



OAKFIELD ACADEMY

BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

This is a STATUTORY document
Recommended for review by Safeguarding Link Trustee every year

Written/

Reviewed by: Designated Safeguarding Lead/SLT

Approved by: Safeguarding Link Trustee

Ratified in: March 2023

By: Board of Trustees

Next review due: March 2024 (Extended to 31/08/2024)

Name of Head Teacher: Emma Wilkes

Name of Designated Lead: Emma Thomas

Names of Deputy Designated Leads: Lesley Peat and Pip Nightingale

Safeguarding Link Trustee: Melody Hunter

Chair of Trustees: Kate Hellard

Direct and immediate child protection concerns should be made to the Police by dialling 999 and/or through the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) - Somerset Direct on: 0300 123 2224. Advice and support can be found through the NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/>

Introduction

Our policy applies to all staff, trustees and volunteers working at the academy and takes into account the current statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE) and local guidance issued by Somerset Local Safeguarding Children Board. These duties are set out in the Education Act 2002 Sec 175/157, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 <mailto:https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023; Advice on Academy Security: Access to, and barring of individuals from, academy premises (DfE); Dealing with Allegations of Abuse policy and the Prevent Strategy.

We will ensure that parents and visitors are made aware of our Safeguarding & Child Protection policy through its publication on our website.

The actions we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm are everyone's responsibility. All staff, trustees and volunteers involved with children have a responsibility to be mindful of issues related to their safety and welfare and a duty to report any concerns.

Definitions – see Appendix A for definitions of types and signs of abuse

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in KCSIE (2023) as:

- a) protecting children from maltreatment;
- b) preventing impairment of children's health or development
- c) ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- d) taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

DSL means the Academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead. References to the DSL include the Deputy DSL (**DDSL**) where the DSL is unavailable – see **Appendix B** Responsibilities of the DSL.

There are five main elements to our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy:

1. Providing a safe environment and culture in which children can learn and develop and staff/trustees/volunteers feel able to report concerns.
2. Ensure we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, trustees and volunteers to work with children, that all staff adhere to the academy's Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance Procedures and that all staff/trustees/volunteers are aware of the 'Whistleblowing' process to follow should they have concerns about the behaviour of a colleague.
3. Raise awareness of safeguarding children, child protection processes and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
4. Follow the correct procedures for identifying and reporting cases of suspected abuse and work in partnership with other agencies.
5. Support children who have been harmed or abused or at risk of being harmed or abused.

Academy Commitment

Never do Nothing!!

Make a referral following a disclosure or concern directly to Emma Thomas - Designated Lead or Lesley Peat / Pip Nightingale - Deputy Designated Leads

All staff need to complete their annual safeguarding training and be alert to the signs of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect), self harm, pregnancy, potential 'forced' marriage, female genital mutilation, upskirting, breast ironing and those at risk from extremism/radicalisation, child on child abuse, those displaying harmful sexual behaviour, contextual safeguarding.

All staff are responsible for staying aware of academy policy and procedure and government guidance

Roles and Responsibilities

Our staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse because of the day to day contact with children. Oakfield Academy will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children (and staff) feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that children (and their parents) know that there are adults at the academy who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty

- Establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies
- Staff members should maintain an attitude of “**it could happen here**” where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.
- Include in the curriculum, opportunities for PSHE/Citizenship, which equip children with the skills they need to develop healthy relationships, support their peers and stay safe from abuse such as: E-safety; Sexual exploitation; Missing education; Domestic abuse; Bullying and abuse
- Recognise how pressure from others can affect their behaviour including awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremist behaviour
- Recognise that children may be harmed by others and child protection procedures will apply
- Take all reasonable measures to minimise the risk of harm to children
- Address quickly and effectively, concerns about the welfare of a child, working in partnership with other agencies and families
- Ensure robust child protection arrangements are in place and part of the daily life of the academy
- Promote child health and safety both in and outside academy
- Promote safe working practice for staff and volunteers and challenge unsafe practice whenever it arises
- Ensure that the procedures are in place to deal with allegations of abuse against all staff including volunteers and that all staff are aware of these (see DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023 and Somerset SSCP local inter-agency procedures)
- Meet the medical and health needs of children with medical conditions where applicable
- Take all reasonable measures to ensure academy site security and monitor who accesses the site
- Address drugs and substance misuse issues and other relevant local issues that may arise
- Reinforce that everyone has a duty to safeguard children inside and outside the academy environment including academy trips, extended academy, activities and vocational placements.
- Ensure we have a designated safeguarding lead and deputy lead for child protection who has received and maintained appropriate training and support for this role; training should include the ‘Prevent’ training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour
- The Chair of Trustees has overall responsibility for all matters which are subject to this policy
- The Chair of Trustees has nominated a designated trustee responsible for safeguarding and child protection
- Ensure each member of staff, (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the board of trustees knows the name of the current Designated Safeguarding Lead and their role
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead
- Exercise our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 by ensuring that all staff are appropriately trained to identify vulnerable children and refer them appropriately
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the academy and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations, contained in this policy and on our website
- Notify Children’s Social Care if a child in receipt of a child protection plan, is absent from academy for more than 2 days when this absence is unexplained
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at child protection conferences, and strategy meetings as required
- Respond appropriately when children are missing education
- Apply the Somerset Safeguarding Children’s Partnership multi- agency Escalation Policy if there is any concern about the actions or inactions of social care staff or staff from other agencies
- Maintain secure child protection records separate from the main child file and in locked locations
- Ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed which includes having a trained person on every recruitment panel
- Apply confidentiality appropriately and in line with HM Gov. [Information Sharing Guidance 2015](#)

Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside school and/or occur between children outside the academy. All staff, including the DSL, should consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur, for example where wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life that may be a threat to their safety or welfare.

Supporting children

We recognise that children who are abused, or who witness violence or domestic abuse, may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They can feel helpless, humiliated and feel a sense of blame. The academy may be

the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives. When at the academy their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The academy will endeavour to support the child through:

- The content of the curriculum
- An academy ethos which provides a positive, supportive and secure environment which gives children a sense of being valued
- Application of the academy Behaviour Policy which will ensure that the child knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they remain valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred
- Effective liaison with other services that support the child such as Children's Social Care and Somerset Education Support Services
- Ensuring that when a child who is subject to a child protection plan or where there are other safeguarding concerns, transfers to a new school, their child protection file is transferred to the new school immediately and securely (see record keeping) and inform child's social worker.

Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. The academy understands that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. The academy's safeguarding training will include guidance about the early help process and prepare all staff to identify children who may benefit from early help. Staff will be mindful of specific safeguarding issues and those children who may face additional safeguarding challenges. Staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who has special educational needs or disabilities; is a young carer; shows signs of anti-social or criminal behaviour; has poor attendance; is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation; is at risk of radicalisation or being exploited; is misusing drugs or alcohol; is looked after or is privately fostered.

If concerns are raised about a child – see Appendix C for further guidance for staff.

If low level or high level concerns are raised about a child's welfare, action should be taken immediately.

The member of staff must report the concern to the DSL or the DDSs in the DSL's absence using My Concern or in writing, if needed staff should speak to the DSL, in their absence, the head teacher or a member of the senior leadership team.

The DSL or DDSs will work in partnership with pastoral support processes and seek advice from Somerset Direct if necessary to deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse.

The views of the child will be taken into account when considering the appropriate course of action but will not be determinative. Staff are alert to the needs of children with physical or mental health conditions, special educational needs or disabilities, where additional barriers can exist when detecting abuse or neglect.

If it is decided that a referral is not required, the DSL will keep the matter under review and give ongoing consideration to a referral if the child's situation does not improve.

If it is decided that a referral is required, the DSL will work with Somerset Direct to complete the appropriate paperwork, which will include an Early Help Assessment (EHA).

Allegations against children – child on child abuse

Allegations against a child should be reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy. If harmful sexual behaviour is alleged to have occurred, the DSL will have regard to KCSIE and take into account the local response of the police and Somerset Direct to these issues. The views of the alleged victim will be taken into account but will not be determinative. The academy will carry out risk assessments and take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare and continued education of all children involved. If child on child abuse is identified records of the incident will be kept on file and sanctions will be allocated in line with the seriousness of the incident, see the Behaviour Policy for a full list of sanctions.

Allegations against staff – see academy policy for Allegations Against Staff

The procedures in this policy apply to all staff and aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff from malicious, false, unsubstantiated or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow part 4 of KCSIE.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181955/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf

Clear guidance for staff conduct and expectations are outlined in our Staff Handbook.

Supporting Staff/Safe Practice

- Safer Recruitment processes will be followed at all times in accordance with DfE
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Effective checks and references are an essential element of safer recruitment

- In the event of any complaint or allegation against a staff member or volunteer, the head teacher should be notified immediately. If it relates to the head teacher, the chair of trustees should be informed without delay.
- Staff may find issues relating to child protection upsetting and may need support which should be either provided directly by the academy or sourced elsewhere by them.
- Staff are entitled to feel safe and secure. Any actions that leave staff feeling threatened should be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Emma Thomas - Designated Lead or Lesley Peat or Pip Nightingale - Deputy Designated Leads. The academy will adopt DfE advice and guidance when taking any actions to safeguard children and staff.

Use of mobile technology

Our responsible internet use guidance on the use of mobile technology including mobile phones, smart watches and cameras is as follows:

- KS2 children are permitted to bring mobile devices into school and hand them in to the academy office.
- KS3 children are permitted to bring mobile devices into school and keep them turned off or on silent in their school bags.

The use of mobile devices is strictly banned during school time. Any mobile devices found to be used during the academy day will be confiscated and parents will be requested to collect any confiscated items. Year 8 pupils are permitted to use their mobile phones at lunchtime under supervision in the common room.

Record Keeping

All concerns and the decisions made with the reasons for the decisions should be recorded in writing either within a paper file, which is stored securely, or on My Concern as an electronic record.

The records created in accordance with this policy may contain personal data. Oakfield Academy has a number of privacy notices which explain how the academy will use personal data for the benefit of the children and parents. In addition, staff must ensure they follow the Academy's Data Protection Policy when handling personal data created in connection with this policy.

Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and the Staff Handbook regarding the safety and welfare of children. Together these make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this academy:

Staff Handbook:

- Anti-bullying
- Absence
- Attendance
- Induction
- Internet Access Policy
- Recruitment and Selection
- Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing

Policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Central record of recruitment and vetting checks
- Complaints
- Data protection
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
- Equalities
- Exclusion
- Freedom of Information
- Health and Safety
- Behaviour policy
- Sex and Relationships Education policy
- SEND policy
- Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance
- Supporting Childs with Medical Conditions

Policies, procedures and guidance are available on Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership website.

Appendix A

Indicators of abuse

Types of abuse

Part 1 of KCSIE (2023) defines the following indicators of abuse and neglect, however, staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label and 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. 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. They 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.

Signs of abuse

- Children may display certain behaviours that can be indicators of abuse
- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;

- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

The DfE document [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(March 2015\)](#) provides advice in identifying specific forms of child abuse and lists further possible signs of these types of abuse.

The [NSPCC website](#) is also a good source of information and advice.

Specific safeguarding issues

Statutory guidance acknowledges the following as specific safeguarding issues:

- children and the court system;
- children missing from education;
- children with family members in prison;
- child sexual exploitation;
- child criminal exploitation: County lines;
- domestic abuse;
- homelessness;
- so-called 'honour-based' violence;
- preventing radicalisation;
- child on child abuse;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges;
- County lines and cuckooing;
- Upskirting.

Further advice and links to guidance on these specific safeguarding issues can be found in Annex A of KCSIE (2023).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181955/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf

Staff should be particularly aware of the safeguarding issues set out below.

Children missing education

Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Academy attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. Action should be taken in accordance with this policy if any absence of a pupil from the academy gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Where reasonably possible the academy will hold more than one emergency contact for each child.

The academy shall inform the local authority of any child who is going to be added to or deleted from the academy's admission register at non-standard transition points in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

This will assist the local authority to:

- fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing from education; and follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.
- the academy shall inform the local authority of any child who:
 - fails to attend school regularly; or

- has been absent without the academy's permission for a continuous period of ten school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the academy and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants; and/or
- b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Honour-based violence

All forms of so called honour-based violence are abuse (regardless of motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves additional risk factors such as a wider network of family or community pressure and the possibility of multiple perpetrators which should be taken into account when deciding which safeguarding action to take. Staff should speak to the DSL if they have any doubts.

If appropriate, the DSL will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences.

There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM. Guidance on the warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 38-41 of the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation> (pages 59-61 focus on the role of schools).

All staff must be aware of the requirement for teachers to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. The report should be made orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining children. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

If the staff member is unsure whether this reporting duty applies, they must refer the matter to the DSL in accordance with this policy. See the Home Office guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information> for further details about the duty.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form or coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning difficulties, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

Guidance on the warning signs that forced marriage may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 13-14 of the [Multi-agency guidelines: handling case of forced marriage \(HM Government, June 2020\)](#).

Staff should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns. Pages 32-36 of the [Multi-agency guidelines: handling case of forced marriage](#) focus on the role of schools in detecting and reporting forced marriage and the Forced Marriage Unit can be contacted on 020 7008 0151 or fm@fco.gov.uk for advice and information.

Radicalisation and the Prevent duty

The academy has a legal duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The academy aims to build children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. Being drawn into terrorism includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. The academy is committed to providing a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand and discuss sensitive topics; including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

The academy has adopted the government's definitions for the purposes of compliance with the Prevent duty:

Extremism: *"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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas."*

Radicalisation: *"the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups."*

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).

It is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the DSL making a referral to the Channel programme, having consulted [Channel duty guidance: protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism \(HM Government, April 2015\)](#).

The DfE and Home Office's briefing note [The use of social media for online radicalisation \(July 2015\)](#) includes information on how social media is used to radicalise young people and guidance on protecting children at risk.

Child on child abuse

The conduct of children towards each other will, in most instances, be covered by the academy's Behaviour Policy. However, some behaviour by a child towards another may be of such a nature that safeguarding concerns are raised. Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-on-peer abuse. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a) bullying (including cyber-bullying);
- b) physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- c) harmful sexual behaviour;
- d) sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- e) initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Harmful sexual behaviour is an umbrella term that includes sexual violence and sexual harassment. The academy recognises that problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours are inappropriate and may cause developmental change. Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and the academy recognises the gendered nature such behaviour can take. Harmful sexual behaviour, like all peer-on-peer abuse, is never acceptable and will be taken seriously.

The academy takes steps to minimise the risk of all types of child-on-child abuse. The academy has robust anti-bullying procedures in place (see the academy's Anti-Bullying Policy) and children are taught at all stages of the academy about acceptable behaviour and how to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are carried out and kept under review. Appropriate action is taken to protect children identified as being at risk including the particular vulnerabilities of those with a special educational need or disability. Abusive behaviour by children must be taken seriously. Behaviour should not be dismissed as being normal between young people, as "banter" or simply "part of growing up". Behaviour such as initiation violence or any form of sexual violence or sexual harassment is not acceptable.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age or sex. They can 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 are likely to 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 physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. The academy will respond to allegations seriously and all victims will be offered appropriate support.

The academy is aware of the importance of:

- a) making it clear to children that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- b) not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- c) challenging behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

References to **sexual violence** are references to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, specifically rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

References to **sexual harassment** mean “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature” that can occur online and offline. In the context of child on child sexual harassment, it 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.

The DfE guidance [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) provides further detailed advice.

Sexting

“Sexting” means the taking and sending or posting of images or videos of a sexual or indecent nature, usually through mobile picture messages or webcams over the internet.

The academy treats all incidences of sexting as safeguarding matters to be actioned in accordance with this policy. Members of staff should not view sexual imagery which is reported to them, or copy, print or share the images under any circumstances. In referring any incident of sexting, members of staff should describe the content of the images as reported to them.

The DSL may in exceptional circumstances view images with the prior approval of the Head and only where:

- a) it is the only way to make a decision whether to involve other agencies, as there is insufficient information available to its contents;
- b) it is necessary to report the image to a website or agency to have it taken down; or
- c) a child has reported the image directly to a member of staff in circumstances where viewing the image is unavoidable.

Where viewing an image is unavoidable:

- a) viewing should take place on academy premises wherever possible;
- b) the image should be viewed by a person of the same sex as the person alleged to be shown in the image (where this is known);
- c) a senior member of staff should be present to monitor and support the person viewing the image. This member of staff should not view the image;
- d) full details of the viewing must be recorded in the academy’s safeguarding records, including who was present, the date and time, the nature of the image and the reasons for viewing it;
- e) any member of staff who views an indecent image should be given appropriate support.

If any devices need to be confiscated (whether in order to view the image(s) or to pass evidence to the appropriate authority), they should be turned off and locked away securely until they are required.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the academy rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, or that it contains a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, the device will be given to the police.

If external agencies do not need to be involved, the academy must consider the deletion of any images. Children should be asked to delete images themselves and to confirm that this is done. Members of staff should not search devices to delete images.

If images have been shared online and cannot now be deleted by the person who shared them, the academy should consider reporting the images to the relevant web host or service provider (if an option is provided), or contacting the Internet Watch Foundation or ChildLine (if the website does not provide this option).

Where a child receives unwanted images, the academy should advise the child and their parents of options that may be available to block the sender or to change the child's mobile phone number or email address.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety's advice note [Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people \(December 2020\)](#) contains details of support agencies and provides further information for schools on how to respond to incidents of sexting.

The College of Policing has also produced a briefing note [Police action in response to youth produced sexual imagery \("sexting"\) \(November 2016\)](#) which provides information on how police forces treat instances of sexting by young persons.

Upskirting

Upskirting 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.

Special educational needs and disabilities

The academy welcomes children with special educational needs and disabilities and will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the academy's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone. See the academy's policy on SEND.

Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of children with a special educational need or disability creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The academy is mindful in particular that:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's special educational need or disability without further exploration;
- children with a special education need or disability can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required.

Looked after children and previously looked after children

The Head teacher is responsible to ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe and the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status, for example:

- whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order;
- contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility;
- information about a child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.

The DSL maintains these details, including contact details of the child's social worker.

Care leavers

The DSL maintains details of the local authority personal advisor appointed to guide and support care leavers and liaises with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern.

Appendix B

Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The name and contact details of the DSL and Deputy DSLs are set out in the contacts list at the front of this policy.

In accordance with Annex B of KCSIE, the main responsibilities of the DSL are:

Managing Referrals

The DSL is expected to:

- a) refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- b) support staff who make referrals to the local authority children's social care;
- c) refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- d) support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- e) refer cases where a person is dismissed or has left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as required; and
- f) refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the police as required.

Work with others

The DSL is expected to:

- a) act as a point of contact with all safeguarding partners;
- b) liaise with the Head to inform them of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- c) as required, liaise with the Case Manager and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member;
- d) liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians and SENCOs/named person with oversight for SEN) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- e) act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.

Raise awareness

The DSL should:

- a) ensure the academy's child protection and safeguarding policies and processes are known, understood and used appropriately;
- b) ensure this policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the Head teacher and Board of Trustees regarding this;
- c) ensure this policy is available publicly and parents are aware that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the academy in this;
- d) link with Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.

Child protection file

Where children leave the academy the DSL shall ensure their child protection file is transferred to any new school or college as soon as possible. This will be transferred separately from the main child file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

In addition, the DSL will consider if it is appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving.

On receiving a child protection file, the DSL will ensure that key staff are aware as required, including the SENDCo.

Prevent

In accordance with the *Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales and Channel duty guidance: protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism* (HM Government, July 2015) the DSL has, in addition, the following responsibilities:

- a) acting as the first point of contact for parents, children, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters relating to the Prevent duty;
- b) co-ordinating Prevent duty procedures in the academy;

- c) liaising with local Prevent co-ordinators, the police and local authorities and through existing multi-agency forums, including referrals to the Channel Police Practitioner and/or the police where indicated;
- d) undergoing appropriate training;
- e) maintaining ongoing training programme for all academy employees including induction training for all new employees and keeping records of staff training; and
- f) monitoring the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to the Prevent duty.

Training

The DSL and the Deputy DSLs have undertaken training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training includes Prevent duty awareness training and will be updated at least every two years. In addition, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- a) 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;
- b) 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;
- c) ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the academy's safeguarding and child protection policy, especially new and part-time staff;
- d) are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special education needs and young carers;
- e) understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation;
- f) understand the importance of information sharing, both within the academy, and with all safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners;
- g) are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- h) understand and support the academy with regard 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;
- i) 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;
- j) 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;
- k) obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses;
- l) encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the academy may put in place to protect them.

Appendix C

Concerns about a child – guidance for staff

Receiving a disclosure

Listen carefully and keep an open mind. Do not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.

Do not ask leading questions, i.e. a question which suggests its own answer.

Reassure the child but do not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. Explain the need to pass on the information in accordance with this policy so that the correct action can be taken.

Keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. All other evidence, for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers, must be kept securely with the written record.

Pass on the record when reporting the concern in accordance with this policy.

Recording a concern

Staff must record all concerns in writing. This can be electronic and logged on My Concern.

Records should be factual and signed and dated, with the name of the signatory clearly printed in writing. Records should include:

- the child's details: name; date of birth; address and family details;
- date and time of the event/concern/conversation;
- the action taken and by whom;
- the name and position of the person making the record.

Receiving a report of harmful sexual behaviour

Additional guidance about how to manage a report of harmful sexual behaviour is provided in Part 5 KCSIE. This includes the following advice:

- Only record the facts as the child presents them.
- Where the report includes an online element, do not view or forward illegal images of a child. See paragraph of Appendix A above and the UK Council for Child Internet Safety's advice note [Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people \(August 2016\)](#) for advice about what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.
- Manage reports with another member of staff present (preferably the DSL or DDSL), if possible.
- Inform the DSL as soon as practically possible if the DSL is not involved in the initial report.

Use of reasonable force

There are circumstances when it would be appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children.

'Reasonable' in these circumstances means using no more force than is needed. Records of incidents are kept in the academy Restraint Register with the Deputy Head.

Staff should refer to the Behaviour Policy for guidance about the use of reasonable force.