



# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Lincolnshire

<b>Policy Code:</b>	
<b>Policy Start Date:</b>	September 2024
<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	September 2025



**This policy is reviewed at least annually by the LSB and was last reviewed on: -**

September 2024

### **CIT Commitment to Safeguarding**

Our school is part of the Community Inclusive Trust (CIT).

CIT aim to work in partnership with all Trust schools to ensure that safeguarding is truly 'everyone's responsibility'.

The Trust Board and the Executive leadership recognise the contribution it can and must make to safeguard and support children and young people in all its schools across the Trust. Their welfare is of paramount importance.

The Trust has an annually reviewed Safeguarding Statement that underpins the principles of individual school policy.

Please access the current statement here: [Trust-wide-Safeguarding-Statement-2023-24-Oct-23.pdf \(citacademies.co.uk\)](#)

CIT expects all schools to adhere to the central expectations set out in this statement – including the 5 Safeguarding Principles as follows:

**Responsibility** – All staff and volunteers who choose to work in CIT schools do this on the understanding that we believe safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. All of us have a responsibility to follow all trust and school policies and the CIT code of conduct.

**Readiness** – All staff and volunteers will adhere to the principle that 'It could happen here' and undergo the necessary, safeguarding training required by CIT to enable all our pupils and staff to keep safe.

**Reporting** – Everyone who works and volunteers in our schools will understand what to look for and how to report concerns to the safeguarding leads in whatever school they are working in. Records will be kept in line with the school Safeguarding Policy.

**Reacting** – All schools will know what action to take to address every concern raised including when to alert CIT central team or external agencies where necessary.

**Responding** – Leaders at schools will make sure there is the appropriate help, support and ongoing work done to make sure pupils stay safe over time.

Our Central **Safe@CIT** Team will provide ongoing support and challenge to all schools to ensure the policies in place are consistently put into practice.

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## **1. Policy statement and principles – including our school’s unique contextual safeguarding issues.**

1.1 At Woodlands Academy, meeting the needs of our pupils is our priority. We aim to provide a safe and secure environment in which pupils will thrive and develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically; a place where learning is central to everything. Our staff are committed to supporting the students entrusted to our care and for them to achieve their best, we ensure a positive working relationship between home and school. Our partnership and with parents is extremely important to us.

- providing a safe environment for pupils and young people to learn and develop in our school setting, and
- identify pupils and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both within and outside of our school setting’
- creating a whole school approach to safeguarding through a culture of care where pupils are listened to, and heard, with the knowledge that their concerns and worries will be taken seriously

1.2 At Woodlands Academy we appoint an appropriate senior member of staff, from our school leadership team, to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters and their role will be made explicit in the job description.

- the DSL (and any agreed deputies) will be given the time, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and to contribute to the assessment of children.

- the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies will liaise with the local authority and work with other agencies as required.

If there are concerns about students who may be considered at risk, including Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation and Extremism, students will be identified, and concerns recorded. These students will be monitored and tracked by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies.

During term time the designated safeguarding lead and or a deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This Safeguarding Policy forms one part of the schools safeguarding responsibilities and should be read in conjunction with the Managing Student Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy and Anti Bullying Policy and any other relevant policies.

If there are concerns about students who may be considered at risk, including Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation and Extremism, students will be identified, and concerns recorded. These students will be monitored and tracked by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies.

During term time the designated safeguarding lead and or a deputy will always be available (during Academy hours) for staff in the Academy to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead and any deputies will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role.

### **1.3 Our safeguarding team at Woodlands Academy is:**

- Sherilyn Pruhs-Borrell – Deputy Headteacher/SENDCo (DSL)
- Jodie Lingard – Assistant SENDCo (DDSL)
- Sue Killips – Senior Administrator (DDSL)

### **1.4 Contextual Safeguarding Rationale:**

CIT recognises that as young people grow and develop, they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family. For example, in school, in the local community, in their peer groups or online.

Children and young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks. Contextual safeguarding looks at how individual schools identify the locally specific risks that are most prevalent in their own environment and community. We believe that if our leaders and staff in schools understand what probable risks our pupils will encounter it will be much easier to proactively engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe.

To understand the individual and unique school communities that make up our CIT family, we expect our schools to know and understand the communities that our children are drawn from and the key contextual safeguarding issues that are faced by pupils.

These risks will be reflected through how leaders work with parents and make links in their community. Leaders will ensure that curriculum provision is adapted to support pupils to have the knowledge that they need to keep safe while at school and as they move through life.

### **1.5 Contextual safeguarding in our school:**

Contextual Safeguarding issues. The Academy are aware that there are several contextual matters. Contextual matters may evolve over time. Pupils that attend Woodlands Academy are vulnerable and at increased risk of exploitation. The list below is not exhaustive but highlights some of the contextual safeguarding issues that we may face on a day-to-day basis.

**Online Safety:** With the increasing use of digital devices and social media, online safety has become a significant concern in schools. Pupils may be vulnerable to online grooming, exploitation, or exposure to harmful content. Online Safety is taught through links with living in wider world of PSHE as well as part of the computing curriculum.

**Child Exploitation –** Children that attend Woodlands Academy are vulnerable and can be at further risk of being groomed or coerced into exploitative situations involving the potential selling and taking of drugs. (County Lines)

**Domestic Violence:** Pupils can be affected by domestic violence within their homes, and schools need to have mechanisms in place to identify and support those who may be impacted.

**Neglect:** Neglect can manifest in various forms, including educational neglect or inadequate supervision, and schools should be attentive to signs of neglect among their pupils.

**Mental Health:** Mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and self-harm, can also be significant concerns within the school context, requiring appropriate support and intervention.

The vast majority of pupils come into school via taxis, which means that they attend school a considerable distance from their home. They may be vulnerable due to a lack of supervision during their journey to school.

This also means that school do not get to see their homes, their parents or the communities they come from on a regular basis. There may well be significant pieces of the jigsaw that the school.

We take safeguarding extremely seriously and as such link safeguarding across the curriculum. Through our PSHE lesson we ensure that our pupils are ready for life after Woodlands and become positive members of society. We give them the knowledge and skill to cope in any situation and develop a Healthy lifestyle so that they can become more independent, and more responsible. PSHE also supports pupils in developing a sense of self-worth and identifying what makes a good healthy relationship and how to stay safe in those relationships.

### **1.6 Policy review arrangements**

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed by the Trust Safeguarding Lead (TSL) Headteacher and the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead on a regular basis to ensure it remains current and incorporates all revisions made to local or national safeguarding guidance.

This policy will as a minimum be fully reviewed as a minimum once a year during the Autumn term provided to the LSB for approval and sign off at the first autumn term meeting.

### **1.7 Who does this policy apply to?**

This policy applies to all young people under 18 at the school. Anyone encountering children in our school or visiting the school site must abide by this policy. Everyone working at the school as a member of staff, or volunteer, has a duty to safeguard and protect our children.

They must read this policy and sign to say they agree to work to it. Visitors to the school, including contractors, must read our safeguarding statement.

### **1.8 What is the purpose of this policy?**

- to clarify the roles and responsibilities of everyone within our school in relation to child protection and safeguarding
- to provide information on the range of safeguarding concerns
- to explain the clear procedures that are followed when a child is identified as needing more than universal services can provide.

### **1.9 Definitions of safeguarding and Child Protection**

This is both a safeguarding and child protection policy.

We recognise the key differences between the two terms (as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023 revision) as follows:

#### **Safeguarding is:**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

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

#### **Child protection is:**

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

## **2 STATUTORY GUIDANCE, PROCEDURES AND ASSOCIATED RESPONSIBILITIES**

The procedures and expectations around how we ensure effective Safeguarding of all children in education is set out in two main pieces of statutory guidance.

#### **Link to Guidance:**

- HM Working Together to Safeguard Children, published December 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSiE) in force from 1 September 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

**Academies, free schools, independent schools, alternative education providers -**



Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015, and the Education and Training (Welfare of Children Act) 2021.

Schools and colleges in England **must** have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

**Children includes everyone under the age of 18.**

**The term 'parent' refers to both parents and carers.**

**The Teachers' Standards 2012** state that teachers, including headteachers, must have regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions; and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

**KCSiE 2024 sets out what schools and colleges should and must do to safeguard children.**

It is for individual schools and colleges to develop their own policies and procedures – and at CIT the central **Safe@CIT** Team produce the model policy that has then been adapted by our leadership team to our unique contextual setting.

KCSiE 2024 does emphasise the importance of discussions and working together with statutory safeguarding partners (see paragraph 492).

In Lincolnshire information about statutory safeguarding partners can be found using the following link: [About Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – LSCP \(lincolnshirescp.org.uk\)](http://lincolnshirescp.org.uk)

### **3 Named staff and contacts**

Advice on any aspect of Child Protection and Safeguarding may be sought from the Safeguarding Team.

<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	<b>Sherilyn Pruhs-Borrell</b>
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSL)</b>	<b>Jodie Lingard Sue Killips</b>
<b>LAC/CiC Lead</b>	<b>Sherilyn Pruhs-Borrell</b>
<b>SENDCo</b>	<b>Sherilyn Pruhs-Borrell</b>
<b>LSB Named Safeguarding Lead</b>	<b>Becky Jackson</b>
<b>Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead (TDSL)</b>	Rebecca Jackson – <a href="mailto:becky.jackson@citacademies.co.uk">becky.jackson@citacademies.co.uk</a>
<b>Deputy Safeguarding Lead</b>	Katie Beeby <a href="mailto:katie.beeby@citacademies.co.uk">katie.beeby@citacademies.co.uk</a>
<b>Safeguarding Trustee</b>	Julia Lindley-Davies <a href="mailto:julia.lindley-baker@citacademies.co.uk">julia.lindley-baker@citacademies.co.uk</a>
<b>Local Authority contact numbers:</b>	

<p><b>Safeguarding of children concerns</b> (<i>Children living in Lincolnshire</i>)</p>	<p><b>01522 782111</b> (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)  <b>Lincolnshire's Children's Services Customer Service Centre for reporting concerns and Early Help Team for Advice</b></p> <p><b>Emergency Duty Team</b>  <b>01522 782333</b> (6pm-8am + weekends and Bank Holidays)</p>
<p><b>Safeguarding of children concerns</b> (<i>Children living in other Authorities</i>)</p>	<p><i>Please add in relevant authority contact numbers if applicable as concerns for children need to be reported to the local authority in which the child resides (or state n/a)</i></p>
<p><b>Allegations against /concerns about adult(s) working with children</b></p> <p><b>Staff must report concerns to the Head teacher or in the event of concerns about the Head teacher concerns must be reported to the Director of Education.</b></p>	<p><b>Lincolnshire Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)</b></p> <p><b>01522 554674</b>  <a href="mailto:LSCP_LADO@lincolnshire.gov.uk">LSCP_LADO@lincolnshire.gov.uk</a>  <b>Online form:</b> <a href="#">LADO referral   Completing the form – Lincolnshire County Council</a></p> <p>The Head/Chair must contact LADO to discuss concerns &amp; course of action.</p>
<p><b>Police</b> (<i>Emergency</i>)</p>	<p><b>999</b></p>
<p><b>Police</b> (<i>non-emergency</i>)</p>	<p><b>101</b></p>
<p><b>Safeguarding Cluster</b></p>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>
<p><b>LCC Safeguarding in Schools</b> <i>for advice around safeguarding policy, audits, training etc.</i></p>	<p><a href="mailto:safeguardingschools@lincolnshire.gov.uk">safeguardingschools@lincolnshire.gov.uk</a></p>

#### 4 Equality

We recognise our obligations under the [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#) that we must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

We will ensure that all staff are aware of our duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality for people with protected characteristics.

In relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children our governing body will carefully consider how we are supporting our pupils regarding protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.

#### 5 Introduction

5.1 Woodlands Academy fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school.

The aim of the policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety, and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive environment and it applies to all adults (Staff, volunteers and LSB members) visiting and working in this school setting. We encourage children to talk about their worries and to report their concerns to us in several alternative ways. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance. Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also relates to the broader aspects of care and education including:

- Pupils' health and safety and emotional well-being, and their mental and physical health or development.
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The use of reasonable force.
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions.
- Providing first aid.
- Educational visits and off- site education.
- Intimate care and emotional wellbeing.
- On-line safety and associated issues.
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure school security, considering the local context.
- Keeping children safe from risks, harm, exploitation and sexual violence and sexual harassment between children: KCSiE 2024 Annex A.

5.2 This policy is consistent with:

- the legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as described in section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the statutory guidance "*Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges*", 2024 and "*Working Together to Safeguard Children*", 2023.
- The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements [Contents \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/procurement/procurementonline.com)-

5.3 There are four main elements to our Safeguarding / Child Protection strategy:

- **Prevention** (e.g. positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils, safer recruitment procedures).
- **Protection** (by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns).
- **Support** (to pupils and school staff and to children who may have been harmed or abused).
- **Working with parents** (to ensure appropriate communications and actions are undertaken).

5.4 This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, governors, and visitors to the school. We recognise that child protection is the responsibility of all adults in school. We will ensure that all parents and other working partners are aware of our Safeguarding and

child protection policy by publishing it on our website, displaying appropriate information in our reception and by raising awareness at meetings with parents as appropriate. There is a condensed set of bullet points from our policy handed out to visitors on arrival on school site – the Safe@CIT leaflet.

## **6 Safeguarding Commitment**

6.1 This school adopts an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. Staff encourage children and parents to feel free to talk about any concerns and to see school as a safe place when there are difficulties. **Children’s worries and fears will be taken seriously**, and children are encouraged to seek help from members of staff.

6.2 Our school will therefore

- Establish and maintain an ethos where all children (including those having protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010) feel secure and are encouraged to report concerns, talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure that children’s wishes and feelings are considered when determining what actions to take and services to provide and that they can express their views and give feedback. We will always seek to act in the best interests of children.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty and that there are alternative ways to report concerns.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE / Citizenship / Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse (including online and other contexts children are in), and to know to whom they can turn for help.
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies; as vast majority of our pupils travel to and from school via taxis, key workers will make calls to parents a minimum of twice a week to ensure that parents are aware of how their child is doing in school.
- Operate safer recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out and recorded on the single central record for new staff and volunteers who will work with children, including identity, right to work, enhanced DBS criminal record and barred list (and overseas where needed), references, and prohibition from teaching or managing in schools (s.128) etc (see “Keeping children safe in education” part 3).
- Ensure a Whole school approach to safeguarding where all staff, LSB and volunteers ensure that they:

- understand the importance every member of staff has through their contact with children in and outside of the school environment and the particular importance of the roles and relationships they have which places them in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.
- have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- make every effort to identify children who may benefit from early help and put in place support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life.
- follow the processes set out in this child protection policy and raise concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy without delay if any staff member has any concerns about a child's welfare.
- should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral, especially if they were involved in being alert to or receiving a disclosure of risk, harm or abuse or harassment from a child.
- designated safeguarding leads and deputies will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care, police, early help, and health where required, as they are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

***Anyone worried about a child must continue to raise the concern until they have a reason not to be worried about the child anymore.***

## **7 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 All staff and volunteers**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's responsibility**. All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare. This includes a responsibility to be alert to possible abuse and to record and report concerns to staff identified with child protection responsibilities within the school.

Everyone in our school who comes into contact with children and their families have a role to play in safeguarding children. All staff in our school consider, always, what is in the best interests of children.

All staff within our school are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help to children to prevent concerns from escalating.

All staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in this.

This includes being able to identify emerging problems to recognise children who may benefit from early help. Staff know in the first instance to discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and understand they may be required to support other agencies and professionals in assessments for early help.

## 7.2 Staff responsibilities

### Reporting concerns

All staff have a key role to play in identifying concerns and provide early help for children.

**All** staff follow the school's Child Protection Procedures which are consistent with:

- ['Working Together to Safeguard Children](#),
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#); and
- [the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Policy and Procedures Manual](#).

Teachers and other adults in school are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, children, parents, and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns.

**All** staff will have an awareness of specific safeguarding issues, as referred to in Domestic Abuse, Child Exploitation (CE), Radicalisation and the Prevent Duty, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Attendance and Children Missing from Education (CME) and Contextual Safeguarding are some of these areas.

**All** staff will also be aware that safeguarding concerns can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include but is not limited to: bullying (including online bullying), gender-based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff are clear as to the school's procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse.

It is **not** the responsibility of the school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All members of staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of children will be recorded and discussed with the DSL (or the deputy DSL in their absence) prior to any discussion with parents. The DSL or DDSL should seek advice from the **Safe@CIT** central Team or the relevant local authority Children's Services Customer Service centre if they are unsure of what action to take.

Any concerns or disclosures **MUST** be reported as soon as possible to the safeguarding team in school. This is ideally within 15 minutes of it being raised.

No concerns should be left unreported at the end of the school day before staff leave the site.

### **Concerns that staff must act on immediately and report:**

- any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the expected knocks or scrapes received in play.
- any explanation given to the above which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g., worrying drawings or play)
- any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment

- any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g., living in a household with children present)
- any potential indicators of Child Exploitation
- any potential indicators of FGM
- any potential indicators of Radicalisation
- any potential indicators of living in a household with Domestic Abuse

**To create a culture where children feel confident to talk and disclose when they need help, ALL staff will:**

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.
- Attend training to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse.
- Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" with regards to safeguarding.
- Record their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the DSL as soon as practical that day. If the DSL is not contactable immediately a Deputy DSL should be informed.
- Be prepared to refer directly to social care, and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or their Deputy is not available.
- Follow the allegations procedures if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff.
- Follow the procedures set out by the NSCP and take account of guidance issued by the DfE KCSiE 2024.
- Support pupils in line with their child protection plan, child in need plan, LAC/CiC Care Plan.
- Treat information with confidentiality but never promising to "keep a secret".
- Notify the DSL or their Deputy of any child on a child protection plan or child in need plan who has unexplained absence.
- Understand early help and be prepared to identify and support children who may benefit from early help.
- Liaise with other agencies that support pupils and provide early help.
- Ensure they know who the DSL and Deputy DSLs are and know how to contact them.
- Have an awareness of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the CIT Code of Conduct, procedures relating to the safeguarding response for children who go missing or who are absent from education and the role of the DSL.



### **7.3 Teachers (including NQTs) and Headteachers – Professional Duty**

The Teachers Standards 2012 (updated 13 December 2021) remind us that teachers, newly qualified teachers and headteachers should safeguard children and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of our professional duties.

### **7.4 The Trust Board and Local School Board (LSB)**

#### **The Trust Board**

The responsibility for the governance of safeguarding in schools sits with the CIT Trust Board.

The Trust Board have delegated a set of assurances to the school LSB which are set out in the CIT assurances schedule.

The Trust will be responsible for ensuring that all LSB members receive safeguarding training on induction which is regularly updated. This training will be appropriate to their role offering strategic challenge to the school.

The Trust Board will nominate a named Safeguarding Trustee who will report back on the effectiveness of the LSB in supporting safeguarding leaders in school.

Aspects of Safeguarding that sit under the responsibility of the Trust Board include:

- All schools have procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the local authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- All schools have procedures for dealing with low level concerns in relation to staff behaviour and that there is a culture of openness in reporting and dealing with these concerns and a process of escalation if any allegation reaches or contributes to a risk of harm to children.
- online safety policy and procedures are in place in all schools and training and support is provided for staff and children to ensure that there is a good understanding of child protection issues related to electronic media.
- The Trust has implemented appropriate electronic filtering and monitoring systems in place which are reviewed regularly to ensure effectiveness. This is to ensure that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

The LSB will be responsible for:

- In accordance with the statutory guidance “Keeping children safe in education” 2024, to ensure that the school has its own child protection/safeguarding policy, procedures and training in place which are effective and always comply with the law. The policy is made available publicly.
- Providing the Trust Board with assurances that the school has met its safeguarding duty and safeguarding is judged by leaders and the Trust Safeguarding Lead to be effective. (When assessed against the CIT Safeguarding Audit Framework and KCSiE 2024)



- Challenging the Headteacher and leaders responsible for safeguarding in the school to address any areas of the CIT Safeguarding Audit Framework that are not self-assessed by the school and the TSL as being effective.
- Ensuring the school completes and returns the local authority annual Safeguarding Return.
- The school operates safer recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers. Furthermore, the Headteacher, nominated LSB members and other staff involved in the recruitment process have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.
- There are procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns (including lower-level concerns) and allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers (see Appendix 2).
- There is a senior member of the school's leadership team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection (the "Designated Safeguarding Lead") and there is always cover for this role with appropriate arrangements for before/after school and out of term time activities.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes effective DSL specific training as set out in the CIT 3-year pathway. (in addition to basic child protection training) and this is refreshed every two years. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals (at least annually) using safeguarding briefings etc. The pathway is detailed in the CIT Safeguarding Handbook.
- The Headteacher, and all other staff and volunteers who work with children (including early years practitioners within any settings on the school site), undertake appropriate training which follows the CIT 3-Year Pathway; and new staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities (including this policy, Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (or Annex A, if appropriate), the pupil behaviour policy, the CIT Code of Conduct, the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and how to respond to children who go missing from education). The CIT Induction and annual training packages will be used as part of this induction and Annex B from "Keeping children safe in education" 2024 is provided to all staff working directly with children.
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to the attention of the LSB will be rectified without delay.
- That the appropriate Director of Education initially deals with any safeguarding concerns or allegations of abuse made against the Headteacher, in liaison with the Local Authority Allegations Manager (LADO). This will be supported where appropriate by the HR team and the TSL.
- Effective policies and procedures are in place and updated annually and the school ensure all staff comply with the CIT behaviour "code of conduct" for staff and volunteers. This code of conduct incorporates all the areas addressed in the "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those who work with children in education settings Feb 2022" (supplemented where necessary by the COVID-19 Addendum April 2020). Information is provided to the Local Authority (acting on behalf of the Safeguarding Children Partnership) through the Safeguarding Annual Return.
- There is a named individual member of the LSB who will champion issues to do with safeguarding children and child protection within the school, liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and provide information and compliance/monitoring reports to the LSB and to the Trust Board.
- The school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2023 including providing a co-ordinated offer of Early Help for children who require this. This Early Help may be offered directly through school provision or via referral to an external support agency.

Safeguarding arrangements consider the procedures and practice of the relevant local authority.

### 7.5 The **Headteacher**

The Headteacher of the school is responsible for ensuring safeguarding is effective. To do this they will ensure that:

- **The CIT Safeguarding Audit is completed** and updated regularly so there is an up to date and accurate self-evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school. This is shared with the LSB and the Trust DSL.
- The policies and procedures adopted by the Trust and the LSB are effectively implemented and followed by all staff.
- **All staff read and understand** KCSiE 2024 Part One (teaching staff) and or Annex A (support staff and volunteers) or both which contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues and be conversant with Part Five Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment.
- **Sufficient resources and time** are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children.
- **The DSL is undertaking their role effectively** and safeguarding procedures are robust.
- **Allegations of abuse or concerns** that a member of staff or adult working at school may pose a risk of harm to children or young people are notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer, where the threshold is met.
- **All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns** about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285).
- **All staff are made aware that they have an individual responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns** and that if all else fails they can report these directly to Children's Social Care (Children and Family Specialist Services) or the Police.
- There is access to DSL or equivalent during school closure.

### 7.6 The **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for the current year are listed at the start of this document.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) will always be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns, the DSL should be physically available during normal school hours – but notes that in exceptional circumstances the availability may be via Teams or mobile phone.

The DSL needs to understand the role of the ‘Appropriate Adult’ within a police investigation.

Leaders in the school will ensure that the school DSL carries out the responsibilities of the DSL as found in Annex C of “Keeping children safe in education” effectively and fully.

At Woodlands Academy the DSL is a senior member of staff on the senior leadership team and the role is explicit in their job description. The current DSL is named in section 3 of this policy.

Responsibilities include:

- **Reading and understanding** all statutory regulations and documents in relation to safeguarding in schools as well as all CIT and school policies that impact on the role of DSL in school.
- **Managing referrals** – to the local authority children’s social care, to the Channel programme, to the Disclosure and Barring Service for staff dismissed for safeguarding concerns (as required), to the Police where a crime may have been committed.
- **Working with others** – to act as a source of support and advice, to act as a point of contact for the safeguarding partners, to liaise with the headteacher or principal about issues especially to do with ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations, to liaise with staff when deciding to make a referral to relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically, to liaise with the senior mental health lead, to promote supportive engagement with parents and carers, to take the lead in promoting educational outcomes for children in need and those with a social worker, to liaise with the LSB and the Local Authority on any deficiencies brought to the attention of the LSB and how these should be rectified without delay.

Be familiar with the guidance from the NSPCC about when to inform and involve the police in relation to concerns.

The DSL is responsible for keeping the Headteacher and relevant school leaders informed of concerns and progress of actions being taken in relation to child protection.

- **Information sharing and managing safeguarding records** – keeping appropriate records in accordance with this policy. They must ensure that records are confidential, secure, and up to date, in a separate record for each child, including a clear and comprehensive summary, detailing how the concern was followed up and resolved, with a note of actions, decisions and the outcome. They are also responsible for sharing information as required to safeguard children and transferring records and other relevant information to the new school within 5 days or in advance if necessary. They must make sure that these records are transferred confidentially to the new school or setting.
- **Raising Awareness** – ensuring each member of staff and volunteer understands the child protection policy which is reviewed at least annually, making it available publicly, ensuring staff and governors have access to relevant training and induction, promoting educational outcomes by sharing relevant information about children.

- **Training, knowledge and skills** – to undergo DSL training every two years (updating at least annually via bulletins etc) and to attend Prevent awareness training, in order to understand assessment and referral processes, to contribute effectively to child protection conferences including the importance of sharing information, to understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have on children and how to respond to this, to be alert to children with specific needs e.g. SEND, those with health conditions and young carers, to understand the unique risks associated with online safety.  
They are responsible for ensuring others are trained appropriately following the CIT 3 Year Pathway.
- **Providing support to staff** – to help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, to provide support in the referral process if required and to help them to understand that safeguarding and educational outcomes are linked.
- **Understanding the views of all children** – encouraging a culture of listening to all children (including those who are known to be disproportionately impacted by different forms of harm and abuse e.g. LGBTQ+ pupils, disabled children or girls) and taking account of their wishes and feelings in measures taken to protect them and understanding the difficulties children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances.
- **Holding and sharing information** – sharing with safeguarding partners, other agencies and professionals and transferring records between schools and colleges in accordance with data protection legislation, keeping detailed, accurate and secure written records and understanding the purpose of this
- **Raising awareness amongst staff** about the needs of children who have or who have had a social worker and the barriers that those children might experience in respect of attendance, engagement and achievement at schools or college.
- **Informing the LSB and Headteacher** of the number of children in their cohort who have or who have had a social worker and appropriate information is shared with teachers and staff on individual children's circumstances.
- **Keeping updated and aware** of national and local guidance regarding how to respond to incidences of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- **Work in partnership** with external agencies
- **Along with the Designated Teacher**, maintain data for children who have looked after status (LAC/CiC) and for children who have been involved in the care system. The designated safeguarding lead will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head (VSH) in the relevant authority that looks after the child.  
They should ensure that appropriate staff have access to the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They should also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her.
- **Take lead responsibility for online safety** and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

## **7.7 The Deputy DSL**

Will support the DSL in all these responsibilities and will act for them in their absence. Therefore, they will be trained to the same level as the DSL to ensure they can competently carry out this role where necessary.

## **7.8 The Designated Teacher for LAC/CiC**

Designated teachers have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

The school has identified a named individual as the Designated Teacher for looked after children (LAC/CiC) as stated in the roles list at the beginning of this policy.

Leaders in the school will be responsible for ensuring they have received the appropriate training to carry out their role effectively, following the CIT central policy for LAC/CiC pupils.

The Designated Teacher in conjunction with the DSL should maintain and analyse data for children who have looked after status and for children who have been involved in the care system.

They will maintain good links with the Virtual School Heads (VSH) to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. The role of virtual school heads was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker. The VSH should identify and engage with key professionals, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children. This should include Designated Safeguarding Leads, social workers, headteachers, governors, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, mental health leads, other local authority officers.

## **8 Responding to disclosure**

### **8.1 Identifying Concerns**

All members of staff, volunteers and governors will receive regular training to enable them to know how to identify pupils who may be being harmed and then how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse, or where others raise concerns about them. School leaders will ensure and check regularly that all staff, volunteers and LSB members are familiar with procedures to be followed. There will also be checks done regularly by leaders and the central team that they are being followed appropriately and effectively.

Staff understand that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition, and that in most cases multiple issues

will overlap with each other. Staff who regularly come into contact with children are aware of the DfE guidance [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)

8.2 Staff will not investigate nor ask any leading questions but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL in order that they can make an informed decision of what to do next.

8.3 The DSL will ensure that the child's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Child Protection processes will operate with the best interests of the child at their core.

8.4 Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm.
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of school staff.
- clarify the information.
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g., using TED technique – 'Tell me, explain to me, Describe to me....'
- try not to show signs of shock, horror, or surprise.
- try not to express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child.
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the DSL, children need to know that staff may not be able to uphold confidentiality where there are concerns about their safety or someone else's.
- reassure and support the child as far as possible.
- explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told.
- explain what will happen next and who will be involved as appropriate.
- record details including date, what the child has said, in the child's words on to the school's safeguarding recording system and ensure that the DSL is made aware.
- record any visible signs, injuries, or bruises on a Body Map (see appendix 3)
- record the context and content of their involvement, distinguishing between fact, opinion, and hearsay.

8.5 Action by the DSL (or deputy DSL in their absence)

Following any information raising concern, the DSL will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child
- whether the child is subject to a child protection plan
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the child/family
- consulting with appropriate persons e.g., [Duty and Advice Team](#)
- the child 's wishes

Then decide:

To talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk.

Whether to make a [child protection referral](#) to Children's Social Care-Duty and Advice Team because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately

OR



Not to make a referral at this stage if further monitoring is necessary.  
If it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (e.g., Early Help Assessment - EHA)

8.6 All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to the Local Authority First Response Children's Desk will be followed up in writing and these referrals will always be kept on file irrespective of the outcome.

8.7 Action following a child protection referral.

The DSL (or deputy DSL in their absence) will:

- make regular contact with the social worker involved to stay informed.
- wherever possible, contribute to the strategy discussion.
- provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any subsequent [child protection conference](#)
- if the child or children are made the subject of a child protection plan, contribute to the child protection plan, and attend core group meetings and review conferences.
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings and ensure that they understand the content.
- where in disagreement with a decision and concerns remain with the child firstly:
  - talk in the first instance to the social worker/customer service centre.
  - check the referral including all the relevant information and clearly document the concerns about the child.
  - finally follow the [professional resolution and escalation protocol](#) if the concern remains.

Where a child subject to a child protection plan moves from the school or goes missing, leaders immediately inform the social worker and/or Children's Social Care Customer Service Centre.

Where there is a child protection concern requiring immediate, same day, intervention from Children's Social Care, the First Response Children's Duty should be contacted by phone (contact the local authority Children's Services where the child lives). Written confirmation should be made within 24 hours on the Multi-Agency Referral Form to Children's Social Care. All other referrals should be made using the relevant local authority online form.

If the concern is about children using harmful sexual behaviour, also refer to the separate guidance from the local authority.

If it appears that urgent medical attention is required arrange for the child to be taken to hospital (normally this means calling an ambulance) accompanied by a member of staff who must inform medical staff that non-accidental injury is suspected. Parents must be informed that the child has been taken to hospital.

Exceptional circumstances: If it is feared that the child might be at immediate risk on leaving school, take advice from the relevant local authority duty desk as soon as possible (for instance about difficulties if the school day has ended, or on whether to contact the police). Remain with the child until the Social Worker takes responsibility.

If in these circumstances a parent arrives to collect the child, the member of staff has no right to withhold the child, unless there are current legal restrictions in force (e.g. a restraining order). If there are clear signs of physical risk or threat, First Response Children's Duty should be updated, and the Police should be contacted immediately. If in any doubt or advice needed – speak to one of the **Safe@CIT** Central team.

## **9 Records, Monitoring and Transfer**

### **9.1 Records of a Child's Information**

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, we require accurate and up to date information about:

- names, contact details and relationship to the child of any persons with whom the child normally lives.
- names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- emergency contact details (if different from above). We need to know that if the person(s) with parental responsibility is unable to collect their child, there is someone known to us who can collect the child and keep them safe until either the person(s) with parental responsibility is available or a more suitable arrangement is made. We need more than one emergency contact, so we have additional options to contact a responsible adult when there is a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.
- any relevant court order in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g., Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- if the child is or has been subject to a Child Protection Plan
- if the child is or has been subject to an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Child in Need (CIN) processes
- if the child is a Looked After Child (LAC-CiC) or previously looked after
- name and contact details of the child's GP
- any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

The school will collate, store, and agree access to this information, ensuring all information held electronically is stored securely with due regard to meeting data protection and safeguarding requirements. Schools need to make sure this information is accurate. We encourage parents to keep us informed of any changes to the basic contact information that we hold at any time but in addition to this our school will check information for all children at least on an annual basis.

### **9.2 Records of concerns**

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing.

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion, and hypothesis. All records will state who is providing the information, the date and time, information will be recorded in the child's words where possible, and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.



The DSL ensures that the method for other members of staff or volunteers passing on concerns or information is always adhered to as consistency is paramount in ensuring that nothing gets missed. All records of concerns are followed up and clearly show what action is being taken because of the concern and the outcomes of this action. All documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection file', separate from the child's school file. It is kept secure with appropriate level of limited access.

All staff are clear about the need to record and report concerns about a child or children within the school. Records of concerns are typed on CPOMS, signed electronically and dated and passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy). The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for such records and for deciding at what point these records should be shared with other agencies (in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR principles).

### **9.3 Records relating to actual or alleged abuse or neglect**

These are stored apart from normal pupil or staff records. Where information is stored in a separate place i.e. on a child's records there will be markers to show that there is sensitive material stored elsewhere. This is to protect individuals from accidental access to sensitive material by those who do not need to know.

9.4 Child protection records are stored securely in a locked cabinet, with access confined to specific staff, e.g. the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and relevant deputies) and the Headteacher.

9.5 Child protection records are reviewed regularly by school leaders and by members of the central leadership team (including the Directors of Education and the Trust DSL) to check whether the management of records is effective and robust and whether any action or updating is needed. This includes monitoring patterns of complaints or concerns about any individuals and ensuring these are acted upon. A case file chronology, summarising case activity and significant events in the child's life, helps to enable effective monitoring. Any actions taken are clearly indicated.

9.6 Where body maps are used – the guidance in this policy (Appendix 4) is adhered to.

9.7 Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of **any action** taken, decisions reached and the outcome

If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead.

### **9.8 Transferring records**

Leaders will follow the file transfer guidance contained in KCSiE 2024 and ensure when a child moves school/education provision their child protection/confidential file is sent securely to their new educational setting when the child starts/ leaves the school within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within 5 days after the start of a new term.

In accordance with KCSiE 2024 we will maintain information on cohorts of children who have been open to social care, have had a social worker or who are closed to

social care and may have returned to the family home. This information will only be considered for sharing 'if appropriate' with the new school or provider in advance of the child leaving to allow for the new school to continue supporting the children who have had a social worker or been victims of abuse, including those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme.

Should a child subject to social care involvement transfer schools, college, or education provider we will ensure the child's child protection or confidential file move is transferred within 5 days as required by KCSIE 2024 page 173.

Safeguarding records will be transferred separately from other records.

If the school receiving the records DOES NOT have CPoms for electronic transfer – the best practice is to pass these directly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead in the receiving school with any necessary discussion or explanation and to obtain a signed and dated record of the transfer. Where a child needs specific ongoing support, relevant information will be transferred prior to the child arriving at their new school. In the event of a child moving out of area and a physical handover not being possible then the most secure method should be found to send the confidential records to a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and a photocopy kept until receipt is confirmed. Files requested by other agencies e.g. Police, are copied – DO NOT pass on the original files.

The full child record is transferred to the next school unless there are any records with a short retention period. It is important that full information is transferred to ensure a vital piece of information is not missing that could contribute at a later stage.

We do not keep any copies of records except where there is an on-going legal action. Once records are transferred, they are the custody and responsibility of the new school.

A child's last school is responsible for retaining the main child record until they reach the age of 25 years. These files are stored securely. Any record relating to child protection concerns is placed on the main child file, in a sealed envelope and then retained for the same period as the child file (DOB + 25 years).

We refer to the guidance below for further support:

- [IRMS Information Management Toolkit](#)
- [IRMS Information Management Academies Toolkit](#)
- [DfE Data Protection Toolkit for Schools](#)

### **9.9 Alternative Provision**

When this school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and before any placement commences we will ensure that we are satisfied that the provider can meet the needs of the pupil.

Pupils who attend alternative education often have complex needs, it is important that leaders and designated safeguarding leads ensure pupils are fully always supported, and the alternative setting is aware of any additional risks of harm that they may be vulnerable to. Information sharing for pupils who receive education

provision outside of a mainstream setting is vital to support them and ensure the learning environment where they are placed has all necessary information before they access the provision. The working together principles are key to keep the pupil safe and understanding the vulnerabilities needing to be supported. This should include up to date contact details for the professionals working with the pupil and family.

When a pupil is placed in an AP, we will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been conducted on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.

In addition, to fulfil our duty to keep all our pupils safe, we will seek written reassurance from the provider that they have acceptable safeguarding practices in place including their response to concerns about a child, attendance and child absent and missing education procedures, appropriate information sharing procedures and an educational safeguarding programme for children. A member of the safeguarding team will visit the AP every other week to ensure that any pupil attending the placement has the opportunity to discuss any safeguarding concerns or other issues that they may have.

When organising work placements, we will ensure that the placement provider has policies and procedures in place to safeguard children.

The department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:

- Alternative Provision DFE statutory guidance, and
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) – DFE statutory guidance

#### **9.10 Elective Home Education**

From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended so that schools must inform their LA of all deletions from their admission register when a child is taken off roll. Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the Headteacher and DSL work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has special educational needs or a disability, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. The leaders who manage this transfer from school to EHE will be familiar with the DfE guidance for local authorities on Elective home education sets out the role and responsibilities of LAs and their powers to engage with parents in relation to EHE.

#### **9.11 Recording Low Level Concerns**

The CIT policy ensures that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

At Woodlands Academy we will take this action to ensure that all these concerns are dealt with effectively to recognise, report and action these concerns, as well as protecting those working in or on behalf of our school from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings. Low level concerns are reported on StaffSafe (CPOMs).

All staff should be aware of and understand the CIT Low Level Concerns policy.

(see Appendix 3).

Staff must be aware that a low-level concern is a concern that a member of the school community has about an adult working in school – relating to their behaviour inside or outside of school, that does not meet the harm threshold that would require referral to the LADO.

KCSiE 2024 tells us that the term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

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

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating children.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from several sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

### **9.12 Attendance**

At our school, we acknowledge the link between attendance and safeguarding. Not only can regular absence, particularly unexplained absence, be a red flag for safeguarding issues, but only when children are in school can they talk to staff and be given support for any pastoral and safeguarding problems. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. Children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Our safeguarding and attendance teams will liaise regularly to track and monitor pupils who are persistently absent from school or whose attendance pattern changes. where reasonably possible, we hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil so we can more easily and quickly contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. Leaders ensure that all staff are part of our school’s robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality, that support us to spot trends and take quick action.

Our attendance policy is compliant with the expectations set out in [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **10 Support to pupils and school staff**

Abuse or neglect of a child can happen by someone inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Young people may be abused in a family, an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others (e.g., via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Sometimes they tell us about abuse, sometimes they do not.

Abuse is categorised in [Working Together to Safeguard children \(2018\)](#) into four areas; Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse and Neglect. Further information can be found in Appendix 8.

Children also face risks within several safeguarding situations, these are detailed in Appendix 2. In our school, we ensure that staff training focuses on the situations that are relevant to our children in our school environment, recognising also that children are part of a wider community and that a 'it may happen here' culture allows early intervention. We also ensure that children themselves develop skills in recognising risks and keeping themselves and others safe within these situations.

We recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers.

We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a positive sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation, and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure, and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication. We also recognise that there are children who are more vulnerable than others, which include children with special educational needs and or disabilities.

*All staff including volunteers are advised to maintain the attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is a concern, and when concerned about the welfare of the child should always act in the **best** interests of the child.*

#### 10.2 **Support to vulnerable pupils (including those with SEND, a disability or about whom there are mental health concerns)**

All staff in our school will be trained to be aware that children with disabilities, SEND and/or mental health issues are more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) and other safeguarding risks than other children and may not always show outward signs and may have communications barriers and difficulties in reporting challenges.

Additionally, children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and view their lives in a positive way and that this is likely to adversely impact their mental health and emotional well-being.

Children may be vulnerable because, for instance, they have needed an allocated social worker, have a disability, are in care, a care-leaver or previously looked after, or are experiencing some form of neglect. It is therefore important that staff recognise that mental health concerns can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially

traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.

For such children school may be one of the few stable, secure and predictable components of their lives. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken, following this policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

10.3 Our school seeks to remove any barriers that may exist in being able to recognise abuse or neglect in pupils with Special Educational Needs, disabilities, or physical health issues. These barriers include: -

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children.
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

We will seek to provide such children with the necessary support to build their self-esteem and confidence, helping them to secure the very best educational outcomes they are able to achieve. The context in which safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours occur, whether in school or within or outside the home (including online), will be considered by staff, particularly the DSL and Deputy DSLs. Any associated threats or risks will be included in assessments and relevant information included in referrals to Children's Social Care.

General indicators of abuse and neglect (from Part 1 of the statutory guidance) are also included in Appendix 8 of this policy and further information about specific forms of abuse are contained within Appendix B of the statutory guidance, "Keeping Children Safe in Education".

#### 10.4 **Child on child abuse**

At Woodlands Academy we recognise that children sometimes display harmful behaviour themselves and that young people are at risk from harm not only from adults but from other children. We are also aware that even if there are no reports, it may still be happening.

Abuse between children is categorised as child-on-child abuse.



Incidents or allegations will be referred on for appropriate support and intervention. Such abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at all or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

Child on child abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- physical and sexual abuse  
all forms of bullying, physical violence (e.g., hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, etc).
- sexual harassment and violence  
This abuse could for example include sexual violence and sexual harassment, “up-skirting”, initiation/hazing type violence,
- emotional harm
- on and offline bullying
- teenage relationship abuse  
abuse in intimate relationships between peers, consensual and non-consensual sharing of indecent images, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent and This may be experienced by both boys and girls, however, girls are more likely to be the victims and boys’ perpetrators.

It can even include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation.

Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination. Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are not phobias, they are not fears; they are forms of discrimination of or hate towards LGBTQ+ people or those perceived to be LGBTQ+ and they will not be tolerated.

We will therefore take positive action to create a culture of support and to ensure that girls and vulnerable groups such as LGBTQ+ and pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds feel confident to bring forward any concerns and have a safe space to talk to trusted staff about their experiences.

There are different school and local authority or Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance and policies which detail the school’s procedures to address and minimise these concerns including;

1. Pupil Behaviour Policy
2. Anti-bullying Policy
3. The CIT Child-on-Child Abuse Policy (see Appendix 9)
4. E-safety/Online safety Policy
5. DfE guidance Part 5 of “Keeping Children Safe in Education”.

All children will be encouraged to report to a trusted adult in school all incidents of child-on-child abuse wherever it may have happened and will be taught about alternative ways of doing this both in school and elsewhere e.g. via an online form. They will always be taken seriously and never given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting their concern or made to feel ashamed. It is recognised that even where no reports are received, this does not mean that such abuse is not taking place. It could just be that it has not been reported. Where an incident has occurred or specific risks are identified, the details will be added to a

safeguarding or behaviour record for the children concerned and a thorough investigation conducted by the DSL, where appropriate.

A written risk assessment will be undertaken by the DSL to minimise the risk of further harm and to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils. Parents or carers of the children involved will be informed as soon as it is appropriate to do so. Support plans will be written, and help offered, by different adults in school (to avoid a possible conflict of interest), to the alleged victim, the child or young person accused, and any other children involved.

A referral to any relevant outside agency will be made e.g., Police or Social Care. Detailed guidance and procedures are included in the linked guidance and school policies listed above.

The following steps will be taken to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- Staff training to ensure an understanding of what it is and how to recognise signs
- Promotion of a supportive environment by teaching about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (including online) in assemblies/tutor time and the wider curriculum e.g. PSHE
- Clear procedures put in place to govern the use of mobile phones in school: they are allowed whilst travelling to and from school however they are not permitted to use mobile phones whilst in school.
- Appropriate staff supervision of pupils and identifying locations around the school site that are less visible and may present more risk to pupils

10.5 **Online safety** – We recognise that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and that children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place).<sup>7</sup> Leaders in school, supported by the ICT lead at the Trust will ensure the school meets the government standards for filtering and monitoring digital content and access: [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Appropriate Filtering and Monitoring - UK Safer Internet Centre.](#)

Leaders ensure that staff in school receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

Some children may use mobile and smart technology, whilst at school and outside of school, to sexually harass their peers, share indecent images (consensually and non-consensually) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Many children have unrestricted access to the internet via their mobile phones and our online safety policy describes the rules governing their use in school.

We aim for staff to be trained to be aware to respond to incidents which may involve one or more of the four areas of risk – content, contact, conduct and commerce.



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

Online safety is a consideration running through the planning and implementation of all relevant policies and procedures. Staff will always respond if informed that children have been involved in sharing indecent images. The DfE guidance “Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people” (Dec 2020) will be used to guide the school’s response on a case-by-case basis.

The key points for staff and volunteers (not including the DSL) being: -

- Report immediately to the DSL
- Do not view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download.
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL (or equivalent) and seek support.
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it. Leave this for the DSL if needed.
- Do not ask the child/children or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL (or equivalent).
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL (or equivalent).

Leaders and the LSB will ensure they do all that they reasonably can to limit children’s exposure to the above risks from the school’s IT system. As part of this process, the LSB will ensure their school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.

They will check as part of their assurances to the trust Board that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

## **10.6 Extremism and Radicalisation**

This school takes seriously its duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), to have “due regard<sup>148</sup> to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The school risk assessment for understanding any localised or contextual concerns in relation to extremism and radicalisation will be regularly reviewed and updated.

All staff will undergo training as part of the CIT pathway to recognise the signs that children are accessing information from extreme ideologies and as a result might be susceptible to radicalisation using guidance from the Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales

All staff know what to do if extremism or radicalisation in any form is suspected and the DSL knows the local procedures for making a referral.

### 8.5 **Sexual violence and sexual harassment –**

At Woodlands Academy we aim to create a school culture that makes clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated,

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences as described under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 including rape and sexual assault. Sexual harassment is ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and may include sexual name-calling, taunting or “jokes” and physical behaviour, for example, deliberately brushing against someone or interfering with clothes.

‘Up skirting’ is also a criminal offence (under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019) and typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without them knowing, to obtain sexual gratification or to cause humiliation, distress or alarm (anyone of any gender can be a victim).

Evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBTQ+ children are more likely to be the victims of sexual violence and harassment, and boys are more likely to be the perpetrators. We will take positive action to create a safe and supportive culture in school, recognising the disproportionate vulnerability of these groups so that all pupils feel supported and have a safe space to speak openly with trusted adults if they wish to do so.

All staff will be aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children of any gender.

#### **Responding to an incident**

- School will follow the DfE guidance on ‘Child-on child sexual violence and sexual harassment’ in Part 5 of “Keeping children safe in education”.
- Relevant staff will liaise with the police, social care and parents as appropriate.
- Support will be offered to both the alleged victim(s) and child(ren) accused. Parents will be included in discussions about the format that this support will take.
- Planned PSHE and Relationships, Sex and Health Education will include personal privacy, respect and consent so that children will have a better understanding of how to behave towards their peers including online. This will be taught alongside other safeguarding issues as set out in the DfE statutory guidance “Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education”. This

will be appropriate to pupils' age and stage of development. It will also be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system.

#### **10.7 Children who are missing and absent from education–**

Children who go missing from education as well as those who are absent for extended periods of time, can indicate a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse, or risk of forced marriage.

We believe that early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

Our school annual safeguarding training and ongoing support for staff will ensure they are aware of our unauthorised absence procedures and children missing from education procedures.

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9.30am to give reason for their child's absence. A telephone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence. The school will always follow up on any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data into the school census system

Where a pupil becomes at risk of Persistent Absenteeism the school will:

- Welcome the pupil back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with the pupil to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
  - Undertake weekly reviews of progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability. Support could include completing an Early Help Assessment with the family to provide external support.

Our school recognises the entitlement that all children have to education and will work closely with the local authority Inclusion Service to share information about pupils who may be missing out on full time education or who go missing from education.

The local authority will also be informed where children are to be removed from the school register a) to be educated outside the school system; b) for medical reasons; c) because they have ceased to attend; d) because they are in custody; d) because they have been permanently excluded.

It is the school's duty to notify the local authority of any children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions and cannot be found at the known place of residence.

We also recognise that when children go missing this could be a sign that they may have been targeted by perpetrators of Child Sexual Exploitation and/or drug related criminals (County Lines). Children may also be groomed into participating in other forms of criminal exploitation including cybercrime, serious violence, and violent crime. Children who attend

an alternative education provision (AP) or have an agreed reduced timetable are more likely to be vulnerable to these forms of exploitation.

#### 10.7 **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

These are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual orientation, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

CSE and CCE can affect both males and females and can include children who have been moved (trafficked) for the purpose of exploitation. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted - exploitation, as well as being physical, can be facilitated and/or take place online.

CSE can include 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to sex, but they may not realise they are being exploited e.g., they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point or are targeted by criminals involved in the illegal supply of drugs (County Lines) and serious violent crime.

'County Lines' involves drug networks or individuals exploiting children and young people into carrying drugs and money between cities, towns, and villages.

Serious violent crime can be associated with this form of criminal activity together with child sexual exploitation.

Children may also be exploited into committing cybercrime or money laundering offences and organized criminal groups or individuals may exploit children and young people with enhanced computer skills to access digital networks and/or data for criminal and financial gain.

Children with bank accounts may be persuaded to allow criminals to use their banking facilities to launder money.

CCE can also involve working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing and may involve coercing children to commit vehicle crime or serious violence towards others.

It is important to note that the experience of girls can be very different to that of boys, but girls are also at risk.

Criminal exploitation of children is a form of harm that can affect children in both a physical environment and online.

Staff training includes raising awareness of these issues and any concerns are passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will make a risk assessment and refer to Local Authority First Response Children's Duty if appropriate.

#### 10.8 **Serious violence**

This is associated with several risk indicators in children including increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Staff will be made aware of these and of the other risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, including, being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending such as theft or robbery. Staff training will raise awareness of these risks, and any concerns will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to co-ordinate a safeguarding response.

#### **10.9 So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse**

This encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the so-called “honour” of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (see appendix 7), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

All forms of so-called Honour Based Abuse are abuse (regardless of the motivation), and concerns will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for onward referral as required.

#### **10.10 Modern slavery and human trafficking**

This can take on many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Children may be trafficked into the UK from abroad or moved around the country. Staff need to be aware of indicators which include, but not limited to, neglect, isolation, poor living conditions, having few personal belongings and a lack of trust and reluctance to seek help. Staff will refer any concerns to the DSL without delay who will act and refer victims to the National Referral Mechanism ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

#### **10.12 Extra Familial Harm**

Leaders will continually strive to ensure our school is a place of protection and where children can share concerns and seek support.

All staff will be aware that safeguarding incidents and or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the schools or college and can occur between children outside of these environments, known as extra-familial harm. These might include a variety of different forms and children can be susceptible to, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.

Also, the school needs to be aware of trends related to harmful online challenges and hoaxes and ensure sharing of information with parents and carers about children’s access to online sites when away from school and how to protect and mitigate against harmful behaviours and challenges.

#### **10.13 Private fostering arrangements and Kinship Care**

This is where a child under 16 (or 18 with a disability) is living with someone who is not their family or a close relative for a period of 28 days or more. (A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer). Such arrangements may come to the attention of school staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children. If so, all staff must inform the Designated

Safeguarding Lead so that a referral to Children’s Social Care for a safety check, can be made. (A close relative includes stepparent, grandparents, uncle, aunt or sibling).

Schools who are involved (whether or not directly) in arranging for a child to be fostered privately must notify local authorities of the arrangement as soon as possible after the arrangement has been made. Notifications must contain the information specified in Schedule 1 of The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and must be made in writing.

**Kinship care** is when a child lives full-time or most of the time with a relative or close family friend, an informal kinship care arrangement is where this person will look after a child but does not have parental responsibility and they are not in the care of your local council’s children’s services department. The child’s parents will usually help make and agree how the arrangement works.

### 10.13 **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). Seeing domestic abuse constitutes domestic abuse. All forms of DV can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. Staff will refer concerns to the DSL.

CIT has a Staff Domestic Abuse Policy which supports adults in school who are victims of abuse. Leaders will ensure this is accessible to all adults in school.

### 10.14 **Complaints**

Complaints or concerns raised by parents or pupils will be taken seriously and followed up in accordance with the school’s complaints process.

### 10.15 **Support for Staff**

As part of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people staff may hear information, either from the child/young person as part of a disclosure or from another adult, that will be upsetting.

Where a member of staff is distressed because of dealing with a child protection concern, he/she should in the first instance speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead about the support they require. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will seek to arrange the necessary support.

## 11 **Training**

### 11.2 **Trust Board and LSB**

The Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure arrangements for all Trustees to receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at



induction. This training will focus on their strategic role and not on operational procedures and will ensure they are equipped with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves as a 'critical friend' that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. This will include safeguarding being embedded into the culture and daily life of the school. This training will focus on their strategic role and not on operational procedures.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that all members of the LSB will receive the appropriate safeguarding training on induction. The Trust will set this as part of the CIT 3-year pathway to ensure they are equipped to do the strategic role of challenging leaders in school to ensure safeguarding for all children is robust and effective.

### **11.3 Leaders**

All headteachers and senior leaders will have annual safeguarding training and follow the CIT 3-year training pathway as set out in the CIT Safeguarding Handbook.

The DSL and the DDSL are trained to the same standard to ensure that the DDSL can adequately discharge the responsibility of the DSL in their absence.

Any leader who undertakes the training of others will themselves have the appropriate training before they deliver safeguarding training to others.

### **11.4 Teachers and staff**

School leaders and the LSB will ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction.

Safeguarding training will be updated as set out in the CIT 3-year pathway.

Induction and training will be in line with the relevant local authority recommendations. All staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) including from the CIT monthly safeguarding bulletin. School leaders will ensure all staff have access to the local authority and Trust updates on a specific bulletin board easily accessible in the school.

### **11.5 Volunteers**

All volunteers will receive the CIT recommended safeguarding training before they work with children. They will be expected to know the same safeguarding information as other adults working in the school. They will need to be able to access the safeguarding notice board.

## **12 Safeguarding in the Curriculum**

Here at Woodlands Academy children are taught about safeguarding in school and how to keep themselves safe.

All children in our school are regularly reminded that they can approach any member of staff if they have a concern. The school is committed to ensuring that children are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All children know that we have a senior member of staff (DSL) with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding and know who this is. We inform

children of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. We use a wide range of organisations and resources as part of our PSHE and Relationships Education to help children learn how to keep safe. In addition to this we make use of opportunities in other curriculum areas to discuss safeguarding topics, so pupils are constantly reminded.

We recognise that some children may find it difficult to talk about abuse that is happening within the school especially sexual abuse and harassment. We will ensure all children feel confident that their concerns will be taken seriously, and any disclosure will not be judged or seen to be minor. We will not wait until incidents occur but will be proactive in ensuring our children understand behaviours that are unacceptable and feel confident to report and be part of the solution to eradicate the behaviour within the school.

The following areas are among those addressed in PSHE and Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and in the wider curriculum: -

- Bullying (including Cyberbullying)
- Drugs, alcohol and substance misuse (including awareness of County Lines and the Criminal Exploitation of children where appropriate)
- Online safety
- The danger of meeting up with strangers
- Fire and water safety
- Road safety
- Domestic Abuse
- Healthy Relationships / Consent
- (so called) Honour Based Abuse issues e.g. forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (see Appendix 6),
- Sexual exploitation of children (CSE), including online
- Child criminal exploitation (including cybercrime)
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation (see Appendices 4 and 5)

### **13 Working with parents/carers**

Our school recognises that the child's welfare is paramount, and that good child protection and safeguarding practice and outcomes rely on a positive, open, and honest working partnership with parents. All leaders, LSB and staff in school are committed to working with parents positively, openly, and honestly.

We will always aim to ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so to protect a child. We make safeguarding information available in a variety of formats, e.g., for families with English as an additional language (EAL) etc.

We always aim for our policies and procedures to be clear, and easy to understand for staff, pupils, students, parents, and carers.

We aim for all our systems to be in place and well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for not only children but also worried parents to confidently report, any form of abuse or neglect, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.



Whilst we may, on a rare occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents and carers, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect any child.

All our safeguarding policies and procedures including the complaints and whistleblowing policies are available for parents and carers on our website. Staff who have responsibility for safeguarding in school are shown on the website as well as on posters in the entrance of the school.

#### 13.1 Our school will:

- Ensure that parents/carers understand the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations on the website. All CIT schools will operate a '*one click to safeguarding*' policy on their websites where this information can easily be accessible from the home page of any website.
- Share with parents/carers any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.
- Ensure that if parents/carers have any concerns about their child's welfare, they can raise this with the child's teachers or with the Head teacher.
- Make sure that if a parent feels that their concerns are not being addressed, they can follow the school complaints procedure which is outlined in the school complaints policy found on the website. Any serious safeguarding concerns can be reported directly to the relevant local authority Customer Services centre – as anyone can report a concern directly. The numbers for this service are on the contacts page of this policy.
- Share information with parents and carers about where to get help and support so they can protect their children at home. This includes helping with online safety understanding – especially in relation to online challenges and hoaxes.
- Undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers and seek necessary consent prior to involvement of Children & Family Services (Children's Social Care) or another agency, unless to do so would place the child at risk of harm or compromise an investigation.
- Maintain regular contact with parents in the event of any remote learning, communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online including what systems school use to filter and monitor online use. We are aware it is important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school their child is going to be interacting with online.
- Make every effort to engage and work with parents in planning for vulnerable children for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children to ensure positive and proactive behaviour support, to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.
- endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents. The DSL will determine which members of staff need to know personal information and what they need to know for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

#### 13.2 Early Help

At our school, we believe that early help and support can ensure families have the support they need to help their children thrive and succeed.

All staff should be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

Where Early Help intervention is required because the school has assessed that parents and carers need support, but the need does not require referral to statutory services, we firmly believe that multi-agency early help will work best when placed alongside our school policies, preventative education and engagement with parents and carers.

We will always aim to work with parents to identify and provide support as soon as a problem emerges.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs • has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

## 14 Safer Working Practice

Parents need to be confident that the environment they send their children to daily is safe and secure. Children also need to know that school is a protective environment where their health and wellbeing is a priority.

Following the [Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Adults who work with children and young people](#) **all staff** in our school:

- Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Work in an open and transparent way.
- Work with other colleagues, where possible, in situations open to question.
- Discuss and/or take advice from school management over any incident which may give rise to concern.
- Record any incidents or decisions made.

- Apply the same professional standards regardless of gender, sexuality, or disability.
- Comply and are aware of the confidentiality policy.
- Are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

If our staff have any concerns about the conduct of another member of staff, they will report these to the head teacher.

If staff members have concerns about the head teacher, these will be reported to the relevant Director of Education (D of E).

The Head teacher or D of E will then consider if the concerns need to be reported to the LADO.

Any concerns relating to the central team or CIT leadership should be reported to the Trust Safeguarding Lead (TSL) or the Safeguarding Trustee. Staff can find details of the contacts for these roles in the CIT Safeguarding Handbook.

## **15 Other Relevant Policies**

15.1 The Trust board and the LSB's statutory responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond simply child protection. The duty is to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies, for instance:

- Pupil Behaviour Policy – school policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook (“Guidance for Safer working practice”) CIT Trust policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy – CIT Trust policy
- Racist incidents
- Anti-Bullying (including Cyberbullying)
- Physical Interventions/Restraint (DfE Guidance “Use of Reasonable Force” and “Screening, searching and confiscation”)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability – school policy
- Educational Visits Coordinator Policy – CIT Trust Policy
- Allegations of Abuse against Staff – CIT Trust Policy
- Complaints Policy – CIT Trust Policy
- Looked After Children/Child in Care Policy – CIT Trust policy
- Work experience and extended work placements
- First Aid Statement and Policy – CIT Trust policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions – CIT Trust policy
- Health and Safety Policy – CIT Trust policy
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education – school policy
- Site Security – school policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy – CIT Trust Policy (the school needs its own equality objectives)
- Online e-Safety
- Whistleblowing Policy – CIT Trust policy

The above list is not exhaustive but when undertaking development or planning of any kind the school will consider the implications for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

## **16 Recruitment and Selection of Staff (also see the Safer Recruitment policy)**

Safer recruitment ensures that every new member of staff understands their duties to safeguard young people from the outset starting from the advertisement, through the interview, to their induction, and start at the school. It is essential that no one gets to work with children who cannot keep them safe.

We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the school who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult including e.g., volunteers and staff employed by contractors. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity, seeing academic and vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking previous employment history (and ensuring all gaps in employment are accounted for) and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and all relevant safer recruitment checks, e.g., Disclosure and Barring Service and Right to Work in the UK checks.

### **16.1 This school will always follow the CIT Safer Recruitment Policy**

This policy has been created with due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Education (Trust Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Trust Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010 1.2

This policy has due regard to guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- DfE 'Staffing and employment advice for Trusts'
- DfE 'Governance handbook' • DfE 'Guidance for full opening: Trusts'
- DfE 'Changes to checks for EU sanctions on EEA teachers from 1 January 2021'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (individual schools)
- Records Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet & IT Systems Policy

16.2 The school will provide all the relevant information in references for a member of staff about whom there have been safeguarding concerns i.e., about child protection / inappropriate conduct. Cases in which the conclusion of an allegation has been unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious will not be included in employer references. A history of repeated safeguarding concerns or allegations which have all been found to be unsubstantiated, malicious etc. will also not be included in a reference.

16.3 The school has an open safeguarding ethos regularly addressing safeguarding responsibilities during staff meetings and fostering an ongoing culture of vigilance. All new staff and volunteers will receive a safeguarding induction and are briefed on the code of conduct for adults working with children. All new staff and volunteers will receive copies of the relevant safeguarding policies and expectations before they start their role in school (See CIT 3-Year Training Pathway Document).

16.4 In line with statutory requirements, every recruitment process for school staff will have at least one member (leader, teacher or LSB member) who has undertaken safer recruitment training.

16.5 Staff and volunteers who provide early years or later years childcare and any managers of such childcare are covered by the disqualification regulations of the Childcare Act 2006 and are required to declare relevant information - see statutory guidance: Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (last updated August 2018).

#### 16.6 SCR

The school maintains a Single Central Record (SCR) which is a statutory document that holds relevant information including safer recruitment checks on:

all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school: this means those providing education to children  
all members of the LSB  
Volunteers who work with children

The information that must be recorded in respect of all staff members mentioned above is whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, **and** the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:

an identity check  
a barred list check  
an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check  
a prohibition from teaching check  
a section 128 check (for management positions as set out in paragraph 99 for independent schools, including free schools and academies) and governors in maintained schools  
further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK: this would include recording checks for those European Economic Area (EEA) teacher sanctions and restrictions  
a check of professional qualifications; and  
a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.

#### **Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK**

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK **must** undergo the same checks as all other staff in school. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in

regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, the school **must** make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks might include, where available:

[criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#) or [Home Office guidance](#) for teaching positions

obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked using the UK European Information Centre [UK ENIC](#) for advice about which regulatory or professional body applicants could be contacted.

Where available, such evidence will be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks to help assess suitability. Where this information is not available school will seek alternative methods of checking suitability or undertake a risk assessment that supports informed decision making on whether to proceed with the appointment. Although sanctions and restrictions imposed by another regulating authority do not prevent a person from taking up teaching positions in England, we will consider the circumstances that led to the restriction or sanction being imposed when considering a candidate's suitability for employment.

#### **16.7 Supply teachers and agency staff**

We obtain information in writing from our supply staff agencies that the required and relevant checks have been carried out on the supply staff and that appropriate certificates have been obtained. We also seek confirmation that an enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided and the date that confirmation was received.

Where appropriate, we will recognise the safer recruitment process within an organisation as proof that all staff who work for the organisation have been recruited safely.

If at any point we are concerned about whether safer recruitment procedures have been implemented to employ a member of staff who is intending to work in our school, we will immediately contact the organisation to check. We will also feedback any concerns we have about the staff and expect the agency to action this.

#### **16.8 Volunteers**

Volunteers play an important role in our school and we value the work they do. We will ensure that appropriate checks will be carried out and recorded and that no volunteer will be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity with a child without checks or safeguarding training.

If required, we will carry out a risk assessment based on the nature of the work with children, what we know about the volunteer, whether the volunteer has other employment or volunteering where referees can be acquired and if the role is eligible for a DBS check and at what level – depending on whether they are being expected to undertake a regulated activity or not.



## **17 Organisations or Individuals using school premises including extended school activities**

17.1 Where the School provides services or activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection will apply.

However, we are aware that our school premises might from time to time be used by individuals or organisations outside of the usual school hours for different purposes.

For example:

Spilsby Walking Football Club

17.2 Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, leaders and the LSB will seek assurance in writing that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and protect children (inspecting these where needed) and that there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate. Safeguarding requirements will be included in any lease or hire agreement as a condition of use; and any failure to comply will lead to termination of the agreement.

We will ensure that adequate checks are carried out when the school premises are used by others not employed by the school. We will:

- with the person's consent, apply for a DBS using the online system
- check for any updates to the DBS every 3-6 months
- check if the person involved is with a regulated body and if so, contact the body to see if there are any concerns
- ask the person involved for names of other schools that they have worked in and contact these schools to see if any concerns have been raised

17.3 safeguarding concerns

If our school is used by any external organisation, we might as a result receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children.

As with any safeguarding allegation, we will ensure that we follow our school and Trust safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

## **18 Whistleblowing and Escalation**

Anyone worried about a child must continue to raise the concern until they have a reason not to be worried about the child anymore

It is essential that our school expects good practice and professional conduct from ourselves, and others involved in the safeguarding of our children. Staff must be committed to providing a high standard of service and children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. They will follow the procedures for reporting low level concerns which are in our Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and raise with the Head teacher and involve the [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) if required.

If a member of staff notices anything that gives them cause for concern, it is vital that this is raised. Acting upon staff concerns is fundamental to ensuring good practice and support for staff. Resolving issues must be viewed by all staff as a positive action and not a breach of trust between colleagues.

Our staff are encouraged to use the Whistleblowing policy as appropriate to raise or pass on concerns about any of the following:

- a) Poor standards of service
- b) Issues of bad practice
- c) The conduct of colleagues or managers
- d) Anything which is not in the best interest of the children or the school
- e) Anything which is illegal or unacceptable behaviour.

We will always listen to any concerns and try to resolve them, but should staff feel unable to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled in the school, they can discuss the concern with either the relevant Director of Education – or the Safe@CIT central team. Alternatively, anyone can use the NSPCC helpline [The NSPCC's 'What you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline](#) or call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8am-8pm, Mon-Fri and 9am-6pm at the weekends or email: [help@NSPCC.org.uk](mailto:help@NSPCC.org.uk)

If there is a concern from within school about how a safeguarding concern is being handled or the school have concerns with the way other agencies are handling a safeguarding concern, then we will follow the relevant local authority escalation protocol.

This allows us to open a dialogue with other professionals and resolve any issues in an open and honest approach and in the best interests of the child.

## **19 Appendices**

### **APPENDIX 1 Local Authority Safeguarding Procedures**

#### **A1.1 Partnerships with others**

It is essential that we establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies who are partners in Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) for us to effectively safeguard our children. We have a joint responsibility to share information when it will help a child/children to stay safe. Key partners include Lincolnshire County Council, Police and Health but we also engage with a wide network of local and national organisations in our mission to protect the children in our school.

#### **A1.2 Lincolnshire Local Authority Agreed Procedures:**

##### **1. Introduction**

If somebody believes that a child may be suffering, or may be likely to suffer Significant Harm, then s/he should always refer concerns to children's services and/or the police. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call the Police immediately on 999.

The Customer Service Centre can receive referrals for unborn children once the mother reaches 14 weeks gestation. Please see the LSCP [Pre-Birth Protocol](#).

The [Customer Service Centre \(CSC\)](#) which is part of the Local Authority is the point of contact for all referrals to Children's Services. Referrals to Lincolnshire Police should be via the [Central Referral Unit](#).

When out of hours, all concerns that a child is suffering or may be likely to suffer significant harm should be through the Emergency Duty Team or through Police Head Quarters.

National advice on these matters is contained in the booklet "[What to Do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused](#)".

All practitioners should have an individual copy of this booklet.

The Customer Service Centre will accept calls from professionals and the public and will offer:

Information on Parenting Support through the provision of leaflets and website addresses. Signposting to other services as appropriate including the Family Group Conference Service. Signposting into the Team Around the Child (TAC) process for children with additional needs.

Referral onto Children's Services: Family Assessment Support Team (FAST) or Children with Disability Team.

Where there are concerns that a child is suffering or may be likely to suffer significant harm they will pass the referral to Children's Services or the Central Referral Unit of Lincolnshire Police.

Cases that require attention, will be forwarded to the relevant Team. If the case is an open case to Children's Services, they will transfer the call to the relevant worker / team. If the worker or the Team Manager is unavailable, the Customer Service Centre will pass the information to the relevant Practice Supervisor.

With regards to open cases, if further concerns are raised the key worker must discuss with the Practice Supervisor or Team Manager to consider if there is a need for a Section 47 enquiry to begin. If the child is subject to TAC and further concerns are raised, the Lead Professional must discuss with their designated officer, to consider if the child needs referral to CSC if there are Safeguarding concerns.

It is good practice for professionals to discuss any concerns they have with the family and, where possible, to seek the family's agreement to making a referral to Children's Services. However, there are exceptional circumstances where such discussion and agreement-seeking would increase the likelihood of the child suffering significant harm. In these circumstances it can be appropriate to refer without discussion or agreement from the family,

although the source of the referral will then be disclosed to the family by Children's Services unless the referrer is a member of the public who has requested anonymity.

Professionals, if in doubt, may wish to seek advice - see [Being Alert Procedure](#). In cases where a professional is acting in good faith in passing on third party information it may not be appropriate for Children's Services to reveal the source of the referral.

Other factors relevant to the decision whether to refer without prior discussion with the family include:

Issues of staff safety.

The risk of destroying evidence.

The likelihood of children or other family members being intimidated.

The possibility of an increased risk of domestic Abuse.

The possibility of the family moving to avoid professional scrutiny.

Detection and prevention of a crime for example sexual abuse.

If there are concerns that an adult with care and support needs is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, then a Safeguarding referral should be made to Adults Safeguarding. If you believe that a crime has been committed and there is an immediate danger, call the police on 999 or 112. If there is no immediate danger, call the police on 101. Further information on Safeguarding Adults can be found on the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) website.

## 2. Information Sharing

In deciding whether there is a need to share information, professionals need to consider their legal obligations, including whether they have a duty of confidentiality to the child. Where there is such a duty, the professional may lawfully share information if the child agrees or if there is a public interest of sufficient force. This must be judged by the professional on the facts of each case.

Where it is likely that a child may suffer Significant Harm, or there may be a risk of serious harm to adults, the public interest test will almost certainly be satisfied. However, there will be other cases where practitioners will be justified in sharing some confidential information to make decisions on sharing further information or acting - the information shared should be balanced.

The child's best interests must be the main consideration in making any such decision. The cross-Government guidance, Information Sharing: Practitioner's Guide, provides advice on these issues (In addition, see [Protocol on Sharing Information in Order to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children](#)) Any decision whether or not to share information must be properly documented. Decisions in this area need to be made by, or with the advice of, people with suitable skills in child protection work such as named or designated professionals or senior managers.

## 3. Making a Safeguarding Referral

When a parent, professional or other person contacts the [Customer Service Centre](#), to make a verbal referral, with concerns about a child's welfare, the customer service advisors will clarify with the caller:

Contact details including names, addresses and dates of birth for all children in the family including names and other relevant information on other adults living in the household and/or significant others.

The nature of safeguarding concerns and evidence to support the concerns.

What the needs of the child and family are, including any special needs arising from cultural, physical, psychological, medical or other factors.

Professional referrals cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that during enquiries it will be made clear which agency has shared the concerns.

Where volunteers work directly with families in a professional capacity, they should follow their organisational safeguarding policies regarding making safeguarding referrals. This may involve a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who should make the referral on behalf of the organisation, where the decision is made that there are safeguarding concerns. Where the volunteer does not work directly with the family in a professional

capacity, e.g., a volunteer at a coffee shop, within this context the referral can be made anonymously.

For members of the public who wish to remain anonymous, details will not be shared unless consent has been given by the referrer. However, due to the nature of the concern to be addressed the child or family may deduce the source of the information.

If known, what other agencies and professionals are involved with the child and family.

If there are any known risks or hazards for professionals going into the home.

Whether there are concerns about parental drug or alcohol misuse or mental ill health and what is the impact of this upon the child.

Who or what is keeping the child safe.

What does the referrer need to see change or happen to no longer have these concerns.

If nothing changes what will happen to the child.

On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is the child is not safe at all and the 10 is the child is safe and their needs are being met where would you scale and why.

Whether the child/ren may need urgent action to make them safe from harm. At the end of the call the customer service advisor will outline next steps of the decision-making process. They may also provide advice and guidance based on the information provided at the time of the call.

When a referral by phone is made in a professional capacity, the referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours, repeating all relevant information and agreed actions.

The online referral form can be completed by following this link [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/xfp/form/224](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/xfp/form/224).

#### **4. Immediate Response of Children's Services to a Safeguarding Referral**

Children's Services will decide on the next course of action within 24 hours, normally following:

Looking at existing records and any history of the child's involvement with Children's Services.

Concerns involving the police where a criminal offence may have been committed against a child.

They will also consider the needs of all the children in the household at this stage and any other children who may be impacted upon due to the concerns raised.

Contact the individual who made the referral to clarify any information as required.

This initial consideration of the case should address, based on the available evidence:

Where there are concerns about either the child's health and development, or actual and/or potential harm which justify further enquiries, assessment and/or intervention a Child and Family Social Work Assessment will be completed.

Sometimes it may be apparent at this stage that emergency action should be taken to safeguard a child. Such action should come before an immediate Strategy

Discussion between the police, social services and other agencies as appropriate.

See [Immediate Protection Procedure](#).

#### **5. Referral Outcome**

At the end of the referral discussion, the referrer and children's services should be clear about the proposed action, who will be taking it, timescales and whether no further action will be taken.

Referral outcomes about a child, where there may be concerns, typically fall in to five categories and pathways:

**No further action**, which may include information to signpost to other services. The referrer should be advised of alternative options for ensuring the family can be offered support services to promote the child's welfare. Opportunities include information and advice, and referral to another agency including the Family Conference Service.

**Early help** - referrals for intervention and prevention services within the Team Around the Child and Early Help services range of provision. The referrer should discuss these options with the parent and young person and gain consent for the next steps. The referrer will have

a key role in taking forward these options in partnership with the family. See [Early Help and Team Around the Child Documentation](#);

Child in Need services - assessment to be undertaken by Children's Services (Section 17 CA 1989).

Child Protection services – assessment and child protection enquiries to be undertaken by Children's Services (Section 47 CA 1989) with active involvement of other agencies such as the police.

New information may be received about a child or family where the child or family member is already known to Children's Services. If the child's case is open, and there are concerns that the child is suffering or may be likely to suffer significant harm then a decision should be made about whether a strategy discussion should be initiated (see [Strategy Discussions Procedure](#)) and a new Section 47 Enquiry commenced. In these circumstances it may not be necessary to undertake a Social Work Assessment before deciding what to do next. It may, however, be appropriate to undertake a Child and Family Social Work Assessment or to update a previous one to understand the child's current needs and circumstances and inform future decision making.

Whatever the outcome of a referral, it will have been assessed by a qualified social worker and a decision will have been made by the relevant line manager within the time scale of one working day about what should happen next. The children's services manager must approve the outcome of the referral and ensure that a record has been commenced and/or updated.

The social worker should inform, in writing, all the relevant agencies and the child, if appropriate, and family of their decisions and, if the child is a Child in Need, of the plan for providing support.

In the case of referrals from members of the public, feedback must be consistent with the rights to confidentiality of the child and their family.

Where a referring professional disagrees with the children's services response to their referral, they have a duty to escalate their concerns as outlined in the [Professional Resolution and Escalation Protocol](#)

The child and parents should be routinely informed about local procedures for raising complaints, if they wish to, and local advocacy services.

Local Authority Recommended Guidance:

[Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-Agency Procedures](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children & Young People 2018](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)

[Information Sharing Document 2018](#)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015](#)

[Children Act 1989](#) and [Children Act 2004](#)

[Education Act 2002](#)

[Teaching Standards](#)

[Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Adults who work with Children and Young People](#)



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

[The Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)

[Behaviour in Schools: advice for Headteachers and school staff \(2022\)](#)

[The Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools](#)

Elective Home Education (EHE) [ehe@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:ehe@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Children Missing Education (CME) [cme@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Child in Entertainment or Employment [cee@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:cee@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

School Attendance Queries [attendance@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Prevent

Prevent Lead, Lincolnshire County Council, [prevent@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:prevent@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

PREVENT Officer, East Midlands Special Operations Unit – Special Branch, 01522 558304,  
[CTP-EM-Prevent@lincs.pnn.police.uk](mailto:CTP-EM-Prevent@lincs.pnn.police.uk)

Online Safety incidents

National helpline

[Saferinternet Helpline](#)

Early Help Team

[TACadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:TACadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

[www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/tac](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/tac)

[earlyhelpconsultants@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpconsultants@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Training Materials

LCC and LSCP Online, virtual and face to face Safeguarding Training courses including Safer Recruitment training: [LSCP Training](#)

[LCC Safeguarding in Schools and education settings package \(including training\)-  
safeguardingschools@lincolnshire.gov.uk](#)

Safeguarding Governor Training [governorsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:governorsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

[LSCP Training](#)

Prevent Training-

Face to face Prevent Awareness training is available through the [Stay Safe Partnership webpage](#)

Staff can also undertake Prevent Awareness e-learning through:

[Prevent Home Office e-learning](#)

[Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF (INCLUDING HEADTEACHERS), SUPPLY TEACHERS, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS**

**Link:** [Allegations-of-Abuse-Against-Staff-Policy-July-2022.pdf \(citacademies.co.uk\)](#)

The CIT Trust policy for allegations of abuse against staff and the agreed procedures within this policy must be followed in all cases where there is an allegation or safeguarding concern that a person working with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

There is also a CIT Trust “Low-level concerns policy” which should be followed if the concern does not meet the allegations threshold above or is not considered serious enough to make a referral to the LADO (See Appendix 3).

Relevant documents:

- DfE “Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges” (part 4: Allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors)

#### **1) Individual Staff/Volunteers/Other Adults who receive an allegation:**

- i. Write and sign a dated and timed note of what has been disclosed or noticed, said or done.
- ii. Report immediately to the Headteacher.
- iii. Pass on the written record.
- iv. If the allegation or safeguarding concern is about the conduct of the Headteacher, report immediately to the Director of Education or Deputy. Pass on the written record. (If there is difficulty reporting to the D of E or Deputy, contact the Allegations Manager (LADO), Safeguarding and Performance Unit as soon as possible.)

**2) Headteacher**

- i. If there is no written record, write and sign a dated and timed note of what has been disclosed or noticed, said or done.
- ii. Before taking further action notify and seek advice from the relevant Director of Education and the Allegations Manager (LADO), Safeguarding and Improvement Unit on the same day.
- iii. You may be asked to clarify details or the circumstances of the allegation, but this must not amount to an investigation at this stage.
- iv. Report to First Response Children's Duty if the Allegations Manager (LADO) so advises or if circumstances require a referral concerning a child.
- v. Ongoing involvement in cases:
  - Liaison with the Allegations Manager (LADO)
  - Co-operation with the investigating agency's enquiries as appropriate (including working closely with the employment agency in the case of supply teachers).
  - Consideration of employment issues and possible disciplinary action where the investigating agencies take no further action.
  - Possible referral to the DBS or The Teaching Regulation Agency, depending on the outcome.

**APPENDIX 3**



# Low Level Concerns Policy

<b>Policy Code:</b>	HR31
<b>Policy Start Date:</b>	July 2024
<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	July 2025

### **Statement of intent**

The Community Inclusive Trust understands the importance of acknowledging, recording and reporting all safeguarding concerns, regardless of their perceived severity.

We understand that, while a concern may be low-level, that concern can escalate over time to become much more serious.

Our Trust prides itself on creating a safe and prosperous environment for pupils, and our staff are expected to adhere to high standards of behaviour when it comes to professional conduct regarding pupils.

The Trust has clear professional boundaries which all staff are made aware of and will adhere to. We are committed to ensuring that any safeguarding concerns are dealt with as soon as they arise and before they have had a chance to become more severe, to minimise the risk of harm posed to our pupils and other children.

#### **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust and school policies:

- The CIT Trust wide safeguarding Statement Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Positive Handling Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy

#### **2. Definitions**

2.1. For the purposes of this policy, a low-level concern is defined as any concern had about an adult's behaviour towards, or concerning, a child that does not meet the harms threshold (see below) or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral at the time of its reporting.

Low-level concerns refer to behaviour on the part of a staff member towards pupils that is considered inappropriate in line with statutory safeguarding advice, the Staff Code of Conduct, and the Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour subsection of this policy.

2.2. Low-level concerns are differentiated from concerns that can cause harm. The harms threshold is the point at which a concern is no longer low-level and constitutes a threat of harm to a child.

This threshold is defined as accusations that an adult has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they pose or may pose a risk to children.
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

2.3. While low-level concerns are, by their nature, less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the Trust understands that many serious safeguarding concerns, e.g. child sexual abuse, often begin with low-level concerns, e.g. being overly friendly with children. The Trust will ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of recognising concerns before they escalate from low-level to serious, wherever possible.

#### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

3.1. The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Trust complies with its duties under child protection and safeguarding legislation.

- Ensuring that policies, procedures and training opportunities about reporting safeguarding concerns are compliant and effective.
- Guaranteeing that there is an effective Staff Code of Conduct that outlines behavioural expectations.
- Ensuring that a suitably trained DSL has been appointed at each school, alongside deputy DSLs where appropriate.
- Ensuring that there are robust reporting arrangements, including inter-agency collaboration.
- Ensuring that there are appropriate procedures in place to handle allegations and low-level concerns reported against members of staff.

3.2. The Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- Providing training on managing low level concerns to Headteachers and DSLs
- Providing advice and guidance to Headteachers and DSLs on the management of reported concerns as appropriate.
- Monitoring the application of this policy within each school.
- Conducting school audits on the reporting, recording and management of low-level concerns to ensure compliance with this policy.

3.3. The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Being a point of contact for all staff when they have safeguarding concerns, whether serious or low-level.
- Assessing whether safeguarding concerns about staff members meet the threshold for being termed an allegation, or whether they are low-level concerns.
- Implementing this policy, and all related policies, throughout their school, and ensuring that staff always adhere to it.
- Safeguarding pupils' wellbeing and maintaining public trust in the teaching profession.
- Ensuring that all staff within their school have undertaken safeguarding training.
- Ensuring that all staff within their school have an ongoing awareness of lowlevel concerns and reporting procedures.

3.4. The DSL is responsible for:

- Being a point of contact for all staff when they have safeguarding concerns, whether serious or low-level.
- Assessing whether safeguarding concerns about staff members meet the threshold for being termed an allegation, or whether they are low-level concerns.
- Following all procedures outlined in this policy for acting upon low-level concerns.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, staff members, the local school board and all relevant agencies to act upon concerns, where necessary.
- Ensuring detailed, accurate and secure records of all low-level concerns and any actions taken are recorded electronically on CPOMS/SchoolPod.

#### **4. Staff are responsible for:**

- Adhering to all the relevant policies and procedures, including always acting within the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Interacting with pupils in a way that is respectful and appropriate for their level of authority and has due regard to the power imbalance between pupils and staff members.
- Understanding the importance of reporting low-level safeguarding concerns.
- Reporting all safeguarding concerns they may have about pupils immediately.
- Reporting all safeguarding concerns they may have about the behaviour of a member of staff immediately.

#### **5. Prevention amongst staff - Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour**

5.1. The Trust will ensure that all staff members are aware of the standards of appropriate behaviour expected towards pupils.

5.2. Staff will ensure that they pay due regard to the fact that:



- They are in a unique position of trust, care, responsibility, authority and influence in relation to pupils.
- There is a significant power imbalance in the pupil-staff dynamic.
- There are more stringent expectations on their behaviour with regard to pupils due to their position as a public professional.

5.3. Staff will remain aware of the fact that all pupils under the age of 18, regardless of the phase and year group they are at within the school, are children by law – resultantly, staff will ensure that they do not assume maturity on behalf of a pupil and do not engage with pupils as they would with their own peers. Staff will be aware that where there is any doubt regarding whether the behaviour of another adult is appropriate, this should be reported to the DSL or Headteacher immediately.

5.4. Inappropriate behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour to behaviour which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour that would constitute a low-level concern that should be reported to the DSL or Headteacher include:

- Being overly friendly with children – this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with pupils, e.g. conversations that are about a staff member's personal life or are of a sexual nature.
- Having favourites – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment or buying pupils gifts.
- Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phones or devices.
- Seeking to engage with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Humiliating pupils
- Covering viewing panels in a classroom door against guidance

5.5. Staff will be aware that some of the above low-level concerns may meet the harms threshold depending on certain factors, e.g. the age or needs of the child or the content of exchanged messages, and that some of the above incidents may not be concerns in context, e.g. a pre-approved, one-to-one meeting with a child behind a closed door between the child and a school counsellor who has received all appropriate safety checks.

5.6. Staff will also be made aware that behaviour which raises concerns may not be intentionally inappropriate, and that this does not negate the need to report the behaviour. Staff members who engage in low-level inappropriate behaviour in relation to pupils inadvertently will be made aware and supported to correct this behaviour in line with the Staff Code of Conduct.

The Headteacher will also evaluate whether additional training would be beneficial for any staff members exhibiting concerning behaviour, or the staff cohort where low-level concerning behaviour is seen more widely.

### **Trust culture**

5.7. The Trust understands that spotting the early signs of harmful behaviour towards children can be difficult, and that many will be hesitant to report concerns they have about their colleagues' behaviour, particularly the behaviour of their superiors. Staff are encouraged to maintain an attitude that recognises that abuse can happen anywhere, in any setting, and that anyone can be a perpetrator regardless of their age, sex, level of authority, personality, etc.

5.8. The Trust will ensure that all staff members have received training as part of their induction that outlines appropriate behaviour towards pupils for staff members. All staff will

read, understand and adhere to the Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour subsection of this policy, as well as the Staff Code of Conduct.

5.9. Staff will address any questions they have regarding safeguarding to the DSL or Headteacher. The Trust will work to foster an environment where personal and professional boundaries are clearly set and respected for all individuals in our school communities, e.g. pupils are not treated as friends and an appropriate professional distance is maintained by staff.

5.10. The Trust will ensure that all staff are sufficiently trained surrounding the reporting of safeguarding concerns as part of their induction, and that refresher training is conducted as necessary. The Trust will ensure that all staff understand how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns. Staff will be trained to identify concerning or problematic behaviour towards pupils that may indicate a safeguarding concern, and how to identify signs of abuse or harm in pupils.

### **Evaluating Trust and School culture following concerns**

5.11. The Trust will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the Trust and School's culture and whether it has enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur. The Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead will review whether any changes need to be made to relevant policies or training programmes considering any evaluations of the Trust or school's culture, to achieve an open and transparent culture that deals with all concerns promptly and appropriately.

## **6. Reporting concerns**

6.1. The Trust will promote a culture in which safeguarding pupils is the uppermost priority, beyond any perceived professional loyalties to colleagues, ensuring that staff are actively encouraged to report concerns, regardless of their relationship with the staff member.

6.2. Staff will report all safeguarding concerns they have to the Headteacher or DSL immediately in line with the procedures laid out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff members will report concerns without undue delay. Where the report concerns a specific incident, staff members will report their concerns no later than 24 hours after the incident where possible. Staff members will be aware that concerns are still worth reporting even if they do not seem serious.

6.3. Staff members will report their concerns to the Headteacher or DSL, by the agreed method for example by submitting a Low-level Concern Reporting Form. When submitting concerns, staff will take care to ensure that they observe the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy and protect the identity of all individuals to which the concern pertains as far as possible.

6.4. Staff members may request anonymity when reporting a concern, and the Trust will endeavour to respect this as far as possible. The Trust will not, however, promise anonymity to staff members who report concerns in case the situation arises where they must be named, e.g. where it is necessary for a fair disciplinary hearing. In line with the Whistleblowing Policy, staff will be protected from potential repercussions caused by reporting a genuine concern.

6.5. Where a low-level concern relates to the Headteacher, it should be reported to the appropriate Director of Education or Deputy, Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director of HR.

6.6. Where a low-level concern relates to the CEO or a member of ELT, it should be reported to the Chair of the Trust Board.

6.7. Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor to work in a school, staff will also be required to report this to the Headteacher or DSL, who will, in turn, inform the employer of the subject of the concern.

## **7. Self-reporting**

7.1. On occasion, a member of staff may feel as though they have acted in a way that:

- Could be misinterpreted.
- Could appear compromising to others.
- They realise, upon reflection, falls below the standards set out in the Staff Code of Conduct.

7.2. The Trust will ensure that an environment is maintained that encourages staff members to self-report if they feel as though they have acted inappropriately or in a way that could be construed as inappropriate upon reflection. The Headteacher and DSL will, to the best of their abilities, maintain a culture of approachability for staff members, and will be understanding and sensitive towards those who self-report.

7.3. Staff members who self-report will not be treated more favourably during any resulting investigations than staff members who were reported by someone else; however, their self-awareness and intentions will be taken into consideration.

## **8. Evaluating concerns**

8.1. Where the Headteacher or DSL is notified of a safeguarding concern, they will use their professional judgement to determine if the concern is low-level or if it must be immediately escalated, e.g. where a child is at immediate risk of harm. When deciding if a concern is low-level, the Headteacher will discuss the concern with the DSL and seek advice from the LADO where there is any doubt about whether the concern in fact meets the harm threshold. When seeking external advice, the Headteacher will ensure they adhere to the Data Protection Policy, and the information sharing principles outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, at all times.

8.2. To evaluate a concern, the Headteacher and DSL will:

- Speak to the individual who raised the concern to determine the facts and obtain any relevant additional information.
- Review the information and determine whether the behaviour displayed by the individual about whom the concern was reported is consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct and the law.
- Determine whether the concern, when considered alongside any other low-level concerns previously made about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and dealt with alongside the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
- Consult with, and seek advice from, external agencies when in doubt over the course of action to follow.
- Speak to the individual about whom the concern has been raised to inform them of the concern and to give them an opportunity to respond to it.

- Ensure that accurate and detailed records are kept of all internal and external conversations regarding evaluating the concern, and any actions or decisions taken.

### **9. Acting on concerns Where the concern is unfounded**

9.1. If it is discovered upon evaluation that the low-level concern refers to behaviour that was not considered to be in breach of the Staff Code of Conduct and the law, the Headteacher will speak to the individual about whom the concern was made to discuss their behaviour, why and how the behaviour may have been misconstrued, and what they can do to avoid such misunderstandings in the future. The Headteacher will also speak to the individual who shared the concern, outlining why the behaviour reported is consistent with Trust standards and the law. The Headteacher will take care to ensure that conversations with individuals who reported concerns that transpired to be unfounded do not deter that individual from reporting concerns in the future.

9.2. The Headteacher will discuss the concern with the DSL (and if they have been involved, the LADO) to discern whether the behaviour, and the reporting of this behaviour, is indicative of ambiguity in the Trust or school's policies or procedures, or the training it offers to staff. Where such ambiguity is found, the DSL and Headteacher will work together, with the Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead, to resolve this with input from other staff members, as necessary. Where the concern is low-level.

9.3. Where the Headteacher or DSL determines that a concern is low-level, the school will respond to this in a sensitive and proportionate manner. The following procedure will be followed:

9.4. The DSL holds a meeting with the individual about whom the concern was reported, during which they will:

- Talk to the individual in a non-accusatory and sympathetic manner.
- Inform them of how their behaviour was perceived by the individual who reported the concern (without naming them, where possible).
- Clearly state what about their behaviour was inappropriate and problematic.
- Discuss the reasons for the behaviour with the individual.
- Inform the individual clearly what about their behaviour needs to change.
- Discuss any support that the individual may require to achieve the proper standards of behaviour.
- Allow the individual the opportunity to respond to the concern in their own words.

9.5. The DSL asks the individual to re-read the Staff Code of Conduct.

9.6. The DSL and the Headteacher will consider whether the individual should receive guidance, supervision or any further training.

9.7. Where considered appropriate in the circumstances, the Headteacher will develop an action plan, with input from the individual, that outlines ongoing and transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour and any other support measures implemented to ensure the staff member's behaviour improves.

9.8. Where it is necessary to undergo an investigation into the behaviour, this will be done discreetly, and information will only be disclosed to individuals on a need-to-know basis.

9.9. Where any pupil or other individual has been made to feel uncomfortable by the individual's behaviour, they will be offered pastoral support, where appropriate.

9.10. The Headteacher will ensure that all details of the low-level concern, including any resultant actions taken, are recorded and securely stored in line with the Records Management Policy and the Data Protection Policy. The Headteacher will ensure that these records are kept organised and up-to-date, and that it is easy to refer to them if any other concerns are reported about the same individual.

9.11. The specific approach to handling low-level concerns will be adapted on a case-by-case basis. It is unlikely that a low-level concern will result in disciplinary procedures; however, individuals may be given warnings in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure where behaviour does not improve once it is brought to their attention. Where behaviour does not improve over a longer period, the concerns will be escalated and dealt with in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy. Where the concern is serious

9.12. The Headteacher may decide upon evaluation that a concern is more serious than the reporter originally thought, e.g. when viewed in conjunction with other evidence or other concerns made about the same individual. Where this decision is made, the concern will be escalated, and dealt with as an allegation. The Headteacher will then follow the procedures laid out in the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

## **10. Record keeping**

10.1. Schools will retain all records of low-level concerns related to their individual schools, including those that were found to be unfounded.

10.2. The Headteacher or DSL will ensure that all records include the most accurate and up-to-date information and will store them according to the system that is in place for recording safeguarding concerns in their school i.e. CPoms and Schoolpod. The Headteacher and DSL will ensure that all low-level concerns are stored together, in an organised and consistent manner, to ensure they can be easily reviewed and analysed where necessary.

10.3. The Trust Safeguarding Lead will maintain records of any central team low-level concerns as well as any concerns relating to Headteachers.

10.4. Record of any low-level concerns concerning members of ELT will be maintained by the Clerk to the Trust Board.

10.5. Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- The context in which the concern arose.
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached, and the outcome.
- The name of the individual sharing concerns – if the individual wishes to remain anonymous, this will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

10.6. The DSL and Trust Safeguarding Lead will periodically review the recent low-level concerns made to ensure that they are being appropriately dealt with and to check for any concerning behaviour patterns amongst the staff cohort. The DSL will keep records of these reviews.

10.7. Where any concerning patterns of behaviour have been identified about a member of staff, the Headteacher will decide on a course of action. Where a pattern of behaviour has become so concerning that it meets the harms threshold, this will be referred to the LADO as soon as practicable. It should be considered whether there are any wider cultural issues within the Trust/school that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies, including this one could be revised, or extra training provided to staff to decrease the risk of it happening again.

10.8. Records of any outcomes from low-level concerns will be kept in the personnel file of the individuals to whom the concerns pertain. Where a concern is thought to be serious and is processed as an allegation, records of this will be kept in staff personnel files. Where multiple low-level concerns have been made about the same individual, these will be kept together, and in chronological order.

10.9. Where an allegation is made about an individual who has previously been subject to such allegations, or where a low-level concern is reclassified as a serious concern after meeting the harms threshold, all records of low-level concerns about that individual will be moved to the staff personnel file and kept alongside records of allegation.

10.10. The Headteacher will ensure that all records are kept in a manner that is consistent with the Data Protection Policy.

10.11. The school will only refer to concerns about a staff member in employment references where they have amounted to a substantiated safeguarding allegation, i.e. it has met the harms threshold and has been found to have basis through investigation, or where it is not exclusively a safeguarding issue and forms part of an issue that would normally be included in a reference, e.g. misconduct or poor performance. Low-level safeguarding concerns will not be included in a reference, unless they have comprised a pattern of behaviour that has met the harms threshold.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

11.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead, and in response to any new safeguarding requirements or concerns surrounding the wider cultural issues in the Trust



**Low Level Concern Reporting Form (For use if school does not use StaffSafe from CPoms)**

Thank you for reporting your concerns to the safeguarding team; we are grateful to you for taking the safety and welfare of our pupils seriously. Please fill in the below form, including as much detail as you can, and return it directly to the headteacher or DSL. Please refrain from discussing this concern with anyone other than the headteacher or DSL until the matter has been dealt with. We ask that you keep all details, including the name staff member to whom the concern pertains, confidential.

Your details	
Name (optional)	
Role	
Date and time of completing this form	
Details of individual whom the concern is about	
Name	
Role	
Relationship to the individual reporting the concern, e.g. manager, colleague	
Details of concern	
Please include as much detail as possible. Think about the following: What behaviour and/or incident are you reporting? What exactly happened? Why does the behaviour and/or incident worry you? Why do you believe the behaviour and/or incident is not consistent with our Staff Code of Conduct?	
Details of any children or young people involved	
Name(s)	
Do you believe there is a risk of harm to the above children or young people, either now or in the future, because of the individual's behaviour? Explain your answer.	
Next steps	
What would you like to see happen in response to your concern?	
Are you willing to meet with the headteacher and DSL to discuss your concern? Please circle as appropriate.	Yes
	No
Please state any other information that you believe is relevant to the processing of this concern.	
Signature	
For use by safeguarding team upon receipt of concern	
Date and time concern received	

<b>Signature of DSL or deputy DSL</b>	
<b>Actions to be taken, e.g. no action, investigation, reclassification as allegation meeting the harms threshold.</b>	

**Appendix 4 – Body Map Guidance:**

Body Maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries.

IF the body map that is being used is NOT part of the electronic MIS recording system (i.e. Schoolpod/CPoms) and is paper based – always use a black pen (never a pencil) and do not use correction fluid or any other eraser.

Do not remove clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment.

**\*At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school take photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person, the body map below should be used. Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to Customer Service Centre or the child's social worker if already an open case to social care.**

**When you notice an injury to a child, try to record the following information in respect of each mark identified e.g., red areas, swelling, bruising, cuts, lacerations and wounds, scalds, and burns:**

- Exact site of injury on the body, e.g., upper outer arm/left cheek.
- Size of injury - in appropriate centimetres or inches.
- Approximate shape of injury, e.g., round/square or straight line.
- Colour of injury - if more than one colour, say so.
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc.?
- Is mobility restricted because of the injury?
- Does the site of the injury feel hot?
- Does the child feel hot?
- Does the child feel pain?
- Has the child's body shape changed/are they holding themselves differently?

Importantly the date and time of the recording must be stated as well as the name and designation of the person making the record. Add any further comments as required.

**Ensure First Aid is provided where required and then recorded appropriately.**

A copy of the body map should be kept on the child's concern/confidential file, if not part of the electronic MIS.

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy for the use of Cameras and Mobile Phones**

The Trust policy on use of personal services covers the needs of the EYFS Framework for having guidance for staff on using mobile phones:

#### Introduction

Throughout the Trust the welfare and wellbeing of our students and staff members is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Devices Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice.

This is achieved through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile devices user guidelines.

The Policy recognises that mobile devices are effective communication tools and sets out ways to protect against potential misuse and unnecessary cost. The Trust is aware of the enhanced functions of many mobile devices and that these can cause concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and can be susceptible to misuse – including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

As it is difficult to detect specific usage, this Policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices, including Mobile Phones, Smart Phones, Smart Watches, Tablets (including iPads), and Wi-Fi Dongles.

Definition: In this policy “mobile devices” include Handheld devices, tablets and smart phones, or any other devices that allow for the user to be mobile.

Scope: This Policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal and work mobile devices on site. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, students, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors.

This Policy should be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Child Protection Policy/Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy • Acceptable Uses Policy
- Photography Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy

Code of Conduct: A Code of Conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a co-operative workforce where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other, thus creating a strong morale. Therefore, our aim is that all staff:

- Have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- Know how to minimise risk.
- Avoid putting themselves in a compromising situation which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.

- Understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use of all mobile communication devices, especially in relation to social media.
- Are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.
- Are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

Misuse refers to any activity that is non-school related or could bring the school into disrepute. It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive, therefore an agreement of trust is promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones/devices within the setting which is agreed to by all users.

#### Personal Devices – Staff

- Personal devices should not be used by staff when pupils are present without written/emailed prior permission from the site lead.
- With permission, staff may take a personal phone out on a school activity; however, they must be turned off and not to be used unless there is an emergency. On residential stays, a personal device/phone may be used in an appropriate location away from pupils.
- Staff are not permitted to make/receive personal calls during contact time with pupils on personal devices.
- Emergency contact should be made via the school office unless other arrangements are agreed with the site lead.
- Personal mobile phones/devices should not be used in any teaching space where pupils are present.
- Use of personal phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no pupils are present, e.g. in office areas, staff room, and empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff set up security to prevent unauthorised access to functions of their personal devices.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example, to take recordings of pupils, or sharing images.
  - Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras, iPads and school issued mobile phones.
- Staff who use applications on personal mobile devices (including social media) need to purchase these with their own personal ID.
- Staff must be conscious of what they post on social media and must ensure that privacy settings are up to date, rigorous and limit public distribution of content.

#### Mobile Phones/Devices for work-related purposes

Where a mobile phone has been issued by the Trust, it will remain the property of the Trust and can be recalled at any time and content checked. The user will be responsible for its safekeeping, proper use, condition and eventual return. During the day mobile phones/devices should be with the user at all times.

Apps must be deleted when the phone/device is returned to the Central Team (due to upgrade, end of employment or any other reason).

If a mobile device is connected to a personal ID, the staff member is required to unlock the device so it can be restored to factory setting and issued to another member of staff. The user must also supply all login details that have been issued to them so that the device can be reset to factory settings.

Where a mobile phone/device has been issued by the Trust the user agrees that upon termination of employment to return the phone/device. If they do not return it, or it is returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of a replacement or a proportional amount of this as decided by the Trust will be taken from final monies owing or the user will otherwise reimburse the Trust.

Photographs of students can be taken on work mobiles/devices; however, these must be stored securely, and the phone/device must be locked when not in use. All such photos must be deleted from the mobile device/phone within a school term (where there are three terms in a school year).

Should there be any queries on the use of the mobile device/phone the ICT Team is available to help. If staff should leave the Trust their work-related devices must be returned to the IT staff.

#### Social Media on Mobile Phones/Mobile Devices

- Social media platforms will only be used in accordance with the CIT Photography and Social Media Policies.
- Teachers will not engage in activities involving social media which might bring the school into disrepute.
- Teachers will not represent their personal views as those of the school on any social media platform.
- Teachers' personal information, or pupils' personal information, will not be discussed on social media
- Authors will be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information.
- Social media will not be used as a platform to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues or other professionals.
- Content expressed on school social media accounts will not breach copyright, Data Protection or Freedom of Information legislation.
- Teachers will request access to the school's social media accounts from the Head Teacher or the Lead IT.
- Teachers participating in social media are expected to demonstrate the high standards of behaviour as expected within the school.
- The school's social media accounts will always comply with site rules, particularly with regard to the minimum age limit for use of the site. Cloud-based Data Storage
- The school is aware that data held in remote and Cloud-based storage is still required to be protected in line with the Data Protection legislation.
- Teachers ensure that Cloud-based data is kept confidential, and no data is copied, removed or adapted.

#### Mobile Phones/Devices – offsite, educational visits, school trips

- Mobiles/devices will be used professionally and appropriately.
- Mobile phones/devices should not be used to make general contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications will be made via the school office.
- Mobile phones/devices may only be used to contact parents in an emergency and when the trip is outside of normal school hours e.g. residential.
- Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to contact other parents or use their phone to take photographs of students.

#### Personal Mobiles/Devices – Students

The Trust recognises that mobile phones/devices are part of everyday life for many of our students and can play a role in helping students feel safe and secure.

However, the Trust also recognises that they can be a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore, we have drawn up a Code of Conduct for students:

- Students are not permitted to have mobile phones/devices at school or on trips unless stated in the individual school's risk assessments. The risk assessment must be reviewed by the school's Senior Leadership Team on an annual basis. The results of this meeting must be minuted.



- In the event of parents wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone/device to contact the parents after school, the mobile phone/device must be handed into a staff member, then stored in the school office first thing in the morning and collected at the end of the day. (The phone is left at the owner's risk).
- Mobile phones/devices brought into school and not handed in will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Parents/Carers will be contacted to ensure that they understand the rules regarding phones/devices.

Where mobile phones/devices are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the Head Teacher has the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of students when they are off the school site.'

#### Mobile Phones/Devices – Parents

The Trust would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones/devices while in school, but it recognises that this would be impossible to regulate. The Trust asks that parents' usage of mobile phones/devices whilst on school sites is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.

The Trust allows parents to photograph or video school events such as shows, sports day, etc, using their mobile phones/devices, but insists that parents do not publish images, for example on social networking sites, that include any children other than their own (see Photography Policy).

#### Lost or Stolen Mobiles/Devices

The user is responsible at all times for the security of the mobile phone/device. A PIN number should be used on the mobile/device to enable maximum security.

All confidential information, for example login details, must be password protected and changed on a regular basis.

If the phone/device is lost or stolen, a member of the IT staff should be informed immediately. If this is not possible then contact the provider directly, quoting the PIN number to ensure that the account is stopped and there is no unauthorised usage. In the event of a theft of a mobile phone/device, the incident must also be reported to the Police and an incident number obtained and used to report to the ICT staff.

#### Monitoring of Usage and Costs

The Trust's phone bills are monitored on a monthly basis and if a user's bill is over the designated monthly cost, then the ICT Team contact the user. If the reason for the higher cost is work-related then no extra cost is incurred; if the calls were personal, then the Trust would bill the user for anything above the designated monthly fee.

Mobile phones can be spot checked at any time. Such checks will be undertaken by a member of the IT Team or Executive Leadership Team and will ensure that the phone has been used appropriately. The user will be told of the UK inclusive allowances when the phone is issued.

#### Mobile Phone Use Abroad

The Trust phones used abroad will be charged at cost to the user, unless the calls are required for school. Prior to the trip abroad, that user must contact the IT Department to give advice and to check the usage abroad. The user will switch off 'data roaming' unless Internet access is needed, as this may be charged at a premium rate abroad.

Policy Review - The Trust considers the Mobile Phone/Mobile Device Policy to be important and the Executive Leadership Team will undertake a thorough review of the policy and practice every three years

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **Safeguarding pupils who are susceptible to extremism and radicalisation**

All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The Prevent duty is part of our school wider safeguarding obligations.

KCSiE 2024 (page 157) says that: *Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments. The school or college’s designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.*

Our school recognises the duties placed on us by the Counter Terrorism Bill (July 2015) to prevent our pupils being drawn into terrorism.

Measures that we as a school take include:

- Assessing the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism – which we do through our Prevent Risk assessment. This is available on our website.
- Working in partnership with relevant agencies (including making referrals) under the local authority Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
- All staff receive appropriate staff training as part of induction and the CIT 3-Year Pathway.
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring – through SENSO.

Our school is committed to actively promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The pupils are encouraged to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

There is a current threat from terrorism in the UK and this can include the exploitation of vulnerable young people, aiming to involve them in terrorism or to be active in supporting terrorism.

Our school seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including but not restricted to those linked to Islamist Ideology, Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology etc. Concerns should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who has local contact details for the Prevent Engagement Team (Police) and Channel referrals.

They will also consider whether circumstances require Police to be contacted urgently.

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 places a mandatory duty on teachers along with social workers and healthcare professionals to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been

carried out on a girl under 18 or where a girl discloses that she has undergone FGM. The school's response to FGM will consider the government guidance, "Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation" updated October 2018. Staff will also follow the established safeguarding procedure by reporting any such concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a report must also be made to the Police.

There will be a considered safeguarding response towards any girl who is identified as being at risk of FGM (e.g. there is a known history of practising FGM in her family, community or country of origin) which may include sensitive conversations with the girl and her family, sharing information with professionals from other agencies and/or making a referral to Children's Social Care. If the risk of harm is imminent there are several emergency measures that can be taken including police protection, an FGM protection order and an Emergency Protection Order.

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **Indicators of abuse and neglect**

All staff will be aware of the definitions of abuse as set out in Keeping children safe in education 2024 pages 11-13:

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others.

This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

**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, because 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 caregivers).

or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **APPENDIX 9**

### **Child-on-Child Abuse -identification and reporting and management of Child-on-Child Abuse**

This aspect of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be read in conjunction with guidance in KCSiE 2024, and the relevant local authority agreed strategy for managing and reporting child on child abuse.

The following terms used in this policy are defined as in KCSiE 2024:

Victims and alleged perpetrator(s)

This policy uses the term 'victim'. It is a widely recognised and understood term. However, we recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way.

We urge any adult in school to be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable.

This policy uses the term 'alleged perpetrator(s)' and where appropriate 'perpetrator(s)'.

These are widely used and recognised terms and the most appropriate to aid understanding in this policy. However, schools and colleges should think very carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of children, not least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.

#### **This part of the policy will: -**

- Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying and managing child on child abuse
- Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people involved. Acknowledging that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful

sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by peer, parents or adults in the community.

KCSIE 2024 defines abuse as a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

When a child or a group of children abuses another child, it is defined and named as child-on-child abuse.

We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse.

This policy will support all staff to understand that Peer on Peer abuse Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex or a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

All staff in school must be made aware, as part of the ongoing Trust 3-year training pathway that children can and do abuse other children.

The scope of this learning will cover incidents that happen both inside and outside of school or college as well as online.

As part of the training, staff will be trained to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

We will ensure that through our training, policy and ongoing practice that our staff are able to recognise the signs of child-on-child abuse and know with confidence how the school and the Trust expects them to respond. This includes the understanding that although incidents might not be reported it is a high likelihood that it may well be happening for some of our pupils. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing and have an impact on academic achievement and emotional health and wellbeing.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence may also occur online and offline.

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it. In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB).

We use the NSPCC definition of HSB as: - "Sexual behaviours expressed by children...that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child or adult.

### **Vulnerable groups**

We recognise that all children can be at risk of abuse, however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable.

This can include:

experience of abuse within their family; living with domestic violence; young people in care; children who go missing; children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities); children who identify or are perceived as LGBT and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

Whilst research tells us girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers and, girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools this is not confined to girls. Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where gangs affect them. We recognise that both boys and girls experience child on child abuse, but they do so in gendered ways.

Information and strategies for dealing with many aspects of child-on-child abuse appear in other school and Trust policies such as the whole school behaviour policy, the anti-bullying policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

**Scope and definition of Child – on – Child abuse:**

At CIT we define child on child abuse as an overarching umbrella that encompasses a spectrum of specific bullying behaviours.

Bullying is a very broad term and therefore we will expect all our staff who are recording incidents on their school behaviour systems to unpick and allocate the form of bullying specific to the actual incident.

Child on child abuse reporting will be a separate category to friendship issues.

Child on child abuse will be broken down in to 5 overarching bullying areas:

Examples of behaviours that fit with these 5 broad areas are given below; the lists are not exhaustive but give an indication of what events should be allocated to which category:

Child on child abuse	Bullying	Physical abuse	physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. It also includes inciting others to commit physical harm.
		Emotional abuse	Name calling, belittling, threatening, isolating and excluding from a social group
		Prejudice based abuse	Racist abuse Homophobic abuse
	Abuse in intimate personal relationships	between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)	
	Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).</li> <li>• sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which</li> </ul>	



		<p>may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Sexting</li> </ul> <p>consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos<sup>13</sup> (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• up skirting, (now a criminal offence and has reporting requirements) which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.</li> </ul>
	Cyber / online	Text groups, social media, sexting and youth-produced sexual imagery, peer pressure,
	Ritual	Initiation /hazing type violence and rituals initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element

Any child-on-child bullying incidents that are prejudice-based and have any motivation against pupils with protected characteristics or that relate to people with protected characteristics will be reported separately and investigated as race/hate incidents, regardless of the nature of the abuse.

**Reporting allegations of child-on-child abuse:**

When staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should report this immediately to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and report it on the school’s behaviour or safeguarding reporting system as soon as practicable as set out in the Reporting section of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

When recording on the school system, the correct categorisation of abuse must be assigned as shown in the boxes above. If in any doubt, the member of staff reporting should seek advice from the DSL.

When they witness or have child on child abuse reported to them, it is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature.

***Staff will be trained effectively so that they know not to downplay certain behaviours, for example we must avoid dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.***

Children also need to know how to report concerns and know that they will be listened to and supported.

These should include:

- Procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse
- How allegations are recorded, investigated and dealt with
- Clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected will be supported
- Recognition of the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse but recognising, that all forms of this behaviour are unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

### **Responding to reports of child-on-child abuse:**

As part of the Trust training pathway, all staff will be trained to manage a report.

All reports of child-on-child abuse will be assessed on a case-by-case basis as to the nature and severity of the incident, with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care or the police as required.

### **The immediate response to a report:**

Any adult who takes a disclosure from a pupil or witnesses an event will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.

- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the interview as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Where the report includes an online element the school or college will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.
- The DSL will be informed and involved as soon as possible following disclosure as they might need to guide any support or follow-up.

**Risk Assessment** When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The risk and needs' assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator; and
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic say where these are filed) and be kept under review.

**Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment:**

The school will use Part 5 of KCSiE 2024 as guidance for dealing with issues relating to sexual violence and harassment.

Following an incident, we will consider

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

**What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?**

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

- **The nature of the alleged incident(s)**, including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- **The ages of the children involved.**

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? (In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, 1-4-year-olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however, should not be overlooked if other issues arise

- **The developmental stages of the children involved; the children's own understanding of what occurred?**

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person understand the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

In dealing with an incident of this nature the answers are not always clear cut. If you are concerned or unsure as to whether there is any risk involved, please seek advice from Children's Services Social Care.

- **Any power imbalance between the children.** For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- **If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse.**

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school staff, and other related issues and wider context?

**Where did the incident or incidents take place?**

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this area?

As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

### **Options to manage the report**

#### **Manage internally**

1. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, leaders may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support. This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored (by whom, where).

2. In line with 1 above, leaders may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

3. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to the relevant local authority body following locally agreed protocols. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker.

Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

#### **Reporting to the Police**

The designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) will follow local processes for referrals. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains.

The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach. Where a report has been made to the police, the school or college will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought to help us.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college take do not jeopardise the police investigation. The end of the criminal process If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school /academy will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for

all children. We will consider any suitable action following our behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in school/academy we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned.

This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the perpetrator's timetable. Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or students in the school or college. We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

### **Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault**

Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of agencies. In school, we will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere.

This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family. If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The DSL will support this move. Where there is a criminal investigation, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim, and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises or on school transport.

This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings. We will work closely with the police. Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school and college premises and transport.

The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases. Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict.

None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator.

Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis.

All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

**Physical Abuse** While a clear focus of child-on-child abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive.

These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police immediately. The principles from the school anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.



**Appendix 10 Actions where there are concerns about a child**

