The Headmistress will inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting the LADO, giving as much information as possible on the likely course of action. Parents/Carers of the pupil(s) involved will also be informed as soon as possible and kept informed about the progress of the case. In addition, parents/carers will be made aware of the restrictions on reporting or publishing allegations against teachers. The School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality.

If further investigation is needed, the Headmistress and LADO/MASH will first discuss when, and by whom, it will be carried out. Arrangements for alternative accommodation offsite away from pupils will be made where a member of boarding staff is suspended pending investigation of a child protection nature.

Consideration will be given to the needs of the child and a recognition that a child may make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen. Should an allegation be found to be malicious the procedures in the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy will be followed.

The School will ensure that all staff are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with pupils and parents/carers as advised within the Schools Code of Conduct for All Staff Policy. As part of the Induction process, all staff will receive guidance about how to create appropriate professional boundaries (in both the real and virtual world) with all children, especially those with a disability or who are vulnerable.

The School will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with pupils aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Abuse of Trust).

Allegations found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records. Any member of staff 'whistle blowing' in good faith will not suffer retribution or disciplinary action (see Section 5 below).

A summary record of allegations, other than those which are malicious, will be kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused, which will indicate how the allegation was followed up and resolved. A copy will be provided to the person concerned where agreed by children's social care or the police.

Allegations which have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated, malicious or unfounded will not be included in staff references. Details of allegations following an investigation that are found to have been malicious or false should be removed from personnel records, unless the individual gives their consent for retention of the information. However, for all other allegations, it is important that the following information is kept on the file of the person accused:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation;
- details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved;
- a note of any action taken, and decisions reached and the outcome as categorised above;
- a copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by children's social care or the police; and,
- a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

The School will report to the Secretary of State, via the Disclosure and Barring Service (PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA; tel: 01325 953795; email: [dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk)), within one month of leaving the School, any person whose services are no longer used because they are considered to have engaged in conduct that has harmed, or is likely to harm, a child, or otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

In this context, ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation, and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering.

The School is committed to consider making a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency ("TRA" – formerly the NCTL) where a person in teaching work has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had they not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. The reasons such an order would be considered are:

- unacceptable professional conduct that falls below the Teachers' Standards;
- the member of staff's behaviour is totally unsuited to working with children; and
- conviction or caution, at any time, for a relevant offence.

Where a referral has been made to the Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS"), it is not necessary for a referral also to be made to TRA, as information is shared between the two bodies. Where a dismissal does not reach the threshold for DBS referral, separate consideration should be given to a TRA referral if the individual is / was in teaching work.

Staff teaching practical subjects (e.g. music, sport, art), especially in a one-to-one situation (e.g. instrumental music lessons), need to be aware of the heightened risks and must be vigilant. Guidance is set out in the Code of Conduct for All Staff Policy.

## **Liaison with Other Agencies**

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The School will:

- work to develop effective links with relevant services to promote the safety and welfare of all pupils;
- co-operate as required, in line with the DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and KCSIE 2024, with key agencies in their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance and providing written reports at child protection conferences and core groups.
- notify Children's Social Care immediately if:



- it should have to exclude a pupil who is subject to a Child Protection Plan (whether fixed term or permanently);
- there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who is subject to a Child Protection Plan; or
- there is any change in circumstances to a pupil who is subject to a Child Protection Plan.

## **Low Level Concerns**

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The School promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about any adults working in or on behalf of the School (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. In adherence with KCSIE 2024 Section Two: Concerns that do not meet threshold. The School has policies and processes to deal with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold. Concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken. These concerns are all recorded, taken seriously and the appropriate action to safeguard children will be taken. Where a low-level concern has been raised by a third party, the Headmistress will collect as much evidence as possible, speaking to the person who raised the concern (if possible), to any individuals involved and any witnesses.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

The safety and wellbeing of children at the School is dependent on the vigilance of all its staff and their prompt communication to the Headmistress of any concerns, no matter how small, about any conduct by an adult which causes them to doubt that adult's suitability to work with or have access to children. All references in this section to "adult" should be interpreted as meaning any adult and any visitor, unless otherwise stated. The School is conscious of its duty of care to pupils and will always act, including if alerted to the possibility of abuse arising from situations or persons outside the school setting. The notification and prompt handling of all concerns about adults is fundamental to safeguarding children. It helps to identify and prevent abuse and to protect adults against misunderstandings or misinterpretations. It also encourages openness, trust and transparency and it clarifies expected behaviours. Those raising concerns or reporting allegations in good faith will always be supported, and adults in respect of whom concerns or allegations have been raised will not suffer any detriment unless the concern or allegation is found to be substantiated. The School is a 'telling' organisation - if staff are concerned about the behaviour or actions of any adult, they must speak to the Headmistress.

All staff must behave responsibly and professionally in all dealings with children and specifically with pupils for whom they have a duty of care. All staff must follow the procedures set out in the School's Code of Conduct for All Staff and the IT Acceptable Use Policy. Staff should always avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and all members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for

personal advantage or gratification. Staff should note that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over and in a position of trust to touch a child in a sexual way or have a sexual relationship with a child, even if the relationship is consensual. A position of trust could arise even if the member of staff does not teach the child.

The School does not permit the use of personal mobile phones and cameras by staff where children are present. The School has a specific policy regarding the use of mobile phones and devices (Mobile Phone and Portable Devices Policy) that recognises and manages the risks by a means appropriate to the setting. The policy on use of mobile phones, cameras and sharing of images is set out in this separate document and is reviewed annually. It is recognised that personal devices have the potential to be used inappropriately and therefore the School has developed a policy to outline the required protocol for all staff, students, volunteers and parents/carers.

The overarching aim of the School's Low-Level Concern Policy is to facilitate a culture in which the clear values and expected behaviours which are set out in our Code of Conduct for All Staff are lived, constantly monitored, and reinforced by all staff. In particular, the intention of this policy is to:

- maintain a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which staff are confident and clear about expected behaviours of themselves and their colleagues, the delineation of boundaries and reporting lines;
- ensure staff feel empowered to raise any low-level concern to the Headmistress, whether about their own or a colleague's behaviour, where that behaviour might be construed as falling short of the standards set out in its Code of Conduct for All Staff; and Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
- provide for responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised – maintaining on the one hand confidence that concerns when raised will be handled promptly and effectively whilst, on the other hand, protecting staff from false allegations or misunderstandings.

A low level concern for this purpose is any concern, no matter how small and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt', that an adult may have acted in a manner inconsistent with the School's Code of Conduct for All Staff or simply – even if not linked to a particular act or omission – a sense of unease as to the adult's behaviour particularly towards or around children.

Low level concerns about self (self-reporting) - From time to time an individual may find themselves in a situation which might appear compromising to others or which could be misconstrued. Equally, an individual may for whatever reason have behaved in a manner which on reflection they consider falls below the standard set out in the Code of Conduct for All Staff Policy. Self-reporting in these circumstances is encouraged as it demonstrates both awareness of the expected behavioural standards and self-awareness as to the individual's own actions or how they could be perceived. As such, the School sees self-reporting of low level concerns as an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

Low level concerns about another adult. From time to time an individual may notice behaviour or actions in others which leave them concerned. These are behaviour or actions which fall short of a formal allegation of abuse. These tend to be behaviours which indicate that the School's Code of Conduct for All Staff Policy has not been met. Any such concerns can be dealt with as a low level concern.

Where a low level concern exists it should be reported to the Headmistress, DSL or Chair of Governors as soon as reasonably possible and, in any event, within 24 hours of becoming aware of it (where the concern

relates to a particular incident). Reports about supply staff and contractors should also be raised with their employers, to allow potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour to be identified.

The Headmistress will, in the first instance, in discussion with the LADO satisfy herself that it is a low level concern and should not be reclassified as an allegation and dealt with under the appropriate procedure. The circumstances in which a low level concern might be reclassified as an allegation are where:

- the threshold is met for an allegation
- there is a pattern of low level concerns which collectively amount to an allegation or
- there is other information which when taken into account leads to an allegation.

Where the Headmistress is in any doubt whatsoever, advice will be sought from the Designated Officer, if necessary on a no-names basis. Having established that the concern is low-level, the DSL or Headmistress as appropriate will discuss it with the individual who has raised it and will take any other steps to investigate it as necessary. Most low level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor and will be dealt with by means of management guidance, training etc.

All low level concerns will be recorded in writing by the Headmistress.

Where a low level concern has been communicated, a confidential record will be kept on the Staff instance of MyConcern which logs all low-level concerns (only the Headmistress and DSL have access). The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible. A written record may be required. This is necessary to enable any patterns to be identified.

Records are kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation ("UK GDPR").

Any such records stored on MyConcern or passed onto the Headmistress are regularly reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school will decide on an appropriate course of action, which could include: internal disciplinary procedures; referral to the LADO (if the Harms Threshold is met). In these circumstances, the School will consider if there were any wider contextual issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur. If this is found to be the case, relevant policies will be reviewed, and extra training put in place to minimise the risk of recurrence. Detailed records will be kept of any low level concern record reviews.

However, no record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file (and no mention made in job references) unless either:

- the concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as an allegation as above; or Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure 37 September 2018
- the concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious to result in formal action under the school's grievance, capability or disciplinary procedure.

## **Staff Behaviour**

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The School expects staff to maintain levels of behaviour as set out in the School's Code of Conduct for All Staff Policy and the DfE's Teachers' standards (July 2011).

## Whistle Blowing Procedures

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Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 requires schools to have clear whistle blowing procedures suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct.

Heathfield School promotes a culture where staff members should feel safe raising concerns. The School values staff and maintains a reflective practice in all that it does.

All staff, paid and unpaid, have a duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. They should speak in the first instance to the Headmistress. All concerns will be taken seriously, addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with the agreed whistle-blowing policy. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report, provided that it is done in good faith.

The School has a separate Whistle Blowing Policy which is available to staff on the Shared Network (see Section 9 of the policy). This outlines the procedures for reporting and handling concerns, including concerns about the attitude or actions of the DSL or of the Headmistress. Staff are regularly reminded of these procedures as part of staff training and they form part of the formal induction process. Support can be provided to staff by the HR Manager or Bursar where necessary.

Provision can be made for mediation and dispute resolution where it is necessary.

General guidance can be found at [Advice on whistleblowing](#). The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline is 0800 028 0285 available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285, 8:00am-8:00pm, Monday to Friday, or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## Online Safety

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The School is alert to the need to safeguard and educate pupils from potentially harmful and inappropriate material online at School and when they are at home. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Through an effective whole school approach to online safety, the School protects and educates pupils and staff in their use of technology and have established mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. Pupils, Parents and staff are taught about e-safety in PSHEE, ICT, Twilight sessions and Talks. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material;
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; and
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm.
- commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If any pupils or staff are identified at risk, this will be reported to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Pupils are reminded regularly about e-safety (particularly sharing images and content online) and required to read, understand (through regular guidance) and sign an ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy for Students in order to access the School's information technology services.

The School is committed to ensuring that all its pupils will be able to use existing, as well as up and coming technologies safely. The School is also committed to ensuring that all those who work with children and young people, as well as their parents/carers, are educated as to the risks that exist so that they can take an active part in safeguarding children.

The School has appropriate filters in place to reduce the risk of accessing inappropriate sites. The School also uses monitoring software to help to identify pupils accessing or trying to access harmful or inappropriate material online. This filter identifies sites accessed and alerts to particular themes of issue e.g. pornography or self-harm. These are reviewed regularly as part of the Safeguarding weekly meeting, with an audit being carried out termly. The DSL team follow up on any inappropriate use and offer support and guidance to the individual and are looking in particular for trends or repeated concerns.

All staff have an IT induction and as part of their regular training are briefed on safe use of their devices and social media conduct. Particularly ensuring their accounts are private and that our rules within the Code of Conduct for all staff and Guidance for Safer Working Practice are adhered to. They are aware of how to alert the safeguarding team if they are aware of any unwanted sites being accessed or breaches of online safety.

Staff are advised to turn off their mobile data whilst on site to prevent any accidental data sharing happening.

The School recognises that children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at school can potentially sexually harass their peers via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. The School carefully considers how this is managed on their premises and bans access to popular social media sites e.g. TikTok, SnapChat, Twitch with further age restrictions in place for numerous sites including Netflix and YouTube.

### **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children**

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The School is aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. The School take a zero tolerance approach to this kind of abuse. Further detail can be found in the Child-on-child Abuse Policy.

When referring to sexual harassment the School means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When the School references sexual harassment, it does so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

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. It can happen outside the School but all reports will be taken seriously and reported to the MASH.

All pupils are regularly reminded about where they can report abuse and it is stressed at the pupil safeguarding sessions that all reports will be taken seriously and that the individual will be supported and kept safe.

The School is clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.

The School is clear of the importance of ensuring children understand the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them rather than criminalise them.

The School is aware of the importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.

Child-on-child abuse can sometimes be hidden abuse and that just because there are no reports of it does not mean it is not happening. Staff and Governors are to remain vigilant and be alert to the signs and report to the DSL any suspicion of child-on-child abuse. Refer to the School's Child-on-child Abuse Policy for signs of abuse.

Through the PSHEE curriculum, the School delivers a program of sessions to challenge this issue. These include:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- what respectful behaviour looks like;
- consent;
- gender roles, stereotyping, equality;
- body confidence and self-esteem;
- prejudiced behaviour;

Where the School becomes aware of any instances of Sexual violence and sexual harassment this will be dealt with in line with the behaviour policy and parents will be notified. Social Care will be contacted in line with child protection procedures.

### **The Roles and Responsibilities**

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The role of the **DSL** and the **DDSLs** is broad. Their role falls broadly into the following areas with more details offered in Appendix B:

DSL: should take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and interagency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and to contributing to the assessment of children.

The role is to:

- Make sure all staff are aware how to raise safeguarding concerns
- Ensure all staff understand the symptoms of child abuse and neglect
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- Attend multi agency meetings as required
- Monitor children who are the subject of child protection and child in need plans
- Maintain accurate and secure child protection records
- ensure that the designated members of staff take advice from a child protection specialist when managing complex cases. The Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) is also available (see Useful Contacts, Appendix E)

DDSL: Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role should be explicit in their job description. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

## **Availability**

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school hours) for staff in the School to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) would be expected to be available in person, in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such media is acceptable.

## **Managing referrals**

- To refer cases of suspected abuse to the MASH as required;
- To support staff who make referrals to the MASH;
- To refer cases to the Prevent coordinator or the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- To support staff who make referrals to Prevent or the Channel programme;
- To refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the DBS as required;
- To refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

## **Work with others**

- To liaise with the Headmistress to inform her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.
- As required, to liaise with the 'case manager' (usually the Headmistress) and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member);
- Liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Manager, and SENCO) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- To liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- To act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.
- Act as a point of contact with safeguarding partners.
- To liaise with the HR department to ensure there are a sufficient number of relevant staff trained in the safer recruitment process.

## **Training**

The DSL (and any deputies) undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The DSL should also undertake relevant Prevent training as the SPoC. In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role:

- To understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements;
- To have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes;

- To ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's or college's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff;
- To be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with SEND and young carers;
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016.
- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
- To be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- To understand and support the School with regards to the requirements of the Prevent Duty and be able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- To obtain access to resources and to attend any relevant or refresher training courses;
- To encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the School may put in place to protect them.
- Can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online;
- Understand the ways to keep them safe when teaching on-line or remotely and how their practice must adhere to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Conduct for all Staff Policy.

### **Raising awareness**

- To ensure the School's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and procedures are known, understood and used appropriately;
- To ensure the School's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and to work with Governors regarding this;
- To ensure the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy is available publicly and parents/guardians are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the School in this;
- To link with the local safeguarding partnership to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school and college leadership staff.

### **Child Protection Files**

- To ensure that child protection files are maintained in line with data protection legislation, held securely with access limited only to those who need to know, and retained in line with nationally recognised retention schedules
- Where children leave the School, to ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible ensuring a secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. The DSL will also consider sharing information with the new school or college in advance of a pupil leaving to allow them to continue to support the pupil and have support in place when they arrive. The DSL will ensure that all key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENco are made aware of any information that they need to know upon the receipt of a child protection file for a new pupil.

### **Availability**

- To be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- It should be noted that whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to the DDSLs, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the DSL; this lead responsibility should not be delegated.



The role of the **Headmistress** will require that she is trained to the DSL level, in order to enable her to fulfil her responsibilities:

- Ensure this policy is implemented by all staff.
- Inform all parents of this policy.
- Allocate sufficient time, training and resources to enable the DSL to carry out her role effectively.
- Foster a culture where all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor practice; and ensure that any concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with whistleblowing procedures.
- Ensure pupils have regular opportunities to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online.
- Ensure a child's wishes are taken into account when determining action to be taken.
- Liaise with the LADO where an allegation is made against a member of staff.
- Ensure that anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk to, a child is referred promptly to the DBS, where they were, or could have been, dismissed due to safeguarding concerns. Also, that prompt referral is made to the Teaching Regulation Agency and other regulatory / advisory bodies, if appropriate.

**Employees and Volunteers** will understand that everyone who works with children at Heathfield has a role to play in keeping them safe. It is the responsibility of every employee and volunteer to:

- Act at all times in the best interests of the child.
- So far as possible, protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Provide a safe environment for children to live and learn.
- Be vigilant in protecting the welfare of children, and constantly aware 'it could happen here'.
- Complete induction in child protection at the start of their Heathfield career.
- Read at least part one of KCSIE.
- Read the School's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy, and sign an acknowledgement that they have done so.
- Receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually.
- Be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so they can identify children at risk of harm.
- Be aware of the School's child protection procedures, and follow them.
- Know how to implement child protection procedures independently, if necessary.
- Be aware of the early help process.
- Keep an adequate record of any significant complaint, conversation or event.
- Promptly report any matter of concern (including concerns about the conduct of another member of staff), following procedures outlined in this policy.
- Make a direct referral to Social Services and / or the police themselves immediately if they fear there is a risk of imminent serious harm.

**Governors'** responsibilities are extensive and require regular and rigorous monitoring. The Governing body will:

- Ensure appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.
- Governing body will review and ratify the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy at least annually and within weeks of any amendments.
- Appoint a senior member of the School leadership team to the role of DSL.
- Ensure the School contributes to inter-agency working, in line with statutory guidance.
- Ensure all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) at induction .
- Ensure the School has appropriate filters and monitoring systems to keep children safe online.
- Ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including safety online.

- Ensure the School follows safer recruitment practices to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children.
- Ensure there are procedures in place to handle allegations against staff, and that a referral to the DBS is made if a person in regulated activity has, or could have been, dismissed due to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to deal with child on child abuse (including sexting) and any associated gender issues.
- Ensure children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- Ensure the welfare of pupils who are, or have ever been, Looked After Children is assured and their educational achievement promoted by a designated teacher (DDSL Andy Valner) and they are sufficiently trained for the role.
- Ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## Training

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The DSL and DDSLs have undertaken Multi-Agency Child Protection training. They undertake regular training at least biannually in accordance with locally-agreed procedures. The required training content for these roles is set out in Annex B of KCSIE.

All new staff (whether temporary, permanent or volunteers) and Governors receive formal training on child protection procedures as part of the induction process. The safeguarding induction is led by the School's DSL and supported by the DDSL's. There is a supplementary PowerPoint for new staff, a key information sheet and an online course to be completed, and refreshed annually, via TES Safeguarding.

The School has a duty to actively promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

The identity and contact details of the School's DSL and DDSLs are displayed across the School on noticeboards..

Staff are advised how to manage a report on child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment and have a responsibility to be aware of *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – A guide for practitioners*.

All staff and Governors receive single agency safeguarding training delivered by the DSL and DDSL in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse. This happens at the beginning of each academic year with updates given at the start of every term. All staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, in line with local safeguarding partnership advice including Prevent, online safety (which includes an understanding of the expectation in relation to filtering monitoring) and informal updates. This schedule will ensure all staff are confident about:

- the School's legislative responsibility
- their personal responsibility
- the school's policies and procedures
- the need to be alert to the signs and indicators of possible abuse, including child sexual and criminal exploitation, child-on-child abuse, female genital mutilation, extremism and radicalisation, grooming, county lines and online harm
- the need to record concerns
- how to support and respond to a child who discloses abuse

The School ensures that mechanisms are in place to enable all staff to read and understand their responsibilities in KCSIE 2024 . Part 1 is given to those who work directly with children, and Part 1 or Annex A (which is a shorter version of Part 1) to other staff. All Staff working directly with children should also read Annex B. Governors are required to read the entire document and ensure the School has regard to it.) Knowledge and understanding is tested via annual completion of the relevant course on TES Safeguarding.

The DSL and DDSLs provide single agency safeguarding training to regular volunteers and senior pupils taking on roles of responsibility within the School.

The School regularly holds parent information sessions to offer guidance on latest safeguarding, welfare and mental health topics to encourage our parent body to develop and enhance their understanding child protection.

The School ensures every member of staff and every governor knows:

- the name of the designated person/s and their role
- how to identify the signs of abuse and neglect
- how to pass on and record concerns about a pupil
- that they have an individual responsibility to be alert to the signs and indicators of abuse and for referring child protection concerns to the Designated Person/s
- that they have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- where to find the local Child Protection Procedures

## **Oversight and Review of Policies and Procedures**

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Governors must ensure that the School has a Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and that this is known to all staff and Governors.

Anne Lynch is the designated Governor for Child Protection and Safeguarding and the Prevent governor. Her role is to liaise with the DSL and DDSL and champion safeguarding in all governing body matters. The DSL, Lou Scott, is Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) and a member of the Senior Leadership Team who takes responsibility for child protection matters.

As part of an annual review, the designated Governor will monitor the efficiency by which policy and procedures have been implemented and report to the Governors. Any deficiencies will be remedied immediately.

The Governors should ensure that the School contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. All schools should allow access for children's social care from the host local authority and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, for that authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.

The Governors should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by the local safeguarding partnership. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires a local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between itself and its relevant partners and other organisations who are engaged in activities relating to children. Under section 14B of the Children Act 2004 the LOCAL

SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP can require a school or college to supply information in order to perform its functions; this must be complied with.

This policy and relevant procedures will be reviewed at least annually by the DSL and the Headmistress. Reviews will also take place after any safeguarding incident and following the introduction of new statutory requirements. The policy will also be reviewed and ratified by the Governing Body at least annually, or as soon as changes are made to the policy.

### **Arrangements for Other Safeguarding and Welfare Responsibilities**

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The School actively promotes the welfare of children and fundamental British values explicitly through the PSHEE curriculum, assemblies and pastoral days, and implicitly through the whole operation of the pastoral system. Pupils are given the information to keep themselves safe, including online (see 8.1 above).

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and could be for reasons such as sexual exploitation, travelling to conflict zones, forced marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM). If a child is away from School for a continuous period of 10 days or more without permission, the School will contact the local authority. If a child is absent from School on a regular basis, the School will seek to ascertain the reasons for these absences from the parents/carers and, if concerned, will contact the local authority.

The School notifies the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard admission point. The School also notifies the local authority when a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. Staff must be alert to signs of pupils at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation, forced marriage or other honour based abuses. Further information and guidance can be found in [\*Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities – September 2016.\*](#)

The School recognises the importance of emotional and mental wellbeing and that internal/self abuse can be a greater threat than third party abuse. The School's pastoral care is an integral part of supporting pupils' mental health. The School aims to recognise the threats to a pupil's emotional and mental health. Providing each pupil with the access to a professional network of support via the Surgery, Counsellor and external agencies whilst ensuring a close connection is developed with at least one adult, preferably their tutor, to offer pastoral support. Wellbeing policies and regular training sessions are in place to support staff in assisting pupils with challenging emotional issues or ideologies. The School also provides a peer support programme as the School recognises a pupil may feel more comfortable in asking for support from an appropriately trained peer in the first instance. (See the School's Mental Health and Self-harm Policies).

All staff and peer mentors are reminded that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation; or a lasting effect of having suffered adverse or traumatic childhood experiences. All staff and mentors are reminded that only trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis. Staff are well placed to observe behaviours and should alert the DSL or use our reporting system – MyConcern to log their concerns.

Use of School premises for non-school activities. Where proprietors hire or rent out the School facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) it ensures that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe. The School seeks assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these

as needed); and that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the School on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the School roll. The School also ensures safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

The School's Summer Courses has its own management and trained DSL. This DSL undergoes local authority training and attends the School's termly DSL training.

## **Records, Monitoring and Transfer**

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Maintaining Records are essential to offer consistency in the monitoring of any Safeguarding concerns; well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All safeguarding concerns and discussions, along with decisions and the reasons for them, must be recorded in writing. All staff must be clear about the need to record and report concerns about a child. If in doubt, staff should discuss with the DSL.

Child protection records are reviewed regularly to check whether any action or updating is needed. This includes monitoring patterns of complaints / concerns about any individual, and ensuring these are acted upon.

Records are retained by the School in line with guidelines issued under local multi-agency arrangements.

The School keeps any paper records in a secure location and digital records under conditions of equivalent security. Safeguarding files are stored separately from other pupil or staff records. Access is restricted to specific staff with a need to see them, such as the DSL, Deputy DSLs and Headmistress, counselling and medical staff. Boarding staff who are in loco parentis or directly responsible for supervision of the pupil may be given access to individual files of pupils for whom they are caring, if this is judged necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of the pupil. MyConcern offers the School a secure, chronological and efficient system for recording all pastoral concerns and updates as they occur.

Data protection legislation is not a barrier to sharing information, where failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Concerns for confidentiality and fears about sharing information should not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare of children.

The General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR") and Data Protection Act 2018 applies to safeguarding records as much as any other personal data that the school may hold. It places duties on the School and the individuals it employs to process personal information in a fair, lawful and transparent manner. Safeguarding information should only be collected where there is a legitimate reason to do so (in this case, the protection of pupils from harm) and used only for that purpose. Records should be kept as accurate and up-to-date as possible, and retained only for as long as there is a justifiable reason to do so.

In general, data should only be processed with the consent of the individual it concerns. However, it may be lawful to do so without consent where this is necessary to protect an individual from neglect, physical, mental or emotional harm; or protect the physical, mental or emotional well-being of an individual. Safeguarding records can, therefore, be maintained even without an individual's consent being obtained.

The School works on the general principle that individuals have a right to see records relating to them. If pupils request access to their own safeguarding file, the DSL will take this general right of access into account when deciding whether to release the file. However, this general right of access may be restricted if, in the judgement of the DSL, release of the file may put the pupil or any other individual at risk of harm.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to release the file in an edited or redacted format. Where parents request access to their children's safeguarding records, the DSL will further take into account the age of the pupil concerned and the fact that the data strictly belongs to the child and not the parent.

Heathfield may share information with external professional agencies (e.g. police, medical or social workers) when it is in the best interests of the child to do so. Further guidance may be found in Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers 2024.

When a pupil transfers from Heathfield to another school, their Child Protection Record is forwarded to the new school without delay. If the pupil is the subject of a Child Protection Plan, the child's social worker is informed.

If the pupil does not move school, Heathfield will keep her file at least until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

If the School considers that a court case may be pending for a child who is moving schools but for whom the School has a Child Protection ("CP") file, the School will keep a copy of the CP file for reference for the court case and inform the new school or college. When any court proceedings are complete, the School will destroy the copy of the file.

Safeguarding records will be transferred separately from other records and, wherever possible, passed directly to the DSL of the receiving school and a signed, dated record of the transfer obtained. In the event of a child moving out of area and a physical handover not being possible, the most secure method will be found to send the confidential records to a named DSL, and a copy kept at Heathfield until safe receipt is confirmed. Files requested by other agencies (e.g. police) will also be copied.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 principles. The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parents to see child protection requests, they will refer the request to the Designated Person or Headmistress.

The Data Protection Act 2018 incorporates the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 requirements into English law.

The School will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from a senior manager or Children's Social Care as required.

The School ensures that the Headmistress or Designated Person will only disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis, including Domestic Abuse notifications.

The School makes all staff aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

The School ensures staff are clear with children that they cannot promise to keep secrets.

## **Safer Recruitment**

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The School is committed to safer recruitment, ultimate responsibility for which lies with the Trustees. The School will ensure that it practises safe recruitment by checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with young people, in accordance with the latest regulations and guidance.

The Headmistress and HR department are responsible for implementing these procedures in practice. The School's Recruitment Policy indicates that all necessary checks will be carried out on the suitability of people who serve on the School's governing body, or are to be employed by the School in accordance with regulations and guidance given in KCSIE 2024, Part three, prior to them being allowed to be unsupervised on the School site.

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process the School will carry out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the School might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

## **Early Help**

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Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. All staff are made aware of the early help process and are asked to be alert to identifying children who may benefit from early help. In the first instance staff should discuss early help requirements with the DSL who will take the lead on Early Help cases and liaise with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

Some children may be particularly vulnerable, and it is important that staff are particularly alert to the potential need for early help where a child:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs;
- is a young carer;
- goes missing from school or home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol;
- faces challenging family circumstances e.g. substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to identify need and provide targeted support that will improve outcomes for the child. All staff should be aware of the early help process, and understand their role in it. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, sharing information with other professionals, and, in some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.

Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of Working Together To Safeguard Children provides detailed guidance on the early help process.

Whatever the concern, the most important thing is that children receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. The importance of acting upon, and referring, the early signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation, cannot be understated. Abuse, neglect and exploitation continue because of the secrecy and silence which surround them.

Don't think "What if I'm wrong?" think "What if I'm right?" and make sure that any suspicions of abuse are reported.

## **Supporting Vulnerable Children**

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The School recognises that abuse or witnessing violence may have an adverse impact on those children which may last into adulthood without appropriate intervention and support.

The School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at School their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may become withdrawn.

The School recognises that some vulnerable children may develop abusive behaviours and that these children may need to be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The School recognises that, statistically, children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. In managing children with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems the School are particularly sensitive to indicators of abuse. The School recognises that behaviour, mood and injury may relate to possible abuse and not just a child's SEN or Disability. The School recognises that there is a greater risk of peer group isolation and disproportionate impact of bullying among children with SEND, in particular for those children with reduced communication. The School strives to ensure any such issues are dealt with at the earliest opportunity and that these matters are dealt with proactively through the PSHEE curriculum.

As part of the PSHEE curriculum staff teach children personal safety skills in accordance with their ability and needs. Children are taught personal safety skills such as telling and who to tell, good and bad touches and good and bad secrets. The content of lessons is shared with parents/carers so that these skills can be supported at home.

Where necessary in order to support children with communication difficulties, the School provides additional training to staff on different communication strategies.

The School promotes high standards of practice, including ensuring that disabled children know how to raise concerns, and have access to a range of adults with whom they can communicate.

The School supports the pupil through:

- Curricular and Co-Curricular opportunities to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- An ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and safe environment and values the whole community.
- The School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will support vulnerable pupils in the school.
- All staff agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self worth.
- The School ensures that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with agencies which support the pupil such as the Behaviour Support Team, Children's Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or other agencies as deemed appropriate.
- A commitment to develop productive and supportive relationships with parents/carers
- Recognition that children living in a home environment where there is domestic abuse, drug or alcohol abuse or mental health issues are vulnerable and in need of support and protection; they may also be young carers.



- Monitoring and supporting pupil's welfare, keeping records and notifying Social Care in accordance with the Berkshire LSCB Child Protection Procedures.
- Ensuring when a child who is subject to a child protection or child in need plan leaves, information is transferred to the new school immediately. The Named Social Worker will also be informed.
- When a child is missing from education, the School will follow the procedure as set out in Bracknell Forest Children Missing Education guidance and the School's Children Missing Education Policy. The Education Welfare Service and Children's Social Care will be informed if a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or there have been ongoing concerns.

## **Elective Home Education**

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The School works pre-emptively to support a pupil struggling to attend school, collaborating with the family to ensure all avenues are explored to keep the child in school where possible.

The School recognises that many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. The School expects the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs. The School will alert the MASH if there are any concerns behind the family's decision to withdraw the child from school.

The School will adhere to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 informing the LA of all deletions from their admission register when a child is taken off roll

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the School will inform the LA and co-ordinate a meeting with parents, and other key professionals. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

## **Mental Health Support**

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The School recognises the key role it has in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. Refer to the School's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for more information.

All staff recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. All staff are trained in identifying deterioration in mental health and there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems. MyConcern is used alongside a collaborative pastoral network that prides itself in its knowledge of the pupil.

The School takes note of the DfE advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools. The School aims to work proactively in developing pupils resilience through integrated programmes such as Positive Psychology Education, and Flourishing. These programmes encourage pupils to talk about their mental health, recognise their social and emotional wellbeing and learn strategies to further develop these.

All staff play a key role in promoting wellbeing and mental health. The Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) acts as the Wellbeing lead and liaises with other members of the leadership team, HOYs,

Learning Support and Boarding teams, amongst others, to ensure there is a collective priority to immerse wellbeing in all facets of the school.

## **Related Policies**

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- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Code of Conduct for All Staff
- Eating Disorders Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- First Aid and Medical Care Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Independent Listener Policy
- Induction Policy
- Intimacy Sexual Relationships between Pupils Policy
- Low Level Concern Policy
- Management of Suicidal Thoughts and Suicide Risk Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Mobile Phone and Portable Device Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Physical Restraint Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Self-Harm Policy
- Self-Produced Sexual Imagery Policy
- Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

## Appendix A: Types of Abuse and Neglect

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Staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

**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.

**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.

**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 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.

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

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

## Further Information on Abuse and Safeguarding Issues

[Annex A](#) Safeguarding information for school and college staff: A new condensed version of Part one of KCSIE 2024. It can be provided (instead of Part one) to those staff who do not directly work with children, if the governing body or proprietor think it will provide a better basis for those staff to promote the welfare and safeguard children.

[Annex B of KCSIE](#) contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues which must be read by all staff who are in regular contact with children. Index on Page 141.

**Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children’s social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.**

Abuse or Safeguarding issue	Link to Guidance/Advice	Source
Abuse	<a href="#">What to do if you're worried a child is being abused</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance</a>	Home Office
	<a href="#">Faith based abuse: National Action Plan</a>	DfE advice
Bullying	<a href="#">Preventing bullying including cyberbullying</a>	DfE advice
Children missing from education, home or care	<a href="#">Children missing education</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Child missing from home or care</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Children and adults missing strategy</a>	Home Office strategy
Children with family members in prison		Barnardo’s in partnership with Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) advice
	<a href="#">County Lines: criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults</a>	Home Office guidance
	<a href="#">Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners</a>	DfE
	<a href="#">Trafficking: safeguarding children</a>	DfE and HO guidance
Drugs	<a href="#">Drugs: advice for schools</a>	DfE and ACPO advice
	<a href="#">Drug strategy 2017</a>	Home Office strategy
	<a href="#">Information and advice on drugs</a>	Talk to Frank website

	<a href="#">ADEPIS platform sharing information and resources for schools: covering drug (&amp; alcohol) prevention</a>	Website developed by Mentor UK
"Honour Based Violence" (so called)	<a href="#">Female genital mutilation: information and resources</a>	Home Office
	<a href="#">Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance</a>	DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Forced marriage: statutory guidance and government advice</a>	Foreign Commonwealth Office and Home Office
Health and Wellbeing	<a href="#">Fabricated or induced illness: safeguarding children</a>	DfE, Department for Health and Home Office
	<a href="#">Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience</a>	Public Health England resources
	<a href="#">Medical-conditions: supporting pupils at school</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Mental health and behaviour</a>	DfE advice
Homelessness	<a href="#">Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions</a>	MHCLG
Online	<a href="#">Sexting: responding to incidents and safeguarding children</a>	UK Council for Child Internet Safety
Private fostering	<a href="#">Private fostering: local authorities</a>	DfE - statutory guidance
Radicalisation	<a href="#">Prevent duty guidance</a>	Home Office guidance
	<a href="#">Prevent duty advice for schools</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Educate Against Hate Website</a>	DfE and Home Office
Violence		Home Office advice
	<a href="#">Ending violence against women and girls 2016-2020 strategy</a>	Home Office strategy
	<a href="#">Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims</a>	Home Office guidance
	<a href="#">Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Serious violence strategy</a>	Home Office Strategy

### DSL and DDSL Role and Responsibilities

#### Role of the designated safeguarding lead

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure an appropriate **senior member** of staff, from the school or college **leadership team**, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

This person should have the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post. The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively.

#### Deputy designated safeguarding leads

It is a matter for individual schools and colleges as to whether they choose to have one or more deputy designated safeguarding leads. Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role should be explicit in their job description. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

#### Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to define what "available" means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such media is acceptable. It is a matter for individual schools and colleges and the designated safeguarding lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

#### Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. [NPCC - When to call the police](#) should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

#### Working with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff;
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners;
- liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;

- as required, liaise with the “case manager” (as per Part four) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member;
- liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), or the named person with oversight for SEN in a college and Senior Mental Health Leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically;
- liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health;
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances;
- work with the Headmistress and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children’s attendance, engagement and achievement at School.

This includes:

- o ensure that the school or college knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; and,
- o support teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children’s educational outcomes.

### **Information sharing and managing the child protection file**

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;

details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;

- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- They should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in Part one and Part two of this guidance.

Where children leave the school or college (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college 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. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN in colleges, are aware as required.

Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child’s safety, welfare and educational outcomes. In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

## **Raising Awareness**

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's or college's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff;
- ensure the school's or college's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this;
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school or college in this;
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements; and, help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school and college leadership staff.

## **Training, knowledge and skills**

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead should undertake Prevent awareness training. Training should provide designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements;
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes;
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers;
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners;
- understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or college;
- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and,



- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

### **Providing support to staff**

Training should support the designated safeguarding lead in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes; and
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.

### **Understanding the views of children**

It is important that children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

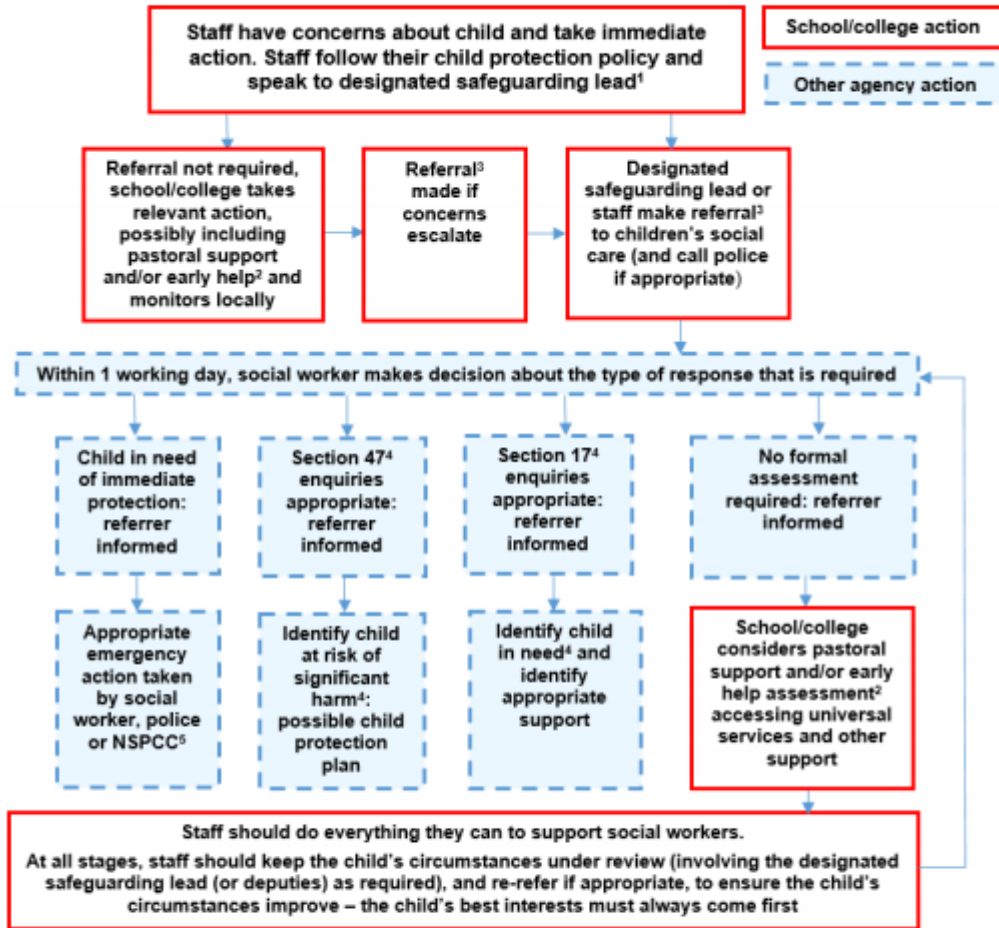
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them; and,
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

### **Holding and sharing information**

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of this document, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners;
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR); and,
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.
- Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.
- Records should include:
  - a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
  - details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
  - a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

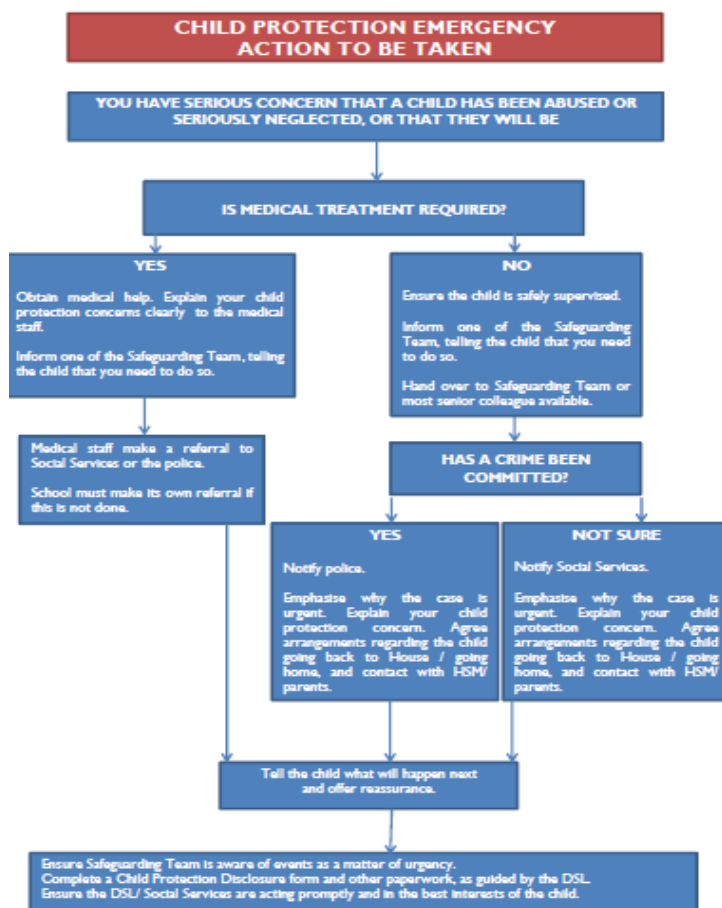
**Actions where there are concerns about a child**



<sup>1</sup> In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part Four of this guidance.  
<sup>2</sup> Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides detailed guidance on the early help process.  
<sup>3</sup> Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).  
<sup>4</sup> Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).  
<sup>5</sup> This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

## Appendix D – Heathfield School Child Protection and Safeguarding Training Leaflet

**IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL STAFF WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE READ THE SCHOOL'S CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND 'KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION' 2024 PART 1 AND ANNEX B. ANNEX A IS GIVEN TO OTHER STAFF**



### Contact Information

#### Designated Safeguarding and PREVENT Lead:

Lou Scott, Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding)  
[lscott@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:lscott@heathfieldschool.net) 01344 898319/ 07715 085300

#### Designated Deputy Safeguarding Leads:

Andy Valner, DDSL  
[avalner@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:avalner@heathfieldschool.net) 01344898349 / 07793804952

Florence Gray, DDSL  
[fgray@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:fgray@heathfieldschool.net) 07546 118771

Julia Hastings, DDSL  
[jhastings@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:jhastings@heathfieldschool.net)

DSL team:  
[DSL@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:DSL@heathfieldschool.net)

**Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub**  
[MASH@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)  
01344 352005, Out of Hours 01344 786543

#### **Allegations against a colleague and Whistle blowing**

If you have concerns or receive an allegation about a colleague, or if you are concerned about the School's safeguarding practices, you should report this straight to the Headmistress or if it is against the Headmistress then it should be reported to the Chair of Governors. They will report to the **LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) 01344 351572**. Alternatively, you may refer the matter directly to the LADO.

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## What to do if a child makes a safeguarding disclosure

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If the child does reveal that they are being harmed, or are at risk of significant harm you should:

- Listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not make a decision about whether or not they think the abuse has taken place.
- Allow the child to speak freely and do not ask leading questions (that is, a question which suggests a 'correct' answer).
- Remain calm and do not overreact. The child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Reassure the child but **NEVER** give a guarantee of confidentiality. Where possible, seek the child's consent about which individuals or agencies need to be informed. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the DSL, who will ensure that the correct action is taken.
- Keep a sufficient written record of the conversation and preserve any evidence (for example, scribbled notes, text messages, etc.). Best practice suggests you should not write any notes while the pupil is speaking. Write up notes immediately after the meeting. If an aide-memoire is required, only very brief phrases or notes should be jotted down – the priority is to listen, not to write down everything that is said, and the writing of notes may lead a pupil to clam up. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the 'who, what, when and where' of the allegation. The record should be signed by the person making it and use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the DSL /Deputy DSL at the first opportunity.

- Report details of the conversation to the DSL / Deputy DSL, preferably on MyConcern.
- Seek support if you feel distressed.
- Never start your own investigation.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only. Do not discuss with colleagues, friends or family.
- All staff have a 'duty to persist' in ensuring a safeguarding matter is dealt with appropriately. The member of staff making the initial referral should expect to be informed that action has been taken by the DSL. If no communication from the DSL is made within 48 hours of the referral, the member of staff should make further contact. If the member of staff still feels that the DSL has not responded to the concern appropriately, they must go directly to Children's Services.

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## Keeping Yourself Safe

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- Avoid being alone with pupils
- Always dress appropriately
- Avoid unprofessional contact with pupils e.g. becoming personal Facebook friends, giving out personal phone number.
- Avoid touching pupils, if possible
- If you do have to touch a child avoid the 'swimming costume' area (unless administering 1st aid) explain clearly what you are doing and why
- Be transparent – if you make a mistake tell someone
- It is not your duty to investigate; it is your duty to pass on any concerns. REMEMBER IT COULD HAPPEN HERE.
- Always pass on concerns to your designated safeguarding lead
- Keep records of what you have done

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## Key Points

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- All people under 18 years of age are considered to be children

## Signs and Indicators of Abuse

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**N.B. The following is not an exclusive list and many could have other acceptable explanations, but the threshold for reporting should always be low.**

### Physical

It is OK to ask a child of sufficient age and understanding how they may have sustained an injury but not to ask any form of leading question.

- Bruising to the face (other than forehead) especially cheeks, eyes, ears mouth.
- Bleeding from the mouth or ear
- Bruising around the neck
- Bruising in a pattern suggestive of finger or hand print, or of an implement mark such as stick or belt
- Bruising which may indicate bite mark, look at the size of the bite mark
- Multiple bruises of different ages (more than you would expect for that stage of development)
- Burns and scalds, especially cigarette burns or those with inadequate / inconsistent explanations
- Fractures, particularly in children under 2 years
- Loss of consciousness, apnoeic episodes when other medical explanations are eliminated
- Poisoning, including prescribed or illicit drugs, alcohol, household substances
- Fabrication or suggestion of symptoms, tampering with test results or inducing illness of a child

There may also be behavioural indicators of physical abuse

- Flinching away from contact
- Extremes of behaviour
- Being bullied or being a bully
- Self-harm

- Truancy
- Running away

### Neglect

Although a single incident might be seen as neglectful it is most likely to be considered abusive if it is occurring on a persistent basis and is causing the child harm either physically or psychologically.

- Faltering growth where medical investigation has excluded any medical reason
- Basic needs not being met
- Poor skin care, hair loss, poor hygiene or inadequate clothing
- Lack of appropriate supervision (leading to risk of 'accidental' injury)
- Developmental delay, impaired language skills, poor social skills, apathetic or dejected presentation
- Persistent failure to follow any medical advice
- Poor school attendance
- Failure to protect from harm

## **Emotional Abuse**

There is an element of emotional abuse in all forms of abuse of a child, but it may also occur alone. Symptoms are non-specific but may include:

- Impaired ability for play and enjoyment
- Lack of curiosity and natural exploratory behaviour
- Persistent head banging or rocking in a younger child
- Delayed language and social skills
- Low self-esteem and feeling of worthlessness
- Eating disturbances or poor growth
- A family history of domestic violence, mental illness of a carer or drug or alcohol misuse
- Behavioural difficulties including aggressive or disruptive behaviour, wetting or soiling, running away etc.
- Self-harm, overdose or attempted suicide
- Scapegoating
- Substance misuse

## **Sexual Abuse**

While there are many signs that have been associated with sexual abuse, many of these may also be found in association with other medical or emotional problems. A good rule to follow is that when there are worries about a child's behaviour that cannot be explained satisfactorily, sexual abuse should be borne in mind as a possible explanation. A child who alleges sexual abuse should be listened to carefully and that information always passed on to the relevant services.

Many children show no signs, particularly in the younger age group.

- Sexually abused children are frequently obedient to adults and anxious to please but with poor peer group relationships
- Physical signs may include genital/anal bleeding, lacerations or bruising
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Pregnancy

## **In younger children:**

- Over sexualised language or play
- Acting out and aggressive behaviour
- Over sexualised behaviour

## **In older children:**

- Withdrawn and/or overtly compliant behaviour
- Depression and suicidal behaviour
- Self-mutilation
- Running away
- School refusal and/or truancy
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders

## **At any age:**

- A sudden change in normal behaviour patterns
- Sexual awareness and knowledge well in advance of what would be expected at the child's level of development
- Children who are being sexually abused do not necessarily display any behavioural disturbance

## **Child Criminal Exploitation (County Lines)**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of 'county lines' criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs.

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

When children present with risk indicators that could be associated to criminal exploitation, school will complete a Criminal Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool and refer to Children's Social Care. School may also consult with the Children's Specialist Support Exploitation Team if required. The designated child protection lead will attend the 'Bracknell Forest Exploitation Risk Assessment Meeting' if requested to do so.

### **Child Absent from or Missing Education**

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in

future. It is important that staff are aware of School's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

The School has a duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of ten school days or more.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying and grooming. Usually marked out by an imbalance of power in the relationship. 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. Perpetrators of child sexual exploitation are found in all parts of the country and are not restricted to particular ethnic groups.

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol

- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.
- advocating violence towards others

Young people who go missing can be at increased risk of sexual exploitation and so procedures are in place to ensure appropriate response to children and young people who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions.

School will complete a Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool and refer to Children’s Social Care if there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation. School may also consult with the Childrens Specialist Support Exploitation Team if required.

The designated child protection lead will attend the ‘Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (“EMRAC”) Meeting’ if a child from the school is being discussed as a result of a completed risk assessment tool.

### **Contextual safeguarding**

The School recognises that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff, in particular the Designated Safeguarding Lead, are asked to consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur.

This is recognised as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Such an approach enables any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any concerns.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Refers to an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. It can encompass but is not limited to: psychological, physical, Sexual, financial and emotional. Where there is Domestic Abuse in a family, the children/young people will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, the greater the risk of significant and enduring harm, which they may carry with them into their adult life and relationships.

The Headmistress will be notified by the Local Authority Safeguarding and Inclusion Manager of Domestic Abuse incidents where the police have been called and that involve children and young people on their school roll. Notifications are also received from Thames Valley Police through Operation Encompass. The school will take appropriate action to ensure these children and young people are closely monitored and any concerns are referred appropriately.

Operation encompass operates in majority of police forces in England. It helps police/schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident where there are children in the household the police will inform the DSL in school before the child arrive at school the following day allowing support to be put in place.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.



- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – free of charge, in confidence  
- 08082000247

Advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available.

## **Fabricated and Induced illness**

Fabricated or Induced Illness is a condition whereby a child suffers harm through the deliberate action of her/his main carer and which is attributed by the adult to another cause.

There are four main ways of the carer fabricating or inducing illness in a child:

- Fabrication of signs and symptoms, including fabrication of past medical history;
- Fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts, records, letters and documents and specimens of bodily fluids;
- Exaggeration of symptoms/real problems. This may lead to unnecessary investigations, treatment and/or special equipment being provided;
- Induction of illness by a variety of means.

Harm to the child may be caused through unnecessary or invasive medical treatment, which may be harmful and possibly dangerous, based on symptoms that are falsely described or deliberately manufactured by the carer, and lack independent corroboration.

In cases of suspected Fabricated and Induced Illness Heathfield will work closely with other agencies to ensure information is shared appropriately and in a timely manner.

Where a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the school will make a referral to Children's Social Care.

The School will adhere to the Attendance and Missing Education Policy to ensure that absences are tracked and any illnesses cited as reasons for absence will be explored and medical evidence requested.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

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. A mandatory reporting duty requires teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s, which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the police.

Female genital mutilation includes procedures that intentionally alter or injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is a form of abuse that does occur in the UK.

FGM is carried out on children between the ages of 0–15. It is extremely harmful and has short and long-term effects on physical and psychological health. FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of the human rights of girls and women, and is illegal in most countries, including the UK.

The School takes these concerns seriously and staff are made aware of the possible signs and indicators that may alert them to the possibility of FGM. Any indication that FGM is a risk, is imminent, or has already taken place will be dealt with under the child protection procedures outlined in this policy. All staff are made aware of their mandatory duty to report concerns the School has about children thought to be at risk of FGM to the police. The School will also notify social care.

The DSL will make appropriate and timely referrals to the Police and Social Care if FGM is suspected or disclosed. In these cases, parents will not be informed before seeking advice. The case will still be referred to Social Care even if it is against the pupil's wishes.

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

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

Signs of potential FGM:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- unusual behavior after an absence from school
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- plea for help without explicit explanation due to embarrassment or fear

Prior to FGM taking place a girl may talk about being taken 'home' to visit family, a special occasion to 'become a woman' or an older female relative visiting the UK. If you suspect FGM, you must dial 999.

### **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.

School staff should never attempt to intervene directly as a School or through a third party. Contact should be made with the MASH and/or the Forced Marriage Unit 200 7008 0151.

### **Honour-based Violence**

Honour based violence (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. For example, honour based violence might be committed against people who:

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;
- want to get out of an arranged marriage; become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;
- want to get out of an arranged marriage;
- want to get out of a forced marriage
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture

It is considered a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse.

Women and girls are the most common victims of honour based violence however it can also affect men and boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include:

- domestic abuse
- threats of violence
- sexual or psychological abuse
- being held against your will or taken somewhere you don't want to go
- assault
- Forced Marriage

### **One Chance Rule**

All staff are aware of the 'One Chance' Rule' in relation to forced marriage, FGM and HBV. Staff recognise they may only have one chance' to speak to a child who is a potential victim and have just one chance to save a life.

The School are aware that if the victim is not offered support following disclosure that the 'One Chance' opportunity may be lost. Therefore, all staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they become aware of potential forced marriage, FGM and HBV cases.

### **Online Safety**

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Through an effective whole school approach to online safety, The School protects and educate pupils and staff in their use of technology and have established mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If any pupils or staff are identified at risk, this will be reported to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

**Further information is contained within the IT Acceptable Use Policy. This includes how online safety is considered whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead and any parental engagement.**

### **Child-on-child Abuse**

- It is particularly important to understand that 'abuse is abuse' and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".
- Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- physical abuse e.g. hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling;
  - gender/ homophobic based violence
  - sexual violence and sexual harassment
  - sexting
  - initiation type violence and rituals.
- A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation (both to protect them, and to ensure fair process) and the School's policy on anti-bullying and behavior policy.
  - Under the Boarding School Association's 'Commitment to Care' Charter, BSA will be notified of any allegation of child on child abuse, as soon as it is permissible to do so. The school's report to BSA will include an outline of the allegation and external agencies that have been involved. It will not include any information that might identify individuals involved.

### **Photography and Images**

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The vast majority of people who take or view photographs / videos of children do so for entirely innocent and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so the School must ensure that it has appropriate safeguards in place. To protect children, the School will:

- Seek their and their parents' consent for photographs to be taken or published (e.g. on our website or in newspapers or publications);
- Ensure children are appropriately dressed;
- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

- Members of staff must not take unauthorised photographs of pupils. Photographs should be the property of the School and not retained on personal equipment.

From time to time, professional photographers are invited into the School to take group photographs or pictures of significant events. Any professional photographers hired by the School will be subject to appropriate checks.

CCTV is located around the School but is not installed in classrooms, changing rooms or toilet areas. All surveillance within the School is overseen by a data controller registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.

Photographs, digital images or videos may be taken by parents and family members, either on the School site or when pupils are involved in organized activities off-site. Parents and family members are welcome to take photographs or videos of school events, which may include images of other pupils. To respect the privacy of others and in some cases for protection purposes, these images should not be made publicly available on social networking sites or on other public areas of the internet. Parents should not take photographs in the USSC.

If the behaviour of an adult capturing images seems unusual or the pupil appears to be worried by someone taking photographs of them, staff will act to challenge the adult and report the matter to the DSL as soon as possible, to allow the concern to be followed up. The police will be informed in cases of serious concern.

In accordance with the pupil AUP and Pupil code of conduct policy, no pupil will take an inappropriate video in their school uniform. Nor will they video or take photos of another student without their permission; further permission must be obtained to post that video or photo online.



## **Private Fostering**

Private fostering occurs when a parent (or someone with parental responsibility) makes an arrangement for their child or children to be cared for by someone else. The person looking after their child or children is known as the private foster carer.

A private fostering arrangement occurs when:

- a child (someone younger than 16 years or 18 years in the case of a child with disabilities) is planned to be cared for, or has already been cared for, by someone else for 28 consecutive days or more
- the person who will care for them is not a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, step-parent or an approved foster carer

School staff are aware to be vigilant for any potential private fostering arrangements. If a staff member becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement, they will refer this to the Designated Lead who will ensure children's social care are aware.

## **Radicalisation**

In the government guidance for England Keeping Children Safe in Education radicalisation is defined as 'the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism' (DfE, 2021). Extremism is defined by HM Government as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of the armed forces whether in this country or overseas.'

There is no single way of identifying individuals who might be susceptible to extremist views. Specific background factors (e.g. emotional problems) may contribute to vulnerability, as may the influence of such as family, friends. The Internet and social media, in particular, have become major factors in the radicalisation of young people. The risk of radicalisation may vary according to wider social and political factors.

Although the School assesses the risk to be low at present, Heathfield will implement prevention measures such as applying appropriate restrictions to internet sites likely to promote terrorist and extremist materials; undertaking appropriate checks on visiting speakers; discussing the dangers with pupils in suitable forums; use PSHEE lessons to raise awareness of radicalisation and highlight the ways in which to reduce risk and increase knowledge to challenge pre-conceptions. All staff undertake Prevent awareness staff training to ensure that staff are able to identify pupils at risk and know how to intervene. In addition, the Heathfield ethos and curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and to understand that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school, whether from internal sources – pupils, staff or governors, or external sources - school community, external agencies or individuals. The School strives to ensure our pupils see the school as a safe place where they can explore controversial issues safely and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this; the School has a duty to ensure this happens.

The School recognises that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for children and so should be addressed as a safeguarding concern as set out in this policy. The School

also recognises that if it fails to challenge extremist views, it is failing to protect our pupils.

Extremists of all persuasions aim to develop destructive relationships between different communities by promoting division, fear and mistrust of others based on ignorance or prejudice and thereby limiting the life chances children and of young people. Education is a powerful weapon against this; equipping children and young people with the knowledge, skills and critical thinking, to challenge and debate in an informed way.

The School provides a broad and balanced curriculum, delivered by skilled professionals, so that our pupils are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and also to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and not marginalised.

The School is aware that young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age which emanate from a variety of sources and media, including via the internet, and at times pupils may themselves reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by pupils or staff will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with in line with our Behaviour and Equality Policies for pupils and the Code of Conduct for staff.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities school staff will be alert to:

- Disclosures by pupils of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of school, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where pupils have not actively sought these out.

- Graffiti symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images
- Pupils accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance
- Partner schools, local authority services, and police reports of issues affecting pupils in other schools or settings
- Pupils voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with our equalities policy, views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Anti-Western or Anti-British views

The School fully understands its duties under the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act (2019) and the 'Prevent Duty'. Heathfield will closely follow local agreed procedure as set out by the Local Authority and agreed processes and criteria for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation. In the event of concerns about a person becoming radicalised, consideration will be given to using the LA Channel process. Channel is a bespoke panel which meets to address issues of individuals who have been identified as being at risk of radicalisation but have not committed any terrorism offence. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.



The normal safeguarding referral procedures set out in this policy apply where there are concerns about children who may have been drawn into terrorism. If a member of staff has serious concerns that a pupil is being radicalised and/or drawn into extremism they should immediately report their concerns to the DSL. They may also report their concerns directly to the police.

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, artwork or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

### **Serious violence**

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

- increased absence from school,
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups,
- a significant decline in performance,
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

### **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Pupils**

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. The school has due regard for the DfE document: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (September 2021). The School is clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.

When referring to sexual harassment the School means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When the School references sexual harassment, it does so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment

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.

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. The safeguarding team will consider referral to the police or other agencies, where appropriate. In responding to the disclosure, the school will take the wishes of the pupil who made the disclosure into account and abide by the best practice outlined.

Through the PSHEE curriculum, the school delivers a programme of Sessions to challenge this issue. These include:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- what respectful behaviour looks like;
- consent;
- gender roles, stereotyping, equality;
- body confidence and self-esteem;
- prejudiced behaviour;

Where the School becomes aware of any instances of Sexual violence and sexual harassment this will be dealt with in line with the Child-on-child Abuse Policy and parents will be notified. Social Care will be contacted in line with child protection procedures.

## **Substance Abuse**

The discovery that a young person is misusing legal or illegal substances or reported evidence of their substance misuse is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings but the school will consider such action in the following situations:

When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- to believe the young person's substance misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual harm or exploitation
- to believe the pupil's substance related behaviour is a result of abuse or because of pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults
- where the misuse is suspected of being linked to parent/carer substance misuse.

## **Children of Substance Misusing Parents/Carers**

Misuse of drugs and/or alcohol is strongly associated with significant harm to children, especially when combined with other features such as domestic violence.

When the school receives information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers they will follow appropriate procedures.

This is particularly important if the following factors are present:

- Use of the family resources to finance the parent's dependency, characterised by inadequate food, heat and clothing for the children

- Children exposed to unsuitable caregivers or visitors, e.g. customers or dealers
- The effects of alcohol leading to an inappropriate display of sexual and/or aggressive behaviour
- Chaotic drug and alcohol use leading to emotional unavailability, irrational behaviour and reduced parental vigilance
- Disturbed moods as a result of withdrawal symptoms or dependency
- Unsafe storage of drugs and/or alcohol or injecting equipment
- Drugs and/or alcohol having an adverse impact on the growth and development of the unborn child.

### **Upskirting**

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'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.

### **Sexting/ Sharing of Nude & Semi-Nude images**

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'Sexting' is an increasingly common activity among children and young people, where they share inappropriate or explicit images online or through mobile phones. It can also refer to written message. 'Sexting' is the exchange of self-generated sexually explicit images, through mobile picture messages or webcams over the internet. 'Sexting' is often seen as 'flirting' by children and young people who feel that it's a part of normal life. 'Sexting' can leave young people vulnerable to blackmail, bullying, unwanted attention and emotional distress.

Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal. 'Sexting' is illegal. By sending an explicit image, a young person is

producing and distributing child abuse images and risks being prosecuted, even if the picture is taken and shared with their permission.

Heathfield has due regard for the Government Guidance 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (December 2020). The school will ensure that the risks associated with this issue are discussed with children on a regular basis as part of the curriculum around e-safety.

Where the school becomes aware of 'Sexting' that has occurred and involves a child or children from the school, parents will be notified and Social Care contacted where appropriate.

Our steps of responding to any issues of Sharing nudes can be found in our Self-Produced Sexual Imagery Policy.

### **Responding to 'Sexting' Incidents**

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In responding to incidents of sexting, the school will act in accordance with advice endorsed by the Department for Education and published as Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UKCCIS, 2016) and Government Guidance 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (December 2020). Following the advice that the MASH recommend. Key points to note are:

- All incidents of Sexting will be dealt with as safeguarding concerns and must be reported to the safeguarding team without delay, even if the imagery seems to have been produced consensually.
- If staff become concerned about a sexting issue in relation to a device in the possession of a student (e.g. mobile phone, tablet, digital camera), the member of staff should confiscate the device and pass it immediately to the DSL. Staff must not ask to see, look at, print or forward any indecent images.

- After receiving a report of a sexting incident, the DSL will consider next steps. Before making a decision to view imagery, the DSL must be satisfied that this:
- is the only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies (i.e. it is not possible to establish the facts from the young people involved);
- is necessary to report the image to a website, app or suitable reporting agency to have it taken down, or to support the young person or parent in making a report;
- is unavoidable because a young person has presented an image directly to a staff member or the imagery has been found on a school device or network.

In such cases, the DSL will gain authority from the Headmistress and Children's Social Services and will ensure viewing takes place with another senior member of staff present in the room (who does not need to view the images). Wherever possible, images will be viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the young person in the imagery. Viewing will be recorded in the pupil's safeguarding file, including details of who was present, why the image was viewed and any subsequent actions.

Young people who share sexual imagery of themselves or their peers are breaking the law. However, it is important to avoid criminalising young people unnecessarily. The school will therefore work in partnership with external agencies with a view to responding proportionately to the circumstances of any incident.

The DSL will discuss the concerns with appropriate staff and speak to young people involved as appropriate. Parents/guardians will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.

If, at any point in the process, there is concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Social Services and / or the police. The Police will always be informed when there is

reason to believe that images involve sexual acts and any child in the imagery is under 13 years of age; if there is suspicion of adult involvement; or criminal / abusive behaviour such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats, or sending / showing of images without the knowledge / against the will of a young person who is pictured.

If the School has decided that other agencies do not need to be involved, then consideration will be given to deleting imagery from devices and online services to limit any further sharing of the imagery.

**IF YOU COME ACROSS AN INCIDENT WHICH INVOLVES SHARING OF NUDES, REFER IT TO THE DSL IMMEDIATELY. **Nb. YOU SHOULD NOT VIEW OR FORWARD ILLEGAL IMAGES OF CHILDREN.****

## APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Link to a website, if relevant</b>
CAMHS/ CYPMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service / Child and Young Person Mental Health Services	
CEOP	Child Exploitation and On-Line Protection Command	<a href="https://ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/">https://ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/</a>
CIC	Children in Care	
CLA	Children Looked After	
CME	Children Missing from Education	
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	
DA (DV)	Domestic Abuse (Domestic Violence)	
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead	
DDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	
FII	Fabricated or Induced Illness	
HBV	Honour Based Violence / abuse	
KCSiE	Keeping Children Safe in Education	<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792ffff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792ffff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf</a>
LAC	Looked After Child	
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer	
LOCAL SAFEGUA RDING PARTNERS HIP	Local Safeguarding Children's Board	Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LOCAL SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIPS) were established by the Children Act 2004 which gives a statutory responsibility to each locality to have this mechanism in place. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIPS will be replaced by Multi-agency Partnerships (MAPs) (also referred to in statutory guidance as 'the three partners') by 2019
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	<a href="https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/keeping-adults-and-children-safe/protecting-children/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-mash">https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/keeping-adults-and-children-safe/protecting-children/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-mash</a>
NFA	No Further Action	
PREVENT	Stage within the government's Counter terrorism strategy	
SCR	Serious Case Review	A serious case review (SCR) takes place after a child dies or is seriously injured and abuse or neglect is thought to be involved. It looks at lessons than can help prevent similar incidents from happening in the future.

<b><i>Acronym</i></b>	<b><i>Meaning</i></b>	<b><i>Link to a website, if relevant</i></b>
WTTSC	Working Together to Safeguard Children	<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf</a>

## Appendix F

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### Useful Contacts and links to further guidance

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Bracknell Forest Council Education Safeguarding Manager	Tel: 01344 354014
Bracknell Forest Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub	Tel: 01344 352005
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Emma Langdon	Tel: 01344 351572
Emergency Duty Team (Out of hours)	Tel: 01344 786543
Prevent/Channel Referrals: Community Safety Team	Tel: 01344 352999

Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) –

[KCSIE 2023](#)

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (Advice for Practitioners, March 2015) - [Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

**UKCCIS Guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people**

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

UKCCIS Education for a Connected World (2020)

[Education for a Connected World \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Home Office Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance (Sep 2018)

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

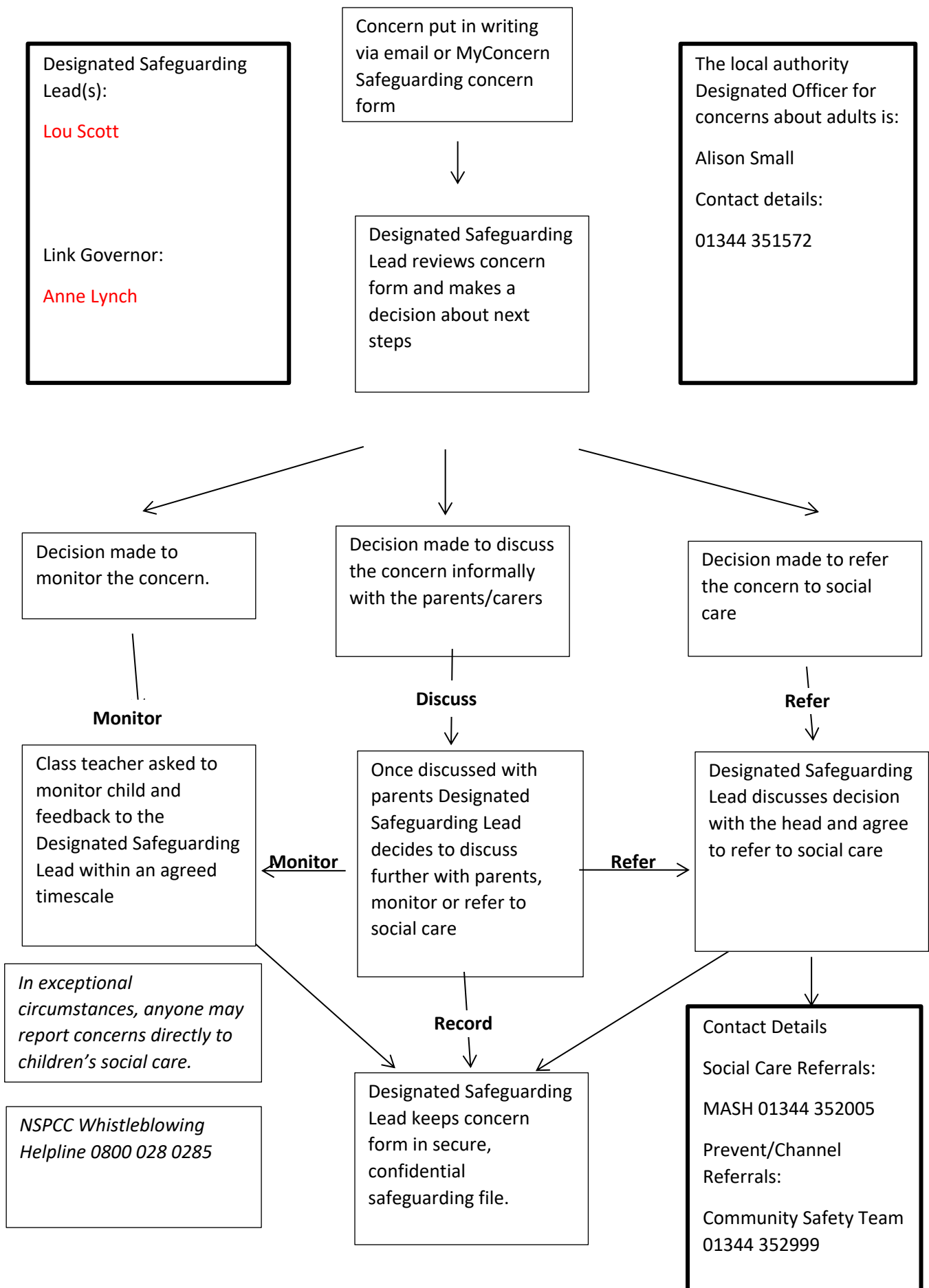
Multi Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (July 2020) –

[HM Government - Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Berkshire Child Protection Procedures – <http://berks.proceduresonline.com/>

Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board – [Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board](#)

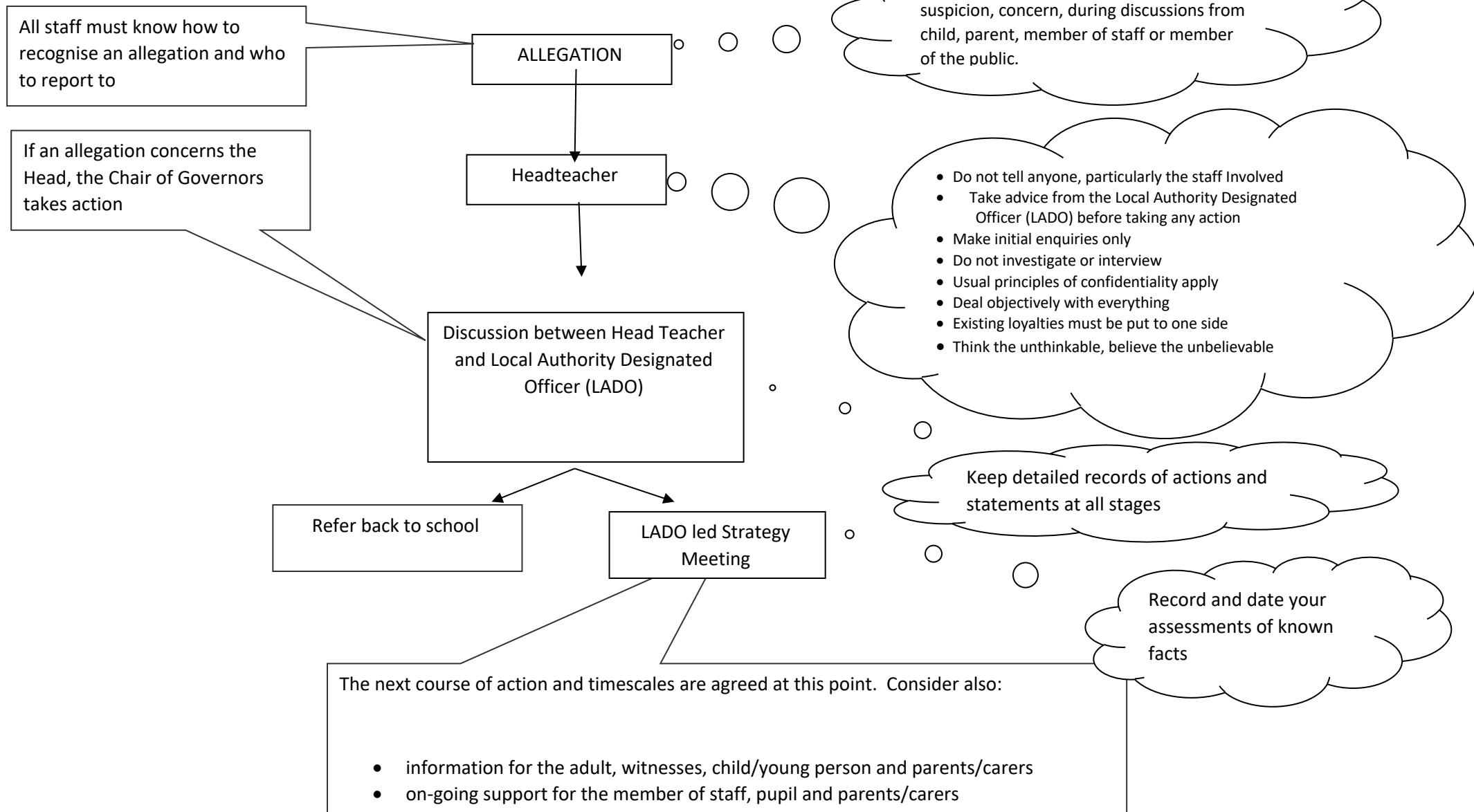
FLOW CHART FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD





## Appendix H

### Managing an Allegation Against a Member of Staff in your Establishment



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