



CHILD PROTECTION AND  
SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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SEPTEMBER 2023

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### Lead Safeguarding Advisor

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Email: advisoryboard@merrywood.org.uk

### Additional Advisory Board Links

Roger Easthope and Steve Wallace

Email: advisoryboard@merrywood.org.uk

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### Local Authority Contacts:

#### Sutton

Children's First Contact Service (CFCS) –  
020 8770 6001

childrensfirstcontactservice@sutton.gov.uk

Social Care - Out of Hours – Emergency Duty Team  
Tel: 0208 770 5000 x9

#### Sutton Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership:

Tel: 020 8770 4879 • Email: suttonlscp@sutton.gov.uk

Website: www.suttonlscp.org.uk

(Sutton Local Safeguarding Children Board ceased to exist when the new Sutton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements came into effect on 1 July 2019.

Three Statutory Partners are the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and Police.

Locally, Education providers will be made the fourth Partners

The LSCP Board will be made up by the four Partners, co-opted members and relevant agencies

**Sutton LA LADO** (Local Authority Designated Officer - complaints against staff)

Tel: 0208 770 4776 • Email: LADO@sutton.gov.uk

#### LBS Prevent and Hate Crime Manager:

Tel 0208 649 0672

**Education Safeguarding Manager:** Tel: 07736 338 180

#### Surrey

**LADO (Local Authority Contact):**

Tel: 0300 123 1650

Email: Lado@surreycc.gov.uk

**Schools and Early Years Child Protection Consultation line:**

Tel: 0300 470 9100

Out of hours

Tel: 01483 517898

Email: csmash@surreycc.gov.uk Prevent

Website: healthysurrey.org.uk

## > Coronavirus (Covid-19)

The government has told all schools to return back to school, you can read the guidance below.

Since the government told schools to return back, we have continued to keep pupils and students safe, prevent and reduce the risk of spread and focus on the wellbeing of our pupils and students.

Read about the government guidance [here](#).

## > 1. Safeguarding statements

### **“It could happen here”**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils and students.

We make every effort to provide an environment in which pupils and students and adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to talk if they are worried, believing they will be effectively listened to.

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers, the Executive Head and advisors with the framework they need in order to keep pupils and students safe and secure in our school. The policy also informs parents and carers how we will safeguard their pupils and students whilst they are in our care.

This includes our safeguarding of pupils and students while using devices on the school’s network. Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place, so that pupils and students remain safe online.

Staff are trained and committed to ensure that all victims of abuse are taken seriously and supported within Merrywood. Our ethos is to reassure pupils and students to call out any abuse they may be suffering.

**The government has told all schools to return back to school, you can read the guidance below.**

Since the government told schools to return back, we have continued to keep pupils and students safe, prevent and reduce the risk of spread and focus on the wellbeing of our pupils and students.

Read about the government guidance [here](#).

## **“The welfare of the child is paramount”**

## > 2. Definitions

### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and students is defined as:**

- protecting pupils and students from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of pupils and students' health or development;
- ensuring that pupils and students grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all pupils and students to have the best outcomes.
- Preventing impairment of pupils and students' mental or physical health or development.

**Child Protection** is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific pupils and students who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Early Help** means the providing support as soon as additional needs and support emerge at any point in a child's life any needs emerge or are identified after as soon as.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child(ren)** includes everyone under the age of 18. On the whole, this will apply to pupils and students of our school; however the policy will extend to visiting pupils and students from other establishment.

**Parents** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step- parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

**Social Care** refers to pupils and students Services in the area in which the child is resident, unless a child is a Child Looked After then this will be the Children's Services in their home authority.

CFCS Children's First Contact Service

## > 3. Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with statutory guidance: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018, Revised Safeguarding Statutory Guidance 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' 2000, 'What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused' 2015 and 'Marriage and Civil Partnership (minimum age) Act 2023. The policy also reflects, guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023 (KCSIE).

The school takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and students; and to work together with other agencies to ensure there are robust arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those pupils and students who are suffering harm or at risk of suffering harm.

This policy applies to all members of staff and advisors of the school.



## > 4. Guidance and documents referred to in this policy

Children's First Contact Service

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015/2018) A revision is expected 2023

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (KCSIE)

FGM Act 2003 Mandatory Reporting Guidance 2016

'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' 2015

Teacher Standards 2011

Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners' guidance 2015

SCC Children Missing Education

SCC Touch and the use of physical intervention when working with children and young people

Covid-19

Sexual Violence between Children Guidance

Sexual Violence between Children Guidance

Marriage and civil partnership (minimum age) Act 2022

## > 5. Policy values

The welfare of the child is paramount.

Maintain an attitude of "It could happen here".

Pupils and students have a right to feel safe and secure, they cannot learn effectively unless they do so.

All pupils and students have a right to be protected from harm and abuse.

All staff have a role in the prevention of harm and abuse and an equal responsibility to act immediately on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a child is at risk of harm, either in the school or in the community, taking into account contextual safeguarding, in accordance with statutory guidance.

We acknowledge that working in partnership with other agencies protects pupils and students and reduces risk and so we will engage in partnership working to protect and safeguard pupils and students.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If pupils and students and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Whilst the school will work openly with parents as far as possible, it reserves the right to contact Social Care or the police, without notifying parents if this is believed to be in the child's best interests.

## > 6. Policy principles

To demonstrate the Merrywood Education's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to pupils and students, parents and other partners.

To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils and students through training staff to identify and report possible cases of abuse.

To enable the school to effectively contribute to Early Help, assessments of need and support for those pupils and students.

Continuously reinforce that outstanding safeguarding is driven by holistically supporting our pupils and students' social, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.

To provide robust school systems and procedures that is followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.

To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, in particular Early Help providers, the Police, Health and Social Care.

To ensure that all staff, including supply staff, working within our Merrywood Education, who have substantial access to pupils and students have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to KCSIE guidance), and a single central record is kept for audit.

We comply with the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 guidance issued in February 2015.

## > 7. Contractors and Outside Agencies

We expect all contractors providing services within the school whose staff have access to school premises to comply with this policy and the attached procedure, as well as the staff code of conduct. The contractor or individual must agree to this in writing.

In particular, we require any contractor or organisation delivering a service on behalf of the school or using our premises to provide evidence they adhere to the above requirements in terms of recruitment, selection, training and supervision of their staff and any volunteers, in particular DBS information.

Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information). For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with pupils and students, an enhanced DBS check will be required (not including barred list information).

Under no circumstances will a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity.

If a contractor working at a school is self-employed, the school will consider obtaining the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account.

The identity of contractors and their staff will be checked on arrival at the school.

This policy and procedure will also apply to any organisation using school facilities. They must agree to this in writing.

## > 8. Site Security

All people on the site have to adhere to the guidelines within this policy. Laxity can cause potential safeguarding issues to arise. Therefore:

- Gates should be locked at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- All Exit Doors should be closed to prevent intrusion.
- Visitors must only enter through the main entrance and after signing in at the office. They should be given a visitors' badge on entry.
- Pupils and students will only be allowed home with adults with parental responsibility or confirmed permission.
- Pupils and students should never be allowed to leave school alone during school hours, and if collected by an adult, signed out.
- Should a child leave the school premises without permission then staff have been informed never to chase after a child, but rather to report immediately to the office and follow at a safe distance in order to keep the child in sight. Then parents and police will be informed of the circumstances.

## > 9. Supporting pupils and students

We recognise that school may provide a safe place and the only stability in the lives of pupils and students who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses abuse and/or violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.

There may also be barriers to the child making a disclosure, as he or she may not feel ready, or may not know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected; and may not recognise their experience as harmful.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

### **Merrywood Education will support all pupils and students:**

We will promote a caring, safe and positive environment within our school.

We will provide pupils and students with adults whom they can build trusting relationships in order to have a safe space in which to make disclosures.

We will encourage self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum and through positive relationships within the school community.

We will ensure pupils and students are taught to understand and manage risk through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and through all aspects of school life. This includes online safety.

We will respond sympathetically to any requests for time out to deal with distress and anxiety. We are a special school with strategies put in place to protect pupils and students' special educational needs.

We will offer details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support.

We will liaise and work in partnership with other support services and agencies involved in Early Help and the safeguarding of pupils and students.

We will notify Social Care immediately if there is a significant concern.

We will provide continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that information is shared under confidential cover to the child's new setting and ensure the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority and within statutory timescales.

## > 10. Prevention / Protection

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils and students by providing pupils and students with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

### **Merrywood Education will:**

Establish and maintain an ethos where pupils and students feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.

Include regular consultation with pupils and students e.g. through questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying activity, asking pupils and students to report whether they have had happy/sad lunchtimes/ playtimes.

Ensure that all pupils and students know there is and can access an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.

Include safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE, opportunities which equip pupils and students with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help. In particular this will include anti-bullying work, online-safety, accessing emergency services, road safety, pedestrian and cycle training.

Ensure all staff are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.

## > 11. Early Help

Every family can go through difficult or challenging times at some point during their lives. If you are aware of a family that is experiencing problems, they may require support to help them to deal with difficult situations and make things better. Early Help services and support should be offered as soon as a problem or difficulty starts. This is to stop things from getting worse, and to make sure that the family gets the help that they need. The Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) is used to find out about the family so that we can understand the difficulties that they may be experiencing. The EHAT is used when a family would like support to help them with a difficulty; when a professional working with a family recognises that they may require extra support; when a family have lots of professionals working with them and services and information needs to be organised to help make things clearer for them; where the needs of the family are unknown or unmet. The EHAT is entirely consent based and the family can decide at any point that they no longer wish to engage with the process. An EHAT is confidential except where there is a risk of serious harm to a child or young person.

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

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

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- 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
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- 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 drugs or alcohol themselves
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is a privately fostered child



## > 12. Multi-Agency Working

Schools and colleges have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Merrywood Education will contribute to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.

The three safeguarding partners are:

- Local authority
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Chief Officer of Police

The three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and students. To fulfil this role they must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies. Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement that the three safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and students with regard to local need. The three safeguarding partners will have set out in their published arrangements which organisations and agencies they will be working with and the expectations placed on any agencies and organisations by the arrangements.

The three safeguarding partners should make arrangements to allow all schools (including those in multi-academy trusts) and colleges in the local area to be fully engaged, involved and included in safeguarding arrangements. It is expected that, locally, the three safeguarding partners will name schools and colleges as relevant agencies and will reach their own conclusions on the best way to achieve the active engagement with individual institutions in a meaningful way.

If named as a relevant agency, schools and colleges, in the same way as other relevant agencies, are under a statutory duty to co-operate with the published arrangements.

Merrywood's Designated Safeguarding Lead or another representative will continue to attend Safeguarding Locality meetings with the LA's Social Care managers in order to promote and improve working together partnerships.

## > 13. Safe school, safe staff

### **We will ensure that:**

The school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with pupils and students and disqualification by association regulations.

All staff receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, the school's safeguarding statement, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct), child protection policy, the role and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy(s), and **Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1 and annex A**.

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction in line with advice from **Safeguarding Children's Partnership** which is updated every two years and receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least every term.

All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety and reporting concerns.

We will have more than one designated safeguard lead, our teachers will all be trained as deputy designated safeguard leads, to ensure that when staff members are off of site that a DSL is always present. Due to the level of needs our pupils and students have, staff will be extra vigilant and monitor behavioural and emotional changes. Designated lead safeguarding training will be updated every two years.

The child protection policy is made available via the school website and that parents/carers are made aware of this policy.

All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through the publication of the Child Protection Policy and reference to it in the school's handbook.

We provide a coordinated offer of Early Help when additional needs of pupils and students are identified and contribute to early help arrangements and inter-agency working and plans.

Community users organising activities for pupils and students are aware of the school's Child Protection Policy, guidelines and procedures.

The name of the designated members of staff for child protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy(s), are clearly advertised in the school with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected harm and abuse.

All staff will be given a copy of Part 1 and Annex A and B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and will sign to say they have read and understood it. This applies to the Executive Head in relation to part 2 of the same guidance.

All staff will be aware of Contextual safeguarding - Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between pupils and students outside the school or college. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of pupils and students should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. Additional information regarding contextual safeguarding is available [here](#).

## > 14. Roles and Responsibilities

### 14.1 All School Staff

All staff have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and in providing help for pupils and students. To achieve this they will:

Provide a safe environment in which pupils and students can learn.

Establish and maintain an environment where pupils and students feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

All staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals will attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

Staff however, are well placed to observe pupils and students 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 pupils and students have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Staff are aware of how these pupils and students's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken, following our child protection policy and procedure and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Ensure pupils and students 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 pupils and students to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.

Attend training in order to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse.

Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" with regards to safeguarding.

Know how to respond to a child who discloses harm or abuse following training of 'Working together to Safeguard Children', and 'What to do if you are worried a child is being Abused' (2015).

Record their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the DSL immediately that day. If the DSL is not contactable immediately a Deputy DSL should be informed.

Be prepared to refer directly to the Multi Agency Partnership (MAP), 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 Local Authority Safeguarding Children's Partnerships and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education.

Provide support for pupils and students subject to Early Help, Child in Need or Child Protection that is in keeping with their 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.

Have an understanding of early help, and be prepared to identify and support pupils and students who may benefit from early help.

Will identify pupils and students who may benefit from early help, liaising with the DSL in the first instance. (Options may include managing support for the child internally via the schools pastoral support process or an early help assessment). In some circumstances it may be appropriate for a member of school staff to act as the Lead Professional in early help cases.

Liaise with other agencies that support pupils and students and provide early help, ensuring that the SEN team from the child’s local authority is kept up to date.

Know who the DSL and Deputy DSL are and know how to contact them.

Have an awareness of the role of the DSL, the schools Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy and Staff Code of Conduct, and procedures relating to the safeguarding response for pupils and students who go missing from education.

Be mindful that the Teacher Standards states that teachers should safeguard pupils and students’s wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

Assist the DSL in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities set out in legislation and statutory guidance.

## **14.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the DSL will:

Hold the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the school, this responsibility is not able to be delegated.

Have an “it could happen here” approach to safeguarding.

Liaise with the local authority and work in partnership with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

NPCC - When to call the police should help designated safeguarding leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.

Manage and submit a Request for Support Form for a child if there are concerns about suspected harm or abuse and act as a point of contact and support for school staff.

Report concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, following the Prevent referral process and use the Prevent referral form to refer cases by e-mail to the LA’s Prevent Team. If the matter is urgent then Police must be contacted by dialling 999. In cases where further advice from the Police is sought dial 101.

The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and Advisors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Liaise with the “case manager” and Local Authority Designated Officer for child protection concerns in cases which concern a member of staff or a volunteer; and refer cases where a person is dismissed or left service due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service and Teaching Regulation Agency, as required.

Follow DfE and KCSIE guidance on ‘Child on Child Abuse’ when a concern is raised that there is an allegation of a child abusing another child within the school.

Be available during term time (during school hours) for staff in school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Appropriate and adequate cover arrangements will be arranged by the DSL and the school leadership for any out of hours/term activities.

Act as a source of support and expertise in carrying out safeguarding duties for the whole school community.

Encourage and promote a culture of listening to pupils and students and taking account of their wishes and feelings, amongst all staff.

Access training and support to ensure they have the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. DSL training should be updated at least every two years and their knowledge and skills refreshed at regular intervals but at least annually.

Have a secure working knowledge of Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including the local authority levels of need criteria and referral arrangements.

Have a clear understanding of access and referral to the local early help offer and will support and advise members of staff where early help intervention is appropriate.

Understand and support the school delivery with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and provide advice and guidance to staff on protecting pupils and students from radicalisation.

Liaise with school staff (especially pastoral support, behaviour leads, school health colleagues and the SENDCO) on matters of safety and safeguarding.

Be alert to the specific needs of pupils and students in need, those with SEND and young carers.

Understand the risks associated with online activity and be confident that they have the up-to-date knowledge and capability to keep pupils and students safe whilst they are online at school; in particular understand the additional risks that pupils and students with SEND face online and the associated and appropriate support they require.

Keep detailed, accurate records (either written or using appropriate secure online software), that include all concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral and record the rationale for decisions made and action taken.

Ensure that an indication of the existence of the additional child protection file is marked on the child's school file record.

Ensure that when a child transfers school (including in-year), their child protection file is passed to the new school as soon as possible, and within statutory timescales (separately from the main child's file and ensuring secure transit) and that confirmation of receipt is received.

Ensure that where a child transfers school and is on a child protection plan or is a child looked after, their information is passed to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed. In addition, consideration should be given to a multi-agency schools transition meeting if the case is complex or on-going.

If the transit method requires that a copy of the Child Protection file is retained until such a time that the new school acknowledges receipt of the original file, the copy should be securely destroyed on confirmation of receipt.

Ensure that all appropriate staff members have a working knowledge and understanding of their role in case conferences, core groups and other multi-agency planning meetings, to ensure that they attend and are able to effectively contribute when required to do so; where a report is required, this should be shared with the parents prior to the meeting.

Ensure that the case holding Social Worker is informed of any child currently with a child protection plan who is absent without explanation.

Ensure that all staff sign to say they have read, understood and agree to work within the School's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Part 1 and ensure that the policies are used effectively.

Organise child protection and safeguarding induction, regularly updated training and a minimum of annual updates (including online safety) for all school staff, keep a record of attendance and address any absences.

Ensure that in collaboration with the school leadership and advisors, the child protection policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.

Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is available publicly and that parents are aware that referrals about suspected harm and abuse will be made and the role of the school in this.

Establish and maintain links with the Local Authority safeguarding partners to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest policies on local safeguarding arrangements.

Contribute to and provide, with the Executive Head and Chair of Advisors, the "Audit of Statutory Duties and Associated Responsibilities" to be submitted annually to the Local Authority, Education Safeguarding Team.

Ensure that the names of the Designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead and deputies, are clearly advertised, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

Meet all other responsibilities as set out for DSLs in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

### **14.3 The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the Deputy DSL will:

Be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the role is explicit in their job description.

Provide support and capacity to the DSL in carrying out delegated activities of the DSL; however, the lead responsibility of the DSL cannot be delegated.

In the absence of the DSL, carries out the activities necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils and students. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

### **14.4 The advisory board to the school will understand and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that:**

The school has effective safeguarding policies and procedures including a Child Protection Policy, a Staff Behaviour Policy or Code of Conduct, a Behaviour Policy and a response to pupils and students who go missing from education. Ensure policies are consistent statutory requirements, are reviewed annually and that the Child Protection policy is available on the school website.

The single central record is kept up to date and that all staff, visitors, contractors, volunteers and instructors have undergone the appropriate checks.

Local authorities are informed in line with local requirements about the discharge of duties via the annual safeguarding audit.

The school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with pupils and students and disqualification by association regulations and by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training, if there is not a panel conducting interviews then the individual will have completed the safer recruitment training.

Members of the school leadership team and the Advisory Board who serve on interview panels have completed safer recruitment training which is updated repeated every two years.

Staff have been trained appropriately and this is updated in line with guidance and all staff have read Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and that mechanisms are in place to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance.

All staff including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the school's child protection policy and staff code of conduct policy.

The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff, volunteers and against other pupils and students and that a referral is made to the DBS and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency (as applicable) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned.

That a nominated advisor for safeguarding is identified as Steve Wallace.

A minimum of one visit per term will be undertaken by the Advisory Board members linked to safeguarding. This will include scrutiny of the SCR and other records and checks with staff that all safeguarding procedures are being followed and are effective.

Discussions will be held with the child to check that they feel safe in school. Any concerns will be raised with senior staff immediately. A safeguarding report will be produced after each visit and made available to the school, advisory board and relevant outside agencies (e.g. Ofsted) and each report will be referenced at the next visit.

That on the appointment, the DSL and deputy(s) will undergo Designated Safeguard Lead training.

That pupils and students are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationship and sex education (RSE).

That the school will comply with DfE and Local Authority **Children Missing Education** requirements.

That the school will comply with regular data returns requested by the Local Authority, regarding all pupils and students, of statutory school age, attending alternative provision and/or on a reduced or modified timetable.

That appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place. That any weaknesses in Safeguarding are remedied immediately.

The advisors, proprietors and school will ensure application filters and monitoring systems are in place to safeguard pupils and students online.



## > 15. Confidentiality, Sharing and Withholding Information

All matters relating to child protection will be treated as confidential and only shared as per the 'Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners' (DfE 2018) guidance.

The school will refer to the guidance in the in the data protection: **toolkit for schools** to support schools with data protection activity, including compliance with the GDPR.

Information will be shared with staff within the school who 'need to know'.

Relevant staff have due regard to Data Protection principles which allow them to share (and withhold) information.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard pupils and students and that the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations are not a barrier to sharing information where a failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm. There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. However, staff are aware that matters relating to child protection and safeguarding are personal to pupils and students and families, in this respect they are confidential and the Executive Head or DSLs will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis.

All staff will always undertake to gain parent/carers consent to refer a child to Social Care unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation.

Merrywood staff will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils and students, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority pupils and students's social care

## > 16. Child Protection Procedures

The following procedures apply to all staff working in the school and will be covered by training to enable staff to understand their role and responsibility.

The aim of our procedures is to provide a robust framework which enables staff to take appropriate action when they are concerned that a child is being harmed or abused or is at risk of harm or abuse.

The prime concern at all stages must be the interests and safety of the child. Where there is a conflict of interest between the child and an adult, the interests of the child must be paramount.

All staff are aware that very young pupils and students and those with disabilities, special needs or with language delay may be more likely to communicate concerns with behaviours rather than words. Additionally, staff will question the cause of knocks and bumps in pupils and students who have limited mobility.

### **If a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must:**

1. Make an initial record of the information related to the concern.
2. Report it to the DSL immediately.
3. The DSL will consider if there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention, however urgent medical attention should not be delayed if the DSL is not immediately available.
4. Make an accurate record (which may be used in any subsequent court proceedings) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the occurrence, of all that has happened, including details of:
  - Dates and times of their observations
  - Dates and times of any discussions in which they were involved
  - Any injuries
  - Explanations given by the child / adult
  - Rationale for decision making and action taken
  - Any actual words or phrases used by the child
5. The records must be signed and dated by the author or / equivalent on electronic based records.
6. In the absence of the DSL or their Deputy, staff must be prepared to refer directly to the Children's Services (and the police if appropriate) if there is the potential for immediate significant harm.

### **Following a report of concerns the DSL must:**

1. Decide whether or not there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm, in which case a referral must be made to the Children's Services and the police if it is appropriate.
2. Normally the school should try to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and where possible to seek their agreement before making a referral to the Children's Services. However, this should only be done when it will not place the child at increased risk or could impact a police investigation. The child's views should also be taken into account.

If there are grounds to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm or abuse the DSL must contact the Children's Services,, by sending a **Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF)** by email to the Local Authority Children's Services. If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the Police (dial 999) **must be called**. The DSL must also notify CFCS of the occurrence and what action has been taken.

3. If the DSL feels unsure about whether a referral is necessary they can phone the Children's Services to discuss concerns.

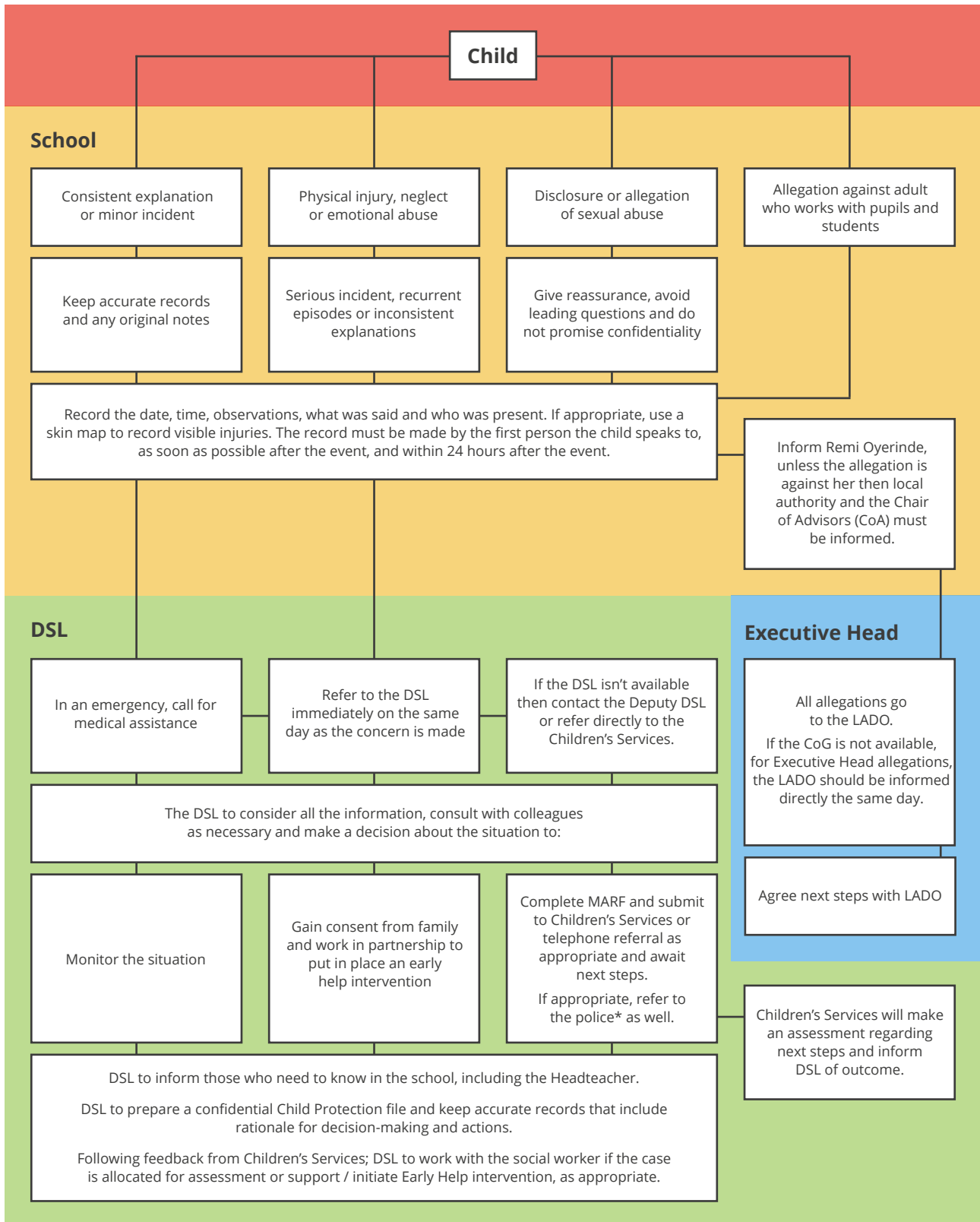
4. If there is not a risk of significant harm, the DSL will either actively monitor the situation or consider the Early Help.

5. Where there are doubts or reservations about involving the child's family, the DSL should clarify with the Children's Services or the police whether the parents should be told about the referral and, if so, when and by whom. This is important in cases where the police may need to conduct a criminal investigation.

6. When a child is in need of urgent medical attention and there is suspicion of abuse the DSL or their Deputy should take the child to the accident and emergency unit at the nearest hospital, having first notified the Children's Services. The DSL should seek advice about what action the Children's Services will take and about informing the parents, remembering that parents should normally be informed that a child requires urgent hospital attention.

7. The exception to this process will be in those cases of known FGM where there is a mandatory requirement for the teacher to report directly to the police. The DSL should also be made aware.

## > 16.1 Child Protection Procedures Flowchart



\* In the cases of known FGM, the teacher who was made aware will also make contact with the police

## > 17. Dealing with disclosures

### All staff

A member of staff who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other pupils and students safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to pupils and students with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

All staff should know who the DSL is and who to approach if the DSL is unavailable. All staff have the right to make a referral to the Children's Services or Police directly and should do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, for example, they are the only adult on the school premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home.

### Guiding principles, the seven R's

#### Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said and take it seriously.
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable.

#### Reassure

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable.
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'.
- Do reassure, for example, you could say: 'I believe you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'.

#### Respond

- Respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details.
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'did he touch your private parts?' or 'did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court.
- Do not ask the child why something has happened.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator; the child may care about them and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the child to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the child that it will be a senior member of staff.

## **Report**

- Share concerns with the DSL immediately.
- If you are not able to contact your DSL or the Deputy DSL, and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact the Children's Services or Police, as appropriate directly.
- If you are dissatisfied with the level of response you receive following your concerns, you should press for re-consideration.

## **Record**

- If possible, make some very brief notes at the time, and write them up as soon as possible.
- Keep your original notes on file.
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and noticeable nonverbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words.
- If appropriate, complete a body map to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising.
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'.

## **Remember**

- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available.
- Complete confidentiality is essential.
- Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues.
- Get some support for yourself if you need it.

## **Review (led by DSL)**

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure?
- Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required?

## **What happens next?**

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff should be informed by the DSL what has happened following a report being made. If they do not receive this information, they should seek it out.

If they have concerns that the disclosure has not been acted upon appropriately, they should contact one of the safeguarding links on the Advisory Board (Roger Easthope or Steve Wallace) and/or may contact the Children's Services or the LADO directly.

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for the member of staff and schools should have a procedure for supporting them after the disclosure. This might include reassurance that they have followed procedure correctly and that their swift actions will enable the allegations to be handled appropriately.

In some cases, additional counselling might be needed, and staff should be encouraged to recognise that disclosures can have an impact on their own emotions.

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## > 18. Pupils and students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- pupils and students with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs.
- difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.
- there may be a higher risk of peer group isolation

In our school we identify pupils and students who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe. We do this in the following ways:

- pupils and students will have a familiar adult to support with communication through simple language.
- Extra pastoral support is considered for pupils and students with SEN and disabilities.
- Use of visual aids and sign language to support understanding where required.
- Use of a familiar Speech and Language therapist to ensure that questioning and answers are put in a manner accessible to the child.
- pupils and students are carefully monitored and observed to provide a full picture of their behaviour and mannerism so that any changes are noted, and a comparison can be made.
- The use of body maps, visuals and sign language are used to allow pupils and students to communicate their needs or concerns.
- The use of social stories is regularly used to support appropriate and inappropriate behaviour – such as bullying and keeping safe.
- Intervention groups teach pupils and students how to communicate and explain appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

When required to use reasonable force to calm a situation, 'reasonable' means 'using no more force than is needed'. Individual plans for vulnerable pupils and students will be drawn up to reduce the use of force.



## > 19. Safeguarding and allegations against adults who work with pupils and students

### Procedure

This procedure should be used in all cases in which it is alleged a member of staff or volunteer in a school, or another adult who works with pupils and students 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; or
- behaved towards a child or pupils and students in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to pupils and students
- behaved or been involved in an incident outside of a setting which did not involve pupils and students but could impact on their suitability to work with pupils and students

In dealing with allegations or concerns against an adult, staff must:

- Report any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff or volunteer to DSL immediately
- If an allegation is made against the DSL, the concerns need to be raised with the Advisory Board
- If a person is deemed to be an immediate risk to pupils and students or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence, the police should be contacted immediately
- Once an allegation has been received by the DSL, Proprietor or Chair of advisors they will contact the LADO (as part of their mandatory duty).
- Following consultation with the LADO, inform the parents of the allegation unless there is a good reason not to.

In liaison with the LADO, the school will determine how to proceed and if necessary, the LADO will refer the matter to Children's Social Care and/or the police.

If the matter is investigated internally, the LADO will advise the school to seek guidance from local authority colleagues in following procedures set out in part 4 of **'Keeping Children Safe in Education'** (2023) and the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

## > 20. What is child abuse?

The following definitions are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government (2018). In addition to these definitions, it should be understood that pupils and students can also be abused by being sexually exploited, honour-based violence, forced marriage or female genital mutilation. To support the local context, all staff have access to the Sutton Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership further details.

### **Abuse and Neglect**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Pupils and students may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or pupils and students.

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse 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 persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on pupils and students.

These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing pupils and students frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of pupils and students. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur in isolation.

### **Sexual abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether 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 pupils and students in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging pupils and students to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including online).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other pupils and students.

The sexual abuse of pupils and students by other pupils and students is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

## > Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy 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).
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

The **Neglect Risk Assessment Tool** is available to provide a more detailed information regarding neglect.

### **The nature of neglect**

Neglect is a lack of parental care, but poverty and lack of information or adequate services can be contributory factors.

Far more pupils and students are registered to the category of neglect on Child in Need and Child Protection plans than to the other categories. As with abuse, the number of pupils and students experiencing neglect is likely to be much higher than the numbers on the plans. NSPCC research has highlighted the following examples of the neglect of pupils and students under 12 years old:

- frequently going hungry
- frequently having to go to school in dirty clothes
- regularly having to look after themselves because of parents being away or having problems such as drug or alcohol misuse
- being abandoned or deserted
- living at home in dangerous physical conditions
- not being taken to the doctor when ill
- not receiving dental care

Neglect is a difficult form of abuse to recognise and is often seen as less serious than other categories. It is, however, very damaging: pupils and students who are neglected often develop more slowly than others and may find it hard to make friends and fit in with their peer group.

Neglect is often noticed at a stage when it does not pose a risk to the child. The duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and students (What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused DfE 2015) would suggest that an appropriate intervention or conversation at this early stage can address the issue and prevent a child continuing to suffer until it reaches a point when they are at risk of harm or in significant need.

Neglect is often linked to other forms of abuse, so any concerns school staff have should be discussed with the DSL.

### **Indicators of neglect**

The following is a summary of some of the indicators that may suggest a child is being abused or is at risk of harm.

It is important to recognise that indicators alone cannot confirm whether a child is being abused. Each child should be seen in the context of their family and wider community and a proper assessment carried out by appropriate persons. What is important to keep in mind is that if you feel unsure or concerned, do something about it. Don't keep it to yourself. **The Neglect Risk Assessment Tool** provides staff with a resource to identify and act on concerns regarding neglect.

#### **Physical indicators of neglect**

- Constant hunger and stealing food
- Poor personal hygiene - unkempt, dirty, or smelly
- Underweight
- Dress unsuitable for weather
- Poor state of clothing
- Illness or injury untreated

#### **Behavioural indicators of neglect**

- Constant tiredness
- Frequent absence from school or lateness
- Missing medical appointments
- Isolated among peers
- Frequently unsupervised
- Stealing or scavenging, especially food
- Destructive tendencies

## > Emotional abuse

### **The nature of emotional abuse**

Most harm is produced in low warmth, high criticism homes, not from single incidents. Emotional abuse is difficult to define, identify/recognise and/or prove.

Emotional abuse is chronic and cumulative and has a long-term impact.

All kinds of abuse and neglect have emotional effects although emotional abuse can occur by itself.

Pupils and students can be harmed by witnessing someone harming another person – as in domestic abuse. It is sometimes possible to spot emotionally abusive behaviour from parents and carers to their pupils and students, by the way that the adults are speaking to, or behaving towards pupils and students. An appropriate challenge or intervention could affect positive change and prevent more intensive work being carried out later.

### **Indicators of emotional abuse**

#### **Developmental issues**

- Delays in physical, mental, and emotional development
- Poor school performance
- Speech disorders, particularly sudden disorders, or changes.

#### **Behaviour**

- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation (I'm stupid, ugly, worthless etc)
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide attempts
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Acting out
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour – e.g., wetting
- Eating disorders
- Destructive tendencies
- Neurotic behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late

## Social issues

- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Withdrawal from social interaction
- Over-compliant behaviour
- Insecure, clinging behaviour
- Poor social relationships

## Emotional responses

- Extreme fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations (“I deserve this”)
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-disgust
- Low self-esteem
- Unusually fearful with adults
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

## > Physical abuse

### **The nature of physical abuse**

Most pupils and students collect cuts and bruises quite routinely as part of the rough and tumble of daily life. Clearly, it is not necessary to be concerned about most of these minor injuries. But accidental injuries normally occur on the bony prominences – e.g., knees, shins.

Injuries on the soft areas of the body are more likely to be inflicted intentionally and should therefore make us more alert to other concerning factors that may be present.

A body map can assist in the clear recording and reporting of physical abuse. The body map should only be used to record observed injuries and no child should be asked to remove clothing by a member of staff of the school.

### **Indicators of physical abuse / factors that should increase concern**

- Multiple bruising or bruises and scratches (especially on the head and face)
- Clusters of bruises – e.g., fingertip bruising (caused by being grasped)
- Bruises around the neck and behind the ears – the most common abusive injuries are to the head
- Bruises on the back, chest, buttocks, or on the inside of the thighs
- Marks indicating injury by an instrument – e.g., linear bruising (stick), parallel bruising (belt), marks of a buckle
- Bite marks
- Deliberate burning may also be indicated by the pattern of an instrument or object – e.g., electric fire, cooker, cigarette
- Scalds with upward splash marks or tide marks
- Untreated injuries
- Recurrent injuries or burns
- Bald patches

In the context of the school, it is normal to ask about a noticeable injury. The response to such an enquiry is generally light-hearted and detailed. So, most of all, concern should be increased when:

- the explanation given does not match the injury
- the explanation uses words or phrases that do not match the vocabulary of the child (adults' words)
- no explanation is forthcoming
- the child (or the parent/carer) is secretive or evasive
- the injury is accompanied by allegations of abuse or assault

You should be concerned if a child:

- is reluctant to have parents/carers contacted
- runs away or shows fear of going home
- is aggressive towards themselves or others
- flinches when approached or touched
- is reluctant to undress to change clothing for sport
- wears long sleeves during hot weather
- is unnaturally compliant in the presence of parents/carers.
- has a fear of medical help or attention
- admits to a punishment that appears excessive



## > Sexual abuse

### **The nature of sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is often perpetrated by people who are known and trusted by the child – e.g., relatives, family friends, neighbours, babysitters, and people working with the child in school, faith settings, clubs or activities. Pupils and students can also be subject to child sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation is seen as a separate category of sexual abuse.

Characteristics of child sexual abuse:

- it is often planned and systematic – people do not sexually abuse pupils and students by accident, though sexual abuse can be opportunistic
- grooming the child – people who abuse pupils and students take care to choose a vulnerable child and often spend time making them dependent (this may occur online)
- grooming the child's environment – abusers try to ensure that potential adult protectors (parents and other carers especially) are not suspicious of their motives

We recognise up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Most people who sexually abuse pupils and students are men, but some women sexually abuse too.

### **Indicators of sexual abuse**

**Physical observations:**

- Damage to genitalia, anus, or mouth
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

### Behavioural observations:

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour or affection inappropriate for age
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Inexplicable decline in education progress
- Depression or other sudden apparent changes in personality as becoming insecure
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Socially isolated or withdrawn
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Acting out, aggressive behaviour
- Poor trust or fear concerning significant adults
- Regressive behaviour,
- Onset of wetting, by day or night; nightmares
- Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation,
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Eating disorders or sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

## > 21. Sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils and students

### Child on Child Abuse – Policy Framework

#### Context

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two pupils and students of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of pupils and students sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of pupils and students.

Up skirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm. Up skirting is now a criminal offence and must be reported and investigated accordingly, and the appropriate action taken by the school.

Pupils and students who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, likely, adversely affect their education attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other pupils and students, adults, school, and college staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

#### Policy

We believe that all pupils and students have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Pupils and students should be free from harm by adults and other pupils and students in school.

We recognise that pupils and students are capable of abusing other pupils and students and their peers and this will be dealt with under our child protection policy and in line with KCSiE (2023).

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

We will minimise child on child abuse by: -

#### Prevention

Taking a whole school approach to safeguarding & child protection.

Providing training to staff.

Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support: and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum.

Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

## Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

Pupils and students making a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe and be well supported.

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Up skirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Up skirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and/or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

If the report includes an online element staff will be mindful of the Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools (DfE 2018) guidance.

Staff taking the report will inform the DSL or the Deputy DSL immediately. Staff taking a report will never promise confidentiality.

Parents or carers should usually be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk).

If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral (MARF) will be made to the Children's Services.

### Risk Assessment

Following a report the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The Risk assessment will consider;

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action.
- All other pupils and students at the school.
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.

The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or other specialist risk assessments, these professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting pupils and students.

### Action: The DSL will consider:

The wishes of the victim.

The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused.

Ages of the pupils and students involved.

Developmental stages of the pupils and students.

Any power imbalance between the pupils and students.

Any previous incidents.

Ongoing risks.

Other related issues or wider context.

## **Options: The DSL decision making regarding the issue with the following possible options:-**

Manage internally.

Early Help intervention.

Refer to the Children's Services.

Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral with Children's Services).

### **Ongoing Response:**

The DSL will manage each case individually and will ensure the risk assessment is reviewed regularly with relevant partner agencies, for example the Police and Children's Social Care.

Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim.

The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport where appropriate.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and may 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 themselves and other pupils and students).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school or college will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, which may include consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school or college, the Executive Head should 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.

The victim, alleged perpetrator and any other affected pupils, students and adults will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis.

The school will take any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator in accordance with the school behaviour policy.

The school recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary.

### **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 child to child 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. The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

### **References:**

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

DfE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges May 2018

## > 22. Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The **Brook Traffic Light Tool** uses a traffic light system to categorise the sexual behaviours of young people and is designed to help professionals:

- Make decisions about safeguarding pupils and students and young people.
- Assess and respond appropriately to sexual behaviour in pupils and students and young people.
- Understand healthy sexual development and distinguish it from harmful behaviour.
- By categorising sexual behaviours, school can work with other agencies to the same standardised criteria when making decisions and can protect pupils and students and young people with a multi-agency approach.

The school recognise that it is vital that professionals agree on how behaviours should be categorised regardless of culture, faith, beliefs, and their own experiences or values.

## 22.1. Brook sexual behaviours traffic light tool

This is intended to be used as a guide only. Please refer to the guidance tool [here](#) for further information.

Print date: 01/10/2015 - Brook has taken every care to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate and up to date at the time of being published. As information and knowledge is constantly changing, readers are strongly advised to use this information for up to one month from print date. Brook accepts no responsibility for difficulties that may arise because of an individual acting on the advice and recommendations it contains.

Brook sexual behaviours traffic light tool adapted from Family Planning Queensland. (2012). Traffic Lights guide to sexual behaviours. Brisbane: Family Planning Queensland, Australia.

### Behaviours: age 0 to 5

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

#### What is a green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are displayed between pupils and students or young people of similar age or developmental ability. They are reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices.

#### What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information.

#### Green behaviours 0-5

- holding or playing with own genitals
- attempting to touch or curiosity about other pupils and students' genitals
- attempting to touch or curiosity about breasts, bottoms or genitals of adults
- games e.g. mummies and daddies, doctors and nurses
- enjoying nakedness
- interest in body parts and what they do
- curiosity about the differences between boys and girls

#### What is an amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences. A potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur.

#### What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

#### Amber behaviours 0-5

- preoccupation with adult sexual behaviour
- pulling other pupils and students's pants down/skirts up/trousers down against their will
- talking about sex using adult slang
- preoccupation with touching the genitals of other people
- following others into toilets or changing rooms to look at them or touch them
- talking about sexual activities seen on TV/online

#### What is a red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening and involving significant age, developmental, or power differences. They may pose a concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur.

#### What can you do?

Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.

#### Red behaviours 0-5

- persistently touching the genitals of other pupils and students
- persistent attempts to touch the genitals of adults
- simulation of sexual activity in play
- sexual behaviour between young pupils and students involving penetration with objects
- forcing other pupils and students to engage in sexual play

## Behaviours: age 5 to 9 and 9 to 13

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

### What is a green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are displayed between pupils and students or young people of similar age or developmental ability and reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices.

### What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information.

### Green behaviours 5-9

- feeling and touching own genitals
- curiosity about other pupils and students' genitals
- curiosity about sex and relationships e.g. differences between boys and girls, how sex happens, where babies come from, same-sex relationships
- sense of privacy about bodies
- telling stories or asking questions using swear and slang words for parts of the body

### Green behaviours 9-13

- solitary masturbation
- use of sexual language including swear and slang words
- having girl/boyfriends who are of the same, opposite or any gender
- interest in popular culture, e.g. fashion, music, media, online games, chatting online
- need for privacy
- consensual kissing, hugging, holding hands with peers

### What is an amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences. A potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur.

### What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

### Amber behaviours 5-9

- questions about sexual activity which persist or are repeated frequently, despite an answer having been given
- sexual bullying face to face or through texts or online messaging
- engaging in mutual masturbation
- persistent sexual images and ideas in talk, play and art
- use of adult slang language to discuss sex

### Amber behaviours 9-13

- uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g. sudden and/or provocative changes in dress, withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more or less money than usual, going missing
- verbal, physical or cyber/ virtual sexual bullying involving sexual aggression
- LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) targeted bullying
- exhibitionism, e.g. flashing or mooning
- giving out contact details online
- viewing pornographic material
- worrying about being pregnant or having STIs

### What is a red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening and involving significant age, developmental, or power differences. They may pose a concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur.

### What can you do?

Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.

### Red behaviours 5-9

- frequent masturbation in front of others
- sexual behaviour engaging significantly younger or less able pupils and students
- forcing other pupils and students to take part in sexual activities
- simulation of oral or penetrative sex
- sourcing pornographic material online

### Red behaviours 9-13

- exposing genitals or masturbating in public
- distributing naked or sexually provocative images of self or others
- sexually explicit talk with younger pupils and students
- sexual harassment
- arranging to meet with an online acquaintance in secret
- genital injury to self or others
- forcing other pupils and students of same age, younger or less able to take part in sexual activities
- sexual activity e.g. oral sex or intercourse
- presence of sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- evidence of pregnancy



## Behaviours: age 13 to 17

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

### What is a green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are displayed between pupils and students or young people of similar age or developmental ability and reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices

### What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information.

### Green behaviours 13-17

- solitary masturbation
- sexually explicit conversations with peers
- obscenities and jokes within the current cultural norm
- interest in erotica/pornography
- use of internet/e-media to chat online
- having sexual or non-sexual relationships
- sexual activity including hugging, kissing, holding hands
- consenting oral and/or penetrative sex with others of the same or opposite gender who are of similar age and developmental ability
- choosing not to be sexually active

### What is an amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences. A potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur.

### What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

### Amber behaviours 13-17

- accessing exploitative or violent pornography
- uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g. sudden and/or provocative changes in dress,
- withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more or less money than usual, going missing
- concern about body image
- taking and sending naked or sexually provocative images of self or others
- single occurrence of peeping, exposing, mooning or obscene gestures
- giving out contact details online
- joining adult- only social networking sites and giving false personal information
- arranging a face to face meeting with an online contact alone

### What is a red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening and involving significant age, developmental, or power differences. They may pose a concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

### What can you do?

Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.

### Red behaviours

- exposing genitals or masturbating in public
- preoccupation with sex, which interferes with daily function
- sexual degradation/humiliation of self or others
- attempting/forcing others to expose genitals
- sexually aggressive/exploitative behaviour
- sexually explicit talk with younger pupils and students
- sexual harassment
- non-consensual sexual activity
- use of/acceptance of power and control in sexual relationships
- genital injury to self or others
- sexual contact with others where there is a big difference in age or ability
- sexual activity with someone in authority and in a position of trust
- sexual activity with family members
- involvement in sexual exploitation and/or trafficking
- sexual contact with animals
- receipt of gifts or money in exchange for sex

## > 23. Allegations against other pupils and students

- If an allegation of abuse is made against other pupils and students by pupils and students, then this must be reported immediately, in accordance with this policy.
- This will then be reported to the Children's Services by a designated person or deputy designated person.
- Abuse or concerns about a risk of abuse or harm by other pupils and students/young people is subject to the same safeguarding procedures as in respect of pupils and students or young people being abused by an adult.
- Professionals responding should be alert to the risk a child/young person may pose to pupils and students/young people other than any 'current' victim; and
- Pupils and students or young people who harm others are likely to have considerable needs themselves (e.g., they may have been subjected to abuse, witnessed domestic violence or committed criminal offences).

## > 24. Opportunities to teach safeguarding

Merrywood Education believes that all our pupils and students are taught about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe, including online. To ensure we support pupils and students to keep themselves safe there are several things we teach pupils and students within our curriculum:

- Relationship and Sex Education, this is now compulsory and will be delivered within our school. Statutory guidance: relationships education relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education
- Online Safety
- PHSE
- Social, emotional, and mental health provision is embedded throughout all of our learning opportunities
- Communication Skills delivered as part of our curriculum to ensure those pupils and students who do not have the skills to speak out, have the opportunity to communicate their needs and wishes.

RSHE will better prepare pupils for life in modern Britain while also promoting preventative education, creating a culture of zero tolerance towards sexism, racism, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic ideology or behaviour. Sexual harassment, or violence in addition to cultural or religious intolerances will also be addressed within formal or informal teaching forums, such as assemblies, workshops, or visits from external professionals.

## > 25. Anti-bullying/Cyberbullying

Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

We keep a record of known bullying incidents which is shared with and analysed by the Head of School and Executive Head. All staff are aware that pupils and students with SEND and/or differences/ perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied/victims of child abuse.

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern. If the anti-bullying procedures are seen to be ineffective, the Head of school and Executive Head will also consider child protection procedures.

PHSE education regularly provides opportunities for pupils and students to understand bullying is wrong, its impact and how to deal with it.

## > 26. Internet Filtering and Monitoring

Access to the internet in school is carefully monitored and supervised. This is made clear to all users through written statements where access is available, including on information displaying guest wireless access.

Our Internet provider is BT

Internet access is filtered in three groups:

- Staff
- Pupils and students
- Staff authenticated

We have a computer engineer who provides us with an annual online safety check and ongoing support with our computers and IT system. We use additional support, such as Jamf and Mobicip to remove any risk of pupils and students accessing unsafe online content.

The school's proprietor as well as governors ensure that our internet filtering and monitoring systems are effective and that the DSL and deputies have a good understanding of those systems.

## > 27. Mobile Phone and Camera Safety

pupils and students have access to an iPad that is protected by Jamf to ensure online safety. pupils and students are taught how to keep each other safe during computing sessions and cover a range of topics, such as sharing images, sexting, cyber bullying and so on.

pupils and students are not allowed their mobile phone onsite.

Staff are not permitted to use mobile phones or devices during working hours, unless on their break and not near pupils and students.

Staff are not permitted to take photos of pupils and students on personal devices.

## > 28. Online safety

The school has an online safety policy which explains how we try to keep pupils and students safe in school and how we respond to online safety incidents.

Pupils and students increasingly use electronic equipment daily to access the internet, share and view content and images via social media sites such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram, snapchat and voodoo and for online gaming.

Some adults and other pupils and students use these technologies to harm pupils and students. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts or emails, to grooming and enticing pupils and students to engage in extremist or sexual behaviour such as webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

Pupils and students may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate material such as pornographic websites or those which promote extremist behaviour, criminal activity, suicide or eating disorders.

Pupils and students are taught about online safety throughout the curriculum and all staff receive online safety training which is regularly updated. The school online safety co-ordinator is Laura Grace.

### **Education at home**

Where pupils and students are being asked to learn online at home the department has provided advice to support schools and colleges do so safely: [safeguarding-in-schools-colleges- and-other-providers](#) and [safeguarding-and-remote-education](#)

Useful Parental support Links

- Childnet offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of pupils and students of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- Common sense media provide independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for pupils and students and their parents
- Government advice about protecting pupils and students from specific online harms such as child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying
- Government advice about security and privacy settings, blocking unsuitable content, and parental controls
- Internet Matters provide age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help pupils and students get the most out of their digital world
- Let's Talk About It provides advice for parents and carers to keep pupils and students safe from online radicalisation
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation StopItNow resource can be used by parents and carers who are concerned about someone's behaviour, including pupils and students who may be displaying concerning sexual behaviour (not just about online)
- NSPCC keeping pupils and students safe online includes resources for parents and carers, as well as for pupils and students and young persons, pupils and students with SEN, online safety advice, specific guidance on inappropriate, explicit and sexual content and the use of chat apps.

- National Crime Agency/CEOP Thinkuknow provides support for parents and carers to keep their pupils and students safe online
- Net-aware provides support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, including a guide to social networks, apps and games
- Parentzone provides help for parents and carers on how to keep their pupils and students safe online
- Parent info from Parentzone and the National Crime Agency provides support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- UK Safer Internet Centre provide tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep pupils and students safe online



## > 29. Racist Incidents

We teach pupils and students to value all human beings and for them to recognise the beauty of diversity. Merrywood Education practices a whole school, zero tolerance of racial abuse and discrimination.

We deliver a personal development curriculum which challenges racial injustice, discrimination and racial profiling.

All racial incidents are recorded, challenged, and are addressed as part of our safeguarding management.

Pupils and students who have used racism within school will be challenged. Psychoeducation is used to prevent any further escalated behaviours or repeated incidents. Logs are maintained in order to identify patterns or serious concerns where these may arise.

Merrywood Education will always challenge injustice and drive forward an equal schooling, community and societal standpoint.

## > 30. Radicalisation and Extremism Terrorism

### Prevent and Channel Panel Measures

CTSA 2015 sets out the duty on local authorities and other organisations such as schools to have due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism, and to raise concerns about an individual they believe is at risk of radicalisation. Although there is a statutory duty on some organisations, anyone can raise a concern if they believe an individual is at risk of, or is being, radicalised.

Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 sets out guidance for both Prevent and Channel panel measures. The Act streamlines the process for referring an individual thought to be at risk of being drawn into terrorism under the Prevent programme to a Channel panel so that they can get the help and support needed to turn them away from radicalisation.

The Prevent programme is part of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. Its aim is to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It is designed to ensure that individuals who are identified as being at risk of being drawn into terrorism are given appropriate advice and support so that they may turn away from radicalisation. Channel is a multi-agency programme which identifies and supports at risk individuals, and which delivers this strategic aim of Prevent. Having identified an individual at risk, the Channel will assess the nature and extent of the risk, and subsequently develop the most appropriate support plan for the individual concerned.

Extremism is defined as 'as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

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

Some pupils and students are at risk of being radicalised; adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal, or dangerous. This can happen both online and offline.

The school is clear that exploitation of vulnerable pupils and students and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern and follows the Department for Education guidance for schools and childcare providers on preventing pupils and students and young people from being drawn into terrorism.

The school seeks to protect pupils and students and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

School staff receive training to help identify early signs of radicalisation and extremism.

Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils and students to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the **DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014)**.

The school advisors, Executive Head, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include the use of school premises by external agencies, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community, and philosophy.

When any member of staff has concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DSL in the first instance.

They should then follow the safeguarding procedures and follow the Prevent referral process and use the Prevent referral form. If the matter is urgent, then Police must be contacted by dialling 999. In cases where further advice from the Police is sought dial 101.

The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and advisors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

### **Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:

Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:

- The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:
- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs.
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts.
- Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity. Pupils and students may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal, and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff can recognise those vulnerabilities.

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- Identity Crisis – the child is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society.
- Personal Crisis – the child may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the child's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
- Unmet Aspirations – the child may have perceptions of injustice or a feeling of failure,
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment and poor resettlement / reintegration.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability – pupils and students may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters.
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element.
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature.
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour.
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

The Department of Education guidance **The Prevent Duty** can be accessed via this link.

## > 31. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse represents one quarter of all violent crime. It is actual or threatened physical, emotional, financial, psychological, or sexual abuse. It involves the use of power and control by one person over another. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, religion, mental or physical ability. Domestic abuse can also involve other types of abuse.

We use the term domestic abuse to reflect that several abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence. Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, exclusive control over another person's finances, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to pupils and students and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, development, ability to learn, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships. Pupils and students may hear, see, or experience domestic abuse within their homes. In addition, teenaged pupils and students may be victims to abuse within their own intimate relationships. Pupils and students who witness domestic abuse are at risk of significant harm and staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse. At Merrywood we have several specialists that are equipped with the skills of supporting young people and their family if facing domestic abuse. We currently have a Young Persons Violence Advisor (YPVA) who is trained to support young people aged 13 -19 who are experiencing domestic abuse in their own relationships. We also have an Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) who can support senior staff in offering advice to any parent experiencing abuse from their partner and a qualified social worker who has specialist training in working with both the parent and her/his abuser as well as offering support, signposting and referral to other organisations.

## > 32. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse.

It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology. All staff are aware of the link between online safety and vulnerability to CSE.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited should be passed immediately to the DSL.

The School is aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at school and CSE. Staff will consider a child to be at potential CSE risk in the case of regular non-attendance at school and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

The DSL will complete the **CSE Screening Tool** alongside staff who know the child well on all occasions when there is a concern that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited or where indicators have been observed that are consistent with a child who is being or who is at risk of being sexually exploited.

In all cases if the tool identifies any level of concern (green, amber, or red) the DSL should contact the Children's Services and email the completed CSE Screening Tool along with a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF). If a child is in immediate danger the police should be called on 999.

The school is aware that a child often is not able to recognise the coercive nature of the abuse and does not see themselves as a victim. As a consequence, the child may resent what they perceive as interference by staff. However, staff must act on their concerns as they would for any other type of abuse. Pupils and students also rarely self-report CSE so staff must be particularly vigilant to potential indicators of risk.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PHSE and SRE curriculum. Pupils and students will be informed of the grooming process and how to protect themselves from people who may potentially be intent on causing harm. They will be supported in terms of recognising and assessing risk in relation to CSE, including online, and knowing how and where to get help.

All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between pupils and students outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) will consider whether pupils and students are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and pupils and students can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

## > 33. Child Criminal Exploitation & Gangs

Both CSE and CCE 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.

There are several areas in which young people are put at risk by gang activity, both through participation in, and as victims of, gang violence which can be in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household.

A child who is affected by gang activity or serious youth violence may have suffered, or may be likely to suffer, significant harm through physical, sexual, and emotional abuse or neglect.

The risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, a gang member or both - in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household. Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and involvement in gang violence. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by risk factors in an individual's background, including violence in the family, involvement of siblings in gangs, poor educational attainment, or poverty or mental health problems.

Criminal exploitation of pupils and students is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. Key identifying features of involvement in county lines are when pupils and students are missing, when the victim may have been trafficked for transporting drugs, a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered with Social Care and Police colleagues.

A child who is affected by gang activity, criminal exploitation or serious youth violence can be at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Girls may be particularly at risk of sexual exploitation.

## Serious violence

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that pupils and students are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendship or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that pupils and students have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being criminally exploited will be passed without delay to the DSL. The school is aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at school and exploitation. Staff will consider a child to be at potential risk in the case of regular non-attendance at school and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

A referral to the Children's Services will be made when any concern of harm to a child because of gang activity including child criminal exploitation becomes known. Any member of staff who has concerns that a child may be at risk of harm should immediately inform the DSL. The DSL will contact the Children's Services. If there is concern about a child's immediate safety, the Police will be contacted on 999.

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



## > 34. Youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)

The practice of pupils and students sharing images and videos via text message, email, social media, or mobile messaging apps has become commonplace. However, this online technology has also given pupils and students the opportunity to produce and distribute sexual imagery in the form of photos and videos. Such imagery involving anyone under the age of 18 is unlawful.

Youth produced sexual imagery refers to both images and videos where:

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18.
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult.
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.

All incidents of this nature should be treated as a safeguarding concern and in line with the UKCCIS guidance '**Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people**'.

Cases where sexual imagery of people under 18 has been shared by adults and where sexual imagery of a person of any age has been shared by an adult to a child is child sexual abuse and should be responded to.

If a member of staff becomes aware of an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery, they should follow the child protection procedures and refer to the DSL immediately.

The member of staff should confiscate the device involved and set it to flight mode or, if this is not possible, turn it off. Staff must not view, copy or print the youth produced sexual imagery.

The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff and subsequent interviews with the pupils and students involved (if appropriate).

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

At any point in the process if there is concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to the Children's Services or the Police as appropriate.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage should be made to Children's Social Care/Police if:

- The incident involves an adult.
- There is good reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special education needs).
- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the child's development stage or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts.
- The imagery involves anyone aged 12 or under.
- There is reason to believe a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

If none of the above apply the DSL will use their professional judgement to assess the risk to pupils and students involved and may decide to respond to the incident without referral to the CFCS or the Police.

During the decision making the DSL will consider if:

- There is a significant age difference between the sender/receiver.
- There is any coercion or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver.
- The imagery was shared and received with the knowledge of the child in the imagery.
- The child is vulnerable, for example subject to Child in Need, Child Protection or Early Help plans, Looked After, SEND.
- There is a significant impact on the pupils and students involved.
- The image is of a severe or extreme nature.
- The child involved understands consent.
- The situation is isolated or if the image been more widely distributed.
- There other circumstances relating to either the sender or recipient that may add cause for concern.
- The pupils and students have been involved in incidents relating to youth produced imagery before.

If any of these circumstances are present the situation will be referred according to our child protection procedures, including referral to the Children's Services or the Police.

The DSL will record all incidents of youth produced sexual imagery, including the actions taken, rationale for actions and the outcome.

## > 35. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. **A mandatory reporting duty requires all staff to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s**, which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the police.

The duty applies to all persons in school who is employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work' in the school, whether they have qualified teacher status.

The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; however the DSL should be informed.

If a teacher is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her or a teacher observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the teacher should personally make a report to the police force in which the girl resides by calling 101. The report should be made immediately.

School staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators of FGM.

Concerns about FGM outside of the mandatory reporting duty should be reported using the school's child protection procedures. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils and students about going on a long holiday during the summer holiday.

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

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

## > 36. Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities cannot) consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Forced marriage is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse, and a serious abuse of human rights. Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

In February 2023, the Marriage and Civil Partners Act 2022 came into force. Previous legislation had allowed persons as young as 16 years old to marry with the consent of parents. The changes with this new piece of legislation mean that no person under the age of 18 years can marry. This Act protects young persons who may be vulnerable to getting coerced into a forced marriage.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage which is common in many cultures. The families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

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

## > 37. Honour Based Abuse

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

Honour based abuse might be committed against people who:

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

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

## > 38. Mental Health

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are well placed to observe pupils and students 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 pupils and students have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these pupils and students' experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The department has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (which may also be useful for colleges). In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting pupils and students and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See Rise Above for links to all materials and lesson plans.

## > 39. One Chance Rule

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

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

## > 40. Private Fostering Arrangements

A **private fostering** arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to pupils and students under the age of 16 years old or 18 years old if the child is disabled.

pupils and students looked after by the local authority or who are placed in residential schools, pupils and students' homes or hospitals are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures and pupils and students may be privately fostered at any age.

The school recognises that most privately fostered pupils and students remain safe and well but are aware that safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases. Therefore, all staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that the child has been trafficked into the country.

By law, a parent, private foster carer, or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Social Care as soon as possible. However, where a member of staff becomes aware that a child may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL and the DSL will notify the Children's Services.



## > 41. Looked After Children

The most common reason for pupils and students becoming looked after is because of abuse and neglect.

The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after pupils and students safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.

The Senior Leadership Team will have the appropriate training to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to educate and support looked after pupils and students.

The designated teacher for pupils and students looked after and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Head of Virtual Schools.

The designated teacher for pupils and students looked after and pupils and students previously looked after will work in partnership with the Virtual School Head to discuss how to support the progress of pupils and students looked after in the school and meet the needs of the pupils and students within their educational, health care plan.

## > 42. Previously Looked After Children (Post-LAC)

The designated lead staff and advisors are also responsible for Previously Looked-After Children.

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society. A previously looked after child can also be a child that was previously subject to a care order and in the care of a local authority and whose order has since been revoked or discharged so that he or she return to the care of a named relative. This is usually granted by the courts following an application from parent/relative, child or the local authority and is dependent on evidencing that there has been a significant change in circumstances since the care order was granted.

Post-LAC support arrangements are distinct to those for LAC and are responsive to the needs of the child and family using the appropriate school support systems which will include PPG but not the PEP process.

We aim to help raise previously looked-after pupils and students' parents' and guardians' awareness of the PP+ and other support for previously looked-after-pupils and students – this includes encouraging parents of eligible previously looked-after-pupils and students to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+ funding; and play a key part in decisions on how the PP+ is used to support previously looked after pupils and students.

As a school we recognise that not all Post-LAC are underachieving, while some may be underachieving and not eligible for funding. We plan to use our funding creatively to support any individual in which any area of under-performance is evident.

## > 43. Pupils and students Missing Education

All pupils and students, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The school recognises that pupils and students missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, becoming victims of abuse and harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Being absent, as well as missing from education can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation. A student's absence may not be the result of a safeguarding issue such as those identified, however can lead to serious safeguarding concerns.

Where possible the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each child.

The school will ensure that there is a record of joiners and leavers as defined in **The Education (Child Registration) (England) 2006**.

When removing a child's name, the school will notify the Local Authority of: (a) the full name of the child, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the child normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the child's future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the child's name is to be removed from the school register.

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the child's name from the school register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f) (iii) and (h) (iii) of **The Education (Child Registration) (England) 2006**.

The school will:

- Enter pupils and students on the admissions register on the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the child will attend the school.
- Notify the Local Authority within five days of adding a child's name to the admission register. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new child.
- Monitor each child's attendance through their daily register and follow the Sutton Local Authority procedure in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Remove a child's name from the admissions register on the date that the child leaves the school.
- Notify the Local Authority when they are about to remove a child's name from the school register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations, no later than the date that the child's name is due to be removed.
- Where parents notify the school, in writing, of their intention to educate the school electively home will forward a copy of the letter to the Elective Home Education Team / Education Welfare. Where parents orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated and no letter has been received, the school will not remove the child from roll and will notify Education Welfare at the earliest opportunity.

## > 44. Pupils and students Missing Out on Education

Most pupils and students engage positively with school and attend regularly. However, to flourish, some pupils and students require an alternative education offer or may require a modified timetable to support a return to full time education provision. It is recognised that pupils and students accessing alternative provision, or a reduced or modified timetable may have additional vulnerabilities. Ofsted refer to these as Children Missing Out on Education (PMOOE), because they are not accessing their education in school in the 'usual way'.

The school will gain consent (if required in statute) from parents to put in place alternative provision and/or a reduced or modified timetable.

The school will ensure that, and parents and the local authority are given clear information about alternative provision placements and reduced or modified timetables: why, when, where, and how they will be reviewed;

The school will keep the placement and timetable under review and involve parents in the review. Reviews will be frequent enough to provide assurance that the off-site education and/or modified timetable is achieving its objectives and that the child is benefitting from it.

The school will monitor and track pupils and students attending alternative provision to ensure that the provision meets the needs of the child.

The school will comply with regular data returns requested by the Local Authority, regarding all pupils and students, of statutory school age, attending alternative provision and/or on a reduced or modified timetable.

## > 45. School Attendance and Behaviour

Additional policies and procedures are in place regarding school attendance and behaviour.

The school recognises that absence from school and exclusion from school may be indicators of abuse and neglect, including the exploitation of pupils and students. The DSL or DDSL will regularly liaise with members of school staff with responsibility for behaviour and attendance to ensure risk is identified and appropriate intervention is in place to protect pupils and students from harm.

The school will work in partnership with Police and other partners for reporting pupils and students that go missing from the school site during the school day. Staff will be alert to signs of pupils and students at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

## > 46. Safe Handling Intervention

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use safe handling as a last resort, when a child is or at immediate risk of harming him/herself or others, and that always it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Such events should be fully recorded and signed by a witness.

Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in Safe Handling, positive guiding, techniques and Physical Intervention in schools.

Staff are aware that safe handling is used only if it is deemed necessary and proportionately. This is used to keep pupils and students safe from extreme injury and death.

Staff understand that physical intervention may cause injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection and/or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with pupils and students, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries.

As an educational provision for pupils and students with SEN, we recognise the importance of building positive attachments and as such, the role of appropriate touch, including hugs.

When keeping pupils and students free from harm and using safe handling or isolation strategies, the school will consider the risks, given the additional vulnerabilities of our pupils and students.

## > 47. Foreign Exchange Visits (if applicable)

We will seek the consent of our host families to carry out checks with the appropriate Local Authority to ensure suitability.

In the event that a host family has been subject of some kind of concern, unless there is satisfactory resolution, the family will be regarded as unsuitable to receive or continue to host a child from overseas. We will take responsible steps to ensure that a comparable approach is taken with our or by our comparison schools abroad.

KCSIE 2023, Annex E explains in full the requirements for schools to follow their statutory duties regarding hosting and exchange visits.

## > 48. Hosting Exchange Visits

When the school is arranging for a visiting child/young person to be provided with care and accommodation in the UK in a home of a family to which the child/young person is not related, the responsible adults are in regulated activity for the period of the stay.

In such cases the school is the regulated activity provider; therefore, the school will obtain the necessary information required including a DBS with barred list information to inform its assessment of the suitability of responsible adults.

**(Please refer to KCSIE, 2023 for further information)**

## > 49. 'Home-stays' in UK

If the school arranges the homestay, they should obtain an enhanced DBS for everyone in the home over 18 years old.

**(Please refer to KCSIE, 2023 for further information)**

## > 50. Alternative Provision

The school will remain responsible for a child's welfare during their time at an alternative provider.

When placing a child with an alternative provider, the school will obtain written confirmation that the provider has conducted all relevant safeguarding checks on staff.

## > 51. Work Experience

When a child is sent on work experience, the school will ensure that the provider has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.



## > 52. Whistle-blowing

We recognise that pupils and students cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be 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, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, the Executive Head or LADO in accordance with the whistle blowing policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about a way a concern is being handled by their school. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

Whistle blowing regarding the Executive Head Michelle Quayle, should be made to Merrywood's Advisory board - Roger Easthope or Steve Wallace, whose contact details are available to staff.

## > 53. Further advice on safeguarding and child protection

**Sutton Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership**

**Surrey Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership**

**NSPCC**

**ChildLine**

**CEOP**

**Anti-Bullying Alliance**

**Beat Bullying**

**Childnet International**

Making the internet a great and safe place for pupils and students. Includes resources for professionals and parents

**Thinkuknow**

Includes resources for professionals and parents

**Safer Internet Centre**

**Contextual Safeguarding Network**

## > Appendix A. Mental Health Definitions

**All staff** should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

### **Anxiety**

Anxiety problems can significantly affect a child's ability to develop, to learn or to maintain and sustain friendships.

Pupils and students and young people may feel anxious for several reasons – for example because of worries about things that are happening at home or at school, or because of a traumatic event. Symptoms of anxiety include feeling fearful or panicky, breathless, tense, fidgety, sick, irritable, tearful, or having difficulty sleeping. If they become persistent or exaggerated, then specialist help, and support will be required.

Clinical professionals refer to several diagnostic categories:

- Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) – a long-term condition which causes people to feel anxious about a wide range of situations and issues, rather than one specific event.
- Panic disorder – a condition in which people have recurring and regular panic attacks, often for no obvious reason.
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) – a mental health condition where a person has obsessive thoughts (unwanted, unpleasant thoughts, images or urges that repeatedly enter their mind, causing them anxiety) and compulsions (repetitive behaviour or mental acts that they feel they must carry out to try to prevent an obsession coming true).
- Specific phobias – the excessive fear of an object or a situation, to the extent that it causes an anxious response, such as panic attack.
- Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD) – worry about being away from home or about being far away from parents/carers, at a level that is much more than normal for the child's age.
- Social Phobia – intense fear of social or performance situations.
- Agoraphobia – a fear of being in situations where escape might be difficult, or help wouldn't be available if things go wrong.

## **Depression**

Feeling low or sad is a common feeling for pupils and students and adults, and a normal reaction to experiences that are stressful or upsetting. When these feelings dominate and interfere with a person's life, it can become an illness.

Depression can significantly affect a child's ability to develop, to learn or to maintain and sustain friendships.

Clinicians making a diagnosis of depression will generally use the categories major depressive disorder (MDD – where the person will show a number of depressive symptoms to the extent that they impair work, social or personal functioning) or dysthymic disorder (DD – less severe than MDD but characterised by a daily depressed mood for at least two years).

## **Hyperkinetic Disorders**

(e.g. disturbance of activity and attention)

Although many pupils and students are inattentive, easily distracted, or impulsive, in some pupils and students these behaviours are exaggerated and persistent, compared with other pupils and students of a similar age and stage of development. When these behaviours interfere with a child's family and social functioning and with progress at school, they become a matter for professional concern.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a diagnosis used by clinicians. It involves three characteristic types of behaviour – inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Whereas some pupils and students show signs of all three types of behaviour (this is called 'combined type' ADHD), other pupils and students diagnosed show signs only of inattention or hyperactivity/impulsiveness.

Hyperkinetic disorder is another diagnosis used by clinicians. It is a more restrictive diagnosis but is broadly like severe combined type ADHD, in that signs of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsiveness must all be present. These core symptoms must also have been present before the age of seven and must be evident in two or more settings.

## **Attachment disorders**

Attachment is the affectionate bond pupils and students have with special people in their lives that lead them to feel pleasure when they interact with them and be comforted by their nearness during times of stress. Researchers generally agree that there are four main factors that influence attachment security: opportunity to establish a close relationship with a primary caregiver; the quality of caregiving; the child's characteristics; and the family context. Secure attachment is an important protective factor for mental health later in childhood, while attachment insecurity is widely recognised as a risk factor for the development of behaviour problems.

## **Eating disorders**

The most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Eating disorders can emerge when worries about weight begin to dominate a person's life. Someone with anorexia nervosa worries persistently about being fat and eats very little. They lose a lot of weight and if female, their periods may stop. Someone with bulimia nervosa also worries persistently about weight. They alternate between eating very little, and then bingeing. They vomit or take laxatives to control their weight. Both eating disorders affect girls and boys but are more common in girls.

## **Deliberate self-harm**

Self-harm is a serious public health problem and is the reason behind many admissions to accident and emergency departments every year. Self-harm and suicidal threats by a child/young person put them at risk of significant harm and should always be taken seriously and responded to without delay.

Common examples of deliberate self-harm include 'overdosing' (self-poisoning), hitting, cutting, or burning oneself, pulling hair or picking skin, or self-strangulation. The clinical definition includes attempted suicide, though some argue that self-harm only includes actions which are not intended to be fatal. It can be a coping mechanism, a way of inflicting punishment on oneself and a way of validating the self or influencing others.

Self-harming is NOT attachment seeking behaviour, it is attention NEEDING behaviour.

## **Post-traumatic stress**

If a child experiences or witnesses something deeply shocking or disturbing, they may have a traumatic stress reaction. This is a normal way of dealing with shocking events and it may affect the way the child thinks, feels and behaves. If these symptoms and behaviours persist, and the child is unable to come to terms with what has happened, then clinicians may make a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

**Date:** September 2023

**Date of review:** September 2024



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