Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

October 2026

Review Date: October 2027

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1 Our strong safeguarding culture

1.1 Why it is important

1.1.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and it is the duty of the trust and our academies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. This is our core safeguarding principle.

1.1.2 In adhering to this principle, we focus on providing a safe and welcoming environment for all of our children regardless of age, ability, disability, culture, race, language, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity. All of our children have equal rights to support and protection.

1.1.3 One of the cornerstones of our safeguarding culture is this policy and the procedures contained within it. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors, all of whom are trained upon its contents and on their safeguarding duties. We update this policy at least annually to reflect changes to law and guidance and best practice.

1.2 What it means for our pupils

1.2.1 We work with our local safeguarding partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional support to the child. It also includes contributing to broader, multi-agency strategic discussions about safeguarding children.

1.2.2 All of our staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. Any pupils or staff involved in child protection or safeguarding issue will receive appropriate support.

1.2.3 Our strong safeguarding culture ensures that we treat all pupils with respect and involve them in decisions that affect them. We encourage positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils and we set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.

1.2.4 Identifying safeguarding and child protection concerns often begin with recognising changes in pupils' attendance and/or behaviour and knowing that these changes may be signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.

1.2.5 All of our staff will reassure children that their concerns and disclosures will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

1.2.6 All of our staff have a responsibility to promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture.

1.2.7 Our staff recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination and the effect these experiences may have on them.

2 Safeguarding legislation and guidance

2.1 The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2026)
- Information Sharing Duty (2026)

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
- Prevent Duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales (2023)
- The Teacher Standards 2012
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002
- Section 16LA of the Children Act 2004
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- PACE Code C 2019
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

3 Roles and responsibilities

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS (DSL):	
Katherine Benson * Laura Biagioni	Abbotsweld
Julie Mahon* Laura Port Molly Sansom	Fawbert & Barnard's
Tom Clarke* Sarah Martin Rachel Divall	Harlowbury
Penny Wallsworth * Laura Ciftci Suzanne Wiltshire Emma Plumb	Jerounds
Jeannette Harman* Georgia Threadwell	Katherines
Emily Allen * Helen Smith	Latton Green
Monica Holland* Alison Farrar Laura Rose-Whybrow	Longwood
Jennifer Penney* Fern Middleton Debbie Clifton Jenny Wakelin	Tany's Dell

Sarah Clarke * Lisa Golding	Waltham Holy Cross
Laura Biagioni * Emily Allen Rahme Zahra	Little Lattons Nursery
Please refer to this DSL at the setting in the first instance. In the event this person is unavailable, please refer to other DSLs in the setting, or then other DSLs across the Trust.	

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:	
Larisa Albu	Katherines, Latton Green and Longwood
Lisa Golding	Abbotsweld, Jerounds and Tany's Dell
Penny Wallsworth	Fawbert & Barnard's, Harlowbury and Waltham Holy Cross

3.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

3.1.1 The designated safeguarding lead takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the academy. The DSL duties include:

- ensuring child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately by staff
- working with the board of trustees and local governing body to ensure that the Trust's child protection policies are reviewed annually and that the procedures are reviewed regularly
- acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff on child protection and safeguarding matters
- liaising with the headteacher regarding ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations and be aware of the requirement for Children to have an Appropriate Adult in relevant circumstances
- acting as a point of contact with the three safeguarding partners
- making and managing referrals to children's social care, the police, or other agencies
- keeping detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions (including where referrals were or were not made)

- taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings
- liaising with the “case manager” and the designated officer(s) at the local authority if allegations are made against staff
- making staff aware of training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements available through the local safeguarding partner arrangements
- transferring the child protection file and any other relevant welfare or safeguarding information to a child’s new school
- work with the headteacher to ensure that the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- work with the headteacher to ensure that each EYFS child is assigned a key person

3.2 The safeguarding governor/trustee

3.2.1 The role of the safeguarding governor/Trustee is to provide support and challenge to the DSL and the leadership of our academies on how they manage safeguarding so that the safety and wellbeing of the children can continuously improve. The role includes:

- Understanding the requirements of the Governance Handbook and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Supporting and challenging the DSL on the standards of safeguarding at the trust and our academies
- Confirming that consistent and compliant safeguarding practice takes place across the trust and our academies
- Reporting to the board of trustees about the standard of safeguarding in the trust and our academies

3.2.2 The DSL and the safeguarding governor/trustee meet on a regular basis to discuss safeguarding issues and to agree steps to continuously improve safeguarding practices in the trust and our academies.

4 Children who may be particularly vulnerable

4.1 Some children are at greater risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. This increased risk can be caused by many factors including social exclusion, isolation, discrimination and prejudice. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we give special consideration to children who:

- are vulnerable because of their race, ethnicity, religion or belief, special educational needs, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or gender identity
- Are Young Carers
- Are involved in the court system or have a family member in prison
- are vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- are at risk of sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, or being drawn into extremism

- live in chaotic or unsupportive home situations
- live transient lifestyles or live away from home or in temporary accommodation
- are affected by parental substance abuse, domestic abuse or parental mental health needs
- do not have English as a first language
- experience or have experienced bereavement or mental health difficulties
- are in care or privately fostered, or have returned home to their family from care
- have experienced multiple suspensions and are at risk of, or have been, permanently, excluded

5 Children with special educational needs and disabilities

5.1 Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEN) or certain medical or physical health conditions disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation that other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- The need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others
- That these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care, and
- These children may have issues over cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school or the consequences of doing so

5.2 Our staff are trained to be aware of and identify these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

6 Children who are absent from education

6.1 Children being absent from education for prolonged periods, on an increasing basis and/or on repeat occasions, and children with unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, can be an indicator of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including sexual abuse or exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, child criminal exploitation, mental health problems, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Our staff are alert to these risks.

6.2 We closely monitor attendance, absence and exclusions and our DSL will take appropriate and proactive action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions, on an increasing basis and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

7 Alternative provision

7.1 Where a pupil is placed with an alternative provision provider, we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will ensure we are satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

8 Mental health

8.1 Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.

8.2 All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation, and that in some cases they can develop into safeguarding concerns. Staff are also aware that where children have suffered adverse childhood experiences those experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

8.3 All staff are aware that there are potential warning signs when a child is struggling with their mental health. These include:

8.3.1 Significant changes in behaviour

8.3.2 Ongoing difficulty sleeping

8.3.3 Withdrawing from social situations

8.3.4 Not wanting to do things they usually like; and

8.3.5 Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

8.4 Where staff are concerned that a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern, they will discuss it with the DSL or a Deputy who will alert other relevant agencies as necessary.

9 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT)

9.1 The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. Unfortunately, children who are LGBT, or are simply perceived to be LGBT, can be targeted by other children. The risk to these children can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

9.2 Our staff endeavour to reduce the barriers and provide a safe space for those children to speak out or share their concerns with them.

9.3 The 2024 Cass review of gender identity services for children and young people identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs.

9.4 When supporting a gender questioning child, as recommended by statutory guidance, we take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

10 Child-on-child abuse

10.1 Child-on-child abuse – children harming other children - is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; it will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. The trust and our academies take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual

harassment and sexual violence. It is never acceptable, and will not be tolerated. It is more likely that boys will be perpetrators of child-on-child abuse and girls victims, but allegations will be dealt with in the same manner, regardless of whether they are made by boys or girls.

10.2 All staff should be clear about the school's policy and procedures for addressing child-on-child abuse and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

10.3 Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including:

- **physical abuse** such as shaking, hitting, biting, kicking or hair pulling
- **bullying,** including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- **sexual violence and harassment** such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- **sexual harassment** such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse and which may include misogyny/misandry
- serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon.
- **causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent,** such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- **up skirting**, which involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge for the purposes of sexual gratification or to cause humiliation, distress or alarm
- **consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos** (including those generated by AI), and including pressuring others to share sexual content.
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (also known as teenage relationship abuse) - such as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- **initiation/hazing** – used to induct newcomers into sports team or school groups by subjecting them to potentially humiliating or abusing trials with the aim of creating a bond
- **discriminatory behaviour –** including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based abuse.

10.4 Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

10.5 All staff recognise that that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place but is not being reported.

10.6 Minimising risk

10.6.1 We take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- Promoting an open and honest environment where children feel safe and confident to share their concerns and worries

- Using assemblies to outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviour

- Using RSE and PSHE to educate and reinforce our messages through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities

- Ensuring that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.

10.7 Investigating allegations

10.7.1 All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be passed to the DSL immediately who will investigate and manage the allegation as follows:

- **Gather information -** children and staff will be spoken with immediately to gather relevant information.

- **Decide on action -** if it is believed that any child is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DSL will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police. In other cases, we may follow our behaviour policy alongside this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

- **Inform parents -** we will usually discuss concerns with the parents. However, our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to a child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

- **Recorded** – all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing, kept confidential and stored securely on the school's child protection and safeguarding systems and/or in the child's separate child protection file. The record will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and a note of the action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

10.7.2 Where allegations of a sexual nature are made, the school will follow the statutory guidance set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. The DSL will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to carry out an immediate risk and needs assessment.

10.7.3 Reports of rape or assault by penetration are especially serious. While the school/trust establishes the facts and liaises with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator(s) may be removed from any shared classes with the victim. The school/trust will also consider how to maintain a reasonable physical separation between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) across school, including before or after school-based activities, and on transport to and from the school.

10.7.4 Children can report allegations or concerns of child-on-child abuse to any staff member and that staff member will pass on the allegation to the DSL in accordance with this policy.

10.7.5 Our staff reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Our staff will never give a victim the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual

violence or sexual harassment, nor will victims be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

10.7.6 Abuse that occurs online or outside of school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. We recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation.

10.7.7 The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their particular circumstance, and the nature of the abuse. The support we provide could include counselling and mentoring or restorative justice work.

10.7.8 Support may also be required for the pupil who caused harm. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil, and/or change behaviours. The consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

11 Serious violence

11.1 Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern which may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and criminal exploitation. All staff are aware of the signs that a child may be at risk of or involved in serious violence, including:

11.1.1 An increased absence from school or college or a significant decline in educational performance.

11.1.2 A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups.

11.1.3 Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries, and

11.1.4 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 and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

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

12.1 Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This power imbalance can be due to a range of factors, including:

12.1.1 Age

12.1.2 Gender

12.1.3 Sexual identity

12.1.4 Cognitive ability

12.1.5 Physical strength

12.1.6 Status

12.1.7 Access to economic or other resources

12.2 The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. It can also be perpetrated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. They can be one-off occurrences or a series of incidents over time and may or may not involve force or violence. Exploitation can be physical and take place online.

12.3 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

12.3.1 CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing, being forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

12.3.2 Children can become trapped by this exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or carry a knife for a sense of protection.

12.3.3 Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

12.3.4 It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys and both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

12.4 CCE Indicators

12.4.1 **CCE** indicators can include children who:

(a) appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions

(b) associate with other young people involved in exploitation

(c) suffer from changes in emotional well-being

(d) misuse drugs or alcohol

(e) go missing for periods of time or regularly return home late

(f) regularly or increasingly miss school or education or do not take part in education

12.5 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

12.5.1 CSE is a form of child sexual abuse which may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

12.5.2 CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

12.5.3 CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year olds who can legally consent to have sex. CSE can be committed

by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

12.5.4 Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

12.6 CSE Indicators

12.6.1 The above indicators can also be indicators of **CSE**, as can children who:

(a) have older boyfriends

(b) suffer sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant

12.7 We include the risks of criminal and sexual exploitation in our RSE and health education curriculum. It is often the case that the child does not recognise the coercive nature of the exploitative relationship and does not recognise themselves as a victim.

12.8 Victims of criminal and sexual exploitation can be boys or girls and it can have an adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health.

12.9 All staff are aware of the indicators that children are at risk of or are experiencing CCE or CSE. All concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. Staff must always act on any concerns that a child is suffering from or is at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation.

13 County Lines

13.1 County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs around the country using dedicated mobile phone lines. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money, with offenders often using coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

13.2 County lines exploitation can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child. This power imbalance can be due to the same range of factors set out at paragraph 10.1 of this policy.

13.3 Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools and colleges. Indicators of county lines include those indicators set out at 10.3 of this policy, with the main indicator being missing episodes from home and/or school.

13.4 Additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited include children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from home
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation with which they have no connection or in a hotel room where there is drug activity

- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters

- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

13.5 All staff are aware of indicators that children are at risk from or experiencing criminal exploitation. The main indicator is increased absence during which time the child may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs or money.

14 Sharing nudes and semi-nudes

14.1 Sharing photos, videos and live streams online is part of daily life for many children and young people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes means the sending or posting online of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums, or carried out offline between devices via services like Apple’s AirDrop.

14.2 Images may be taken or created by the child themselves or by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including what are sometimes described as ‘deep fakes’ or ‘deep nudes.

14.3 The term ‘nudes’ is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of images sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include ‘dick pics’ or ‘pics’. Other terms used in education include ‘sexting’, youth produced sexual imagery’ and ‘youth involved sexual imagery’.

14.4 The motivations for taking and sharing nudes and semi-nudes are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

- children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer

- children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online

- images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame

14.5 The trust takes a safeguarding approach in response to all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual. All such incidents require a safeguarding response, with a proportionate approach that considers the age, development, and circumstances of the children involved, as well as any elements of coercion, exploitation, or vulnerability. All incidents involving nude or semi-nude images will be managed as follows:

- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately and the DSL will discuss it with the appropriate staff. If necessary, the DSL may also interview the children involved.

- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put a child at risk of harm.

- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, we will refer the matter to the police and/or children’s social care.

14.6 The UK Council for Internet Safety updated its advice for managing incidences of sharing nudes and semi-nudes in February 2024 - UKCIS advice 2024 . The school will have regard to this advice when managing these issues.

15 Online safety

15.1 It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As well as educating children about online risks, we have appropriate and effective filtering and monitoring systems in place to limit the risk of children being exposed to inappropriate content, subjected to harmful online interaction with other users and to ensure their own personal online behaviour does not put them at risk. Filtering and monitoring systems also monitor content access through generative AI.

15.2 These filtering and monitoring systems block harmful and inappropriate content, and we take care to ensure that they do not unreasonably impact on teaching and learning. The systems are reviewed regularly (at least annually) to ensure their effectiveness, and staff have been identified and assigned suitable roles and responsibilities to manage these systems. We also have effective monitoring strategies in place to meet the safeguarding needs of our pupils.

15.3 We tell parents and carers what filtering and monitoring systems we use, so they can understand how we work to keep children safe.

15.4 We will also inform parents and carers of what we are asking children to do online, including the sites they need to access, and with whom they will be interacting online.

15.5 Online safety risks can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content such as pornography, fake news, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact**: Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, such as peer-to-peer pressure and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit children.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm such as making, sending and receiving explicit images, sharing other explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams.

15.6 All staff are aware of these risk areas and should report any concerns to the DSL.

16 Domestic abuse

16.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

16.2 Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It includes people who have been or are married, are or have been civil partners, have agreed to marry one another or each have or have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

16.3 Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. This means children can also be victims of domestic abuse.

16.4 Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic violence in their home life. Experiencing domestic abuse and exposure to it can have a serious emotional and psychological impact on children, and in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

16.5 As part of our safeguarding arrangements and our work with safeguarding partners, our school has signed up to Operation Encompass . Operation Encompass is a national initiative which aims to provide support to children who have experienced domestic abuse. It means the Police inform us if they have attended an incident of domestic abuse which involves a child on our roll, so that appropriate support can be put in place. Any information in relation to this will be held on the child's child protection file, as with any other safeguarding information.

16.6 All staff are aware of the impact domestic violence can have on a child. If any of our staff are concerned that a child has witnessed domestic abuse, they will report their concerns immediately to the DSL.

17 Honour-Based abuse

17.1 So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses actions taken 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.

17.2 Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Our staff are aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors and we take them into consideration when deciding what safeguarding action to take.

17.3 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

17.4 Female Genital Mutilation

17.4.1 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 and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

17.4.2 FGM is carried out on females of any age, from babies to teenagers to women. Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, including concerns expressed by girls about going on a long holiday during the summer break. If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of FGM or who has suffered FGM, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Teachers are also under legal duty to report to the police where they discover that FGM has been carried out on a child under 18. In such circumstances, teachers will personally report the matter to the police as well as informing the designated safeguarding lead.

17.5 Forced Marriage

17.5.1 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 of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure or abuse.

17.5.2 Forced marriage is illegal. It is also illegal to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

17.5.3 Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, which may include being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to the UK.

17.5.4 Forced marriage is not the same as arranged marriage, which is common in many cultures.

17.5.5 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of forced marriage, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

18 Radicalisation and Extremism

18.1 Extremism is defined as vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Radicalisation refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of terrorist violence.

18.2 Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Whilst Islamic fundamentalism is the most widely publicised, extremism and radicalisation can occur in other cultures, religions and beliefs, including the far right and white supremacy. Our staff are trained to identify those at risk of being radicalised or drawn into extremism.

18.3 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

19 Staff/pupil relationships

19.1 Staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that it is a criminal offence for them to engage in any sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.

19.2 We provide our staff with advice regarding their personal online activity and we have clear rules regarding electronic communications and online contact with pupils. It is considered a serious disciplinary issue if staff breach these rules.

19.3 Our Staff Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.

20 Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers

20.1 If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made about a member of staff, supply staff, contractor or a volunteer, or relates to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the academy premises for the purposes of running activities for children our set procedures must be followed. Our safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers' policy and procedure can be accessed at the academy office and the full procedure for managing such allegations or concerns are set out in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

20.2 Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff who no longer work at the school will be reported to the police.

21 Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

21.1 It is important that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about a colleague's practice. All such concerns should be reported to the headteacher, unless the complaint is about the

headteacher, in which case concern should be reported to the CEO and if applicable to the chair of governors.

21.2 Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

21.3 The school's whistleblowing policy is published on the trust's website and allows staff to raise concerns or make allegations and for an appropriate enquiry to take place.

22 Staff and governor/trustee training

22.1 Our staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and empowered to provide exceptional safeguarding to our pupils.

22.2 New staff and volunteers receive a briefing during their induction which covers this Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and our staff behaviour policy, how to report and record concerns and information about our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs.

22.3 Our governors/trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that there is an effective whole trust approach to safeguarding. This training is updated at least annually.

22.4 Our safeguarding governor/trustee receives additional training to empower them to support and challenge the Designated Safeguarding Lead and support the delivery of high-quality safeguarding across the trust.

23 Safer Recruitment

23.1 The governing body and our senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring we follow recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might harm children. When doing so we check and verify the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the local safeguarding partner arrangements.

23.2 All relevant staff (involved in early years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification from childcare guidance and their obligations to disclose to us relevant information that could lead to disqualification.

23.3 We ensure that our volunteers are appropriately checked and supervised when in school. We check the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks where required by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

23.4 When using supply staff, we will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that staff they provide have been appropriately checked and are suitable to work with children. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained confirming their suitability to work with children.

23.5 The trust maintains the single central record of recruitment checks undertaken in each of our academies. Our recruitment policy and procedures can be accessed at the academy office.

24 Site security

24.1 Visitors are asked to sign in at the school reception and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. If visitors have undergone the appropriate checks, they can be provided with unescorted access to the school site. Visitors who have not undergone the required checks will be escorted at all times.

25 Child protection procedures

25.1 Recognising abuse

25.1.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

25.1.2 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse and neglect.

25.2 Taking action

25.2.1 Any child could become a victim of abuse. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary, call 999
- complete a record of concern form and report your concern to the DSL as soon as possible
- share information on a need-to-know basis only and do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family

25.3 If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

25.3.1 Staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. This may be because the pupil's behaviour has changed, their appearance has changed, or physical signs are noticed. In these circumstances, staff will give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK.

25.3.2 If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below.

25.3.3 Staff are 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. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened, which could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This will not prevent our staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to our DSL if they have concerns about a child.

25.4 If a pupil discloses to you

25.4.1 If a pupil tells a member of staff about a risk to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will:

- remain calm and not overreact
- allow them to speak freely
- not be afraid of silences
- not ask investigative questions

- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- not automatically offer physical touch as comfort
- let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL
- tell the pupil what will happen next and give them an opportunity to ask questions about what will happen next
- complete the **concern form** and pass it to the DSL as soon as possible
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- let the pupil know when they can expect to be updated or receive more information, emphasising that the pupil can talk to them or the DSL at any time

25.5 Notifying parents

25.5.1 The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. If the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are notified.

26 Referral to children's social care

26.1 The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

27 Reporting directly to child protection agencies

27.1 Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care or the police if they are convinced that a direct report is required or if the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the deputies, the headteacher, CEO or the chair of governors are not available and a referral is required immediately.

28 Confidentiality and sharing information

28.1 Child protection issues necessitate a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, headteacher, CEO or chair of governors.

28.2 Sharing information

28.2.1 The school has a statutory duty to share information where the DSL considers that the information is relevant to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of a child and that sharing it may assist the recipient organisation to exercise its safeguarding functions. The duty extends to information about any adult or other individual connected to the child where that information is relevant to the child's safety or welfare.

28.2.2 The DSL will inform the child and/or their parents or carers about what information has been shared and why, unless there is good reason not to. Consent from the child, parent or carer is not required before sharing. This is a transparency obligation, not a requirement to obtain consent before sharing.

28.2.3 Data protection law provides the framework for sharing information lawfully and proportionately; it is not a barrier to sharing. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Data Protection Officer.

28.2.4 Where the DSL determines through their professional judgement that sharing relevant information would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing, they will withhold the information. All decisions, whether to share or not to share, will be recorded with clear reasons.

28.3 Storing information

28.3.1 Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. It will be stored and handled in line with our Retention and Destruction Policy.

28.3.2 Where a child transfers to a new school, DSL will transfer the child protection file and any other relevant welfare or safeguarding information to the child's new school.

28.3.3 Our Confidentiality and Information Sharing policy and our Retention and Destruction policy is available to parents and pupils on request.

29 Special Circumstances

29.1 Looked after children

29.1.1 The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

29.2 Children who have a social worker

29.2.1 Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Local authorities will share this information with us, and the DSL will hold and use this information to inform decision about safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare.

29.3 Work Experience

29.3.1 The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with statutory guidance.

29.4 Children staying with host families

29.4.1 The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with host families, for example during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. When we do, we follow the guidance set out in the statutory guidance to ensure hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

29.4.2 Schools cannot obtain criminal record information from the Disclosure and Barring Service about adults abroad. Where pupils stay with host families abroad we will agree with the partner schools a shared understanding of the safeguarding arrangements. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the arrangements are sufficient to safeguard our pupils and will include ensuring pupils understand who to contact should an emergency

occur or a situation arise which makes them feel uncomfortable. We will also make parents aware of these arrangements.

29.4.3 Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

29.5 Private fostering arrangements

29.5.1 A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

29.5.2 Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will tell the DSL and the school will notify the local authority of the circumstances.

Appendix One - Four categories of abuse

It is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff are also aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, and online.

1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse is 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.

1.1 Indicators of physical abuse

The following may be indicators of physical abuse:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, bites, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying
- Isolation from peers

2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent 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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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.

2.1 Indicators of emotional abuse

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- The child consistently describes him/herself in negative ways
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies
- Self-harm
- Drug or solvent abuse
- Running away
- Appetite disorders – anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis

3 Sexual abuse

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 penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

3.1 Indicators of sexual abuse

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area
- Reluctance to go home
- Refusal to communicate
- Depression or withdrawal
- Isolation from peer group

- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia
- Self-harm
- Substance abuse
- Acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new ‘friends’

4 Neglect

Neglect is 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.

4.1 Indicators of neglect

The following may be indicators of neglect:

- Constant hunger or stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food
- Frequent tiredness
- Frequently dirty or unkempt
- Poor attendance or often late
- Poor concentration
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones or to develop intellectually or socially
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers