

# Meadowhead School and Sixth Form



## Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

This is a policy of Meadowhead School and Sixth Form.

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<b>Date of last review:</b>	September 2025
<b>Approval date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<b>Date of next review:</b>	September 2026



*Note: Meadowhead School has adopted the Sheffield Model Policy for Safeguarding. This internal school policy endeavours to clarify that policy within the parameters of Meadowhead School.*

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*This policy is the responsibility of the Headteacher. The monitoring of the effectiveness of this policy is the responsibility of the Governing Body (or Interim Executive Board), as appropriate.*

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Introduction

This school recognises its legal duty under S.175/157 Education Act 2002 to work with other agencies in safeguarding children and protecting them from “significant harm”. These duties are defined by:

- “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (2023)
- “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” (DfES 2012)

It applies to **all** adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of the school, visiting our school or working with our students on trips, visits or activities out of school.

## 2. Meadowhead School Commitment

Meadowhead School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of its students with a child centred approach. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility. We understand the importance of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all our students. 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. This means that at all times staff should consider, what is in the best interests of the children.

We are committed to protecting children from maltreatment;

- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care both at school and at home; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The governing board are required to keep children safe while at school, and to make sure that staff take part in inter-agency procedures to keep children safe from harm and abuse outside school. These procedures apply up to the age of 18.

All staff seek to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children and young people as part of their general responsibility and duty of care. All staff at this school want parents and children to feel free to talk about any concerns or worries which may affect educational progress and that they will see the school as a safe place if there are any difficulties at home. Children will always be taken seriously and listened to carefully if they seek help from a member of staff.

Our work is underpinned by the statutory guidance for schools and colleges - **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025**. Part One is distributed to staff to ensure that:

**All** staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:

- child protection policy, which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with peer on peer abuse;
- behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct);
- safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

**All** staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training is regularly updated and records of training kept.

**All** staff should be aware of their local Early Help process and understand their role in it.

**All** staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

**All** staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused, exploited or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

**All** staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

## **Early help**

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

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child; and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

## **3. Safer Recruitment and Selection**

The school pays full regard to current DCSF guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' Jan 2012. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the school who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult, including volunteers and staff employed by contractors. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also

includes undertaking interviews, and carrying out checks with regard to the Children's List, the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and the right to work in England.

In line with statutory changes, underpinned by regulations, the following will apply:

- A DBS Enhanced Disclosure is obtained for **all** new appointments to the school
- An up-to-date single central record is maintained detailing a range of checks carried out on staff
- All new appointments who have lived outside the UK will be subject to additional checks as appropriate
- Checks are made to ensure that Supply staff have undergone the necessary checks
- Identity checks are carried out on all appointments to our school workforce before the appointment is made
- A senior member of staff who has undertaken the Safer Recruitment in Education Training will lead each recruitment process

#### **4. Safe Working Practices**

Safe working practices are regularly outlined to all staff, and all new staff undertake a 1-hour induction session to cover these within 2 weeks of starting at the school.

Safe working practice ensures that students are safe and that all staff:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions'
- work in an open and transparent way
- work with other colleagues, where possible, in situations open to question
- discuss and/or take advice from school management over any incident which may give rise to concern
- record any incidents or decisions made
- apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality
- be aware of Confidentiality Policy (The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe).
- are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them
- know that any use of physical force or reasonable restraint will be carried out only as a last resort to protect the safety of the individual involved and that of other students, and documented in accordance with the relevant guidance and policy. If it is necessary to use physical action to protect a child from injury, to prevent a child from harming others, or if any child is injured accidentally, parents will be informed immediately. Children will not be punished within the school by any form of deliberate hitting, slapping, shaking or other degrading treatment.

#### **5. Safeguarding Information for students**

The school provides a care and guidance structure to ensure that all students in our school are aware of a number of staff who they can talk to. The school is committed to ensuring that students are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe.

All students know that we have a senior member of staff with responsibility for child protection and know who this is. We inform students of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard, and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

## **6. Partnership with Parents**

The school shares a purpose with parents to maximise the achievement of their child, but within this to keep all students safe from harm and to have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child. The school will ensure, where reasonably possible, that they have more than one contact number for parents/carers.

The school is committed to share any concerns we may have about their child with parents and carers. Parents will be consulted and their consent obtained before any referral is made to an agency outside the school under local "children in need" procedures, unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

*However, staff cannot guarantee to consult parents first, or to keep children's concerns confidential, if referral must be made to the appropriate agencies in order to safeguard the child's welfare.*

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

We encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with the school and provide opportunities to do this. We make parents aware of our policy and parents are made aware that they can view this policy on request.

## **7. Partnerships with others**

We recognise that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies (social care, the police, health services and other services) to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

Regular communications between all agencies that have dealings with our students ensure that our safeguarding principles are upheld.

## **8. School Training and Staff Induction**

The school's large team of staff with designated responsibility for child protection undertake basic child protection training and training in inter-agency working, and refresher training at yearly intervals.

The Headteacher and all other school staff, including support and ancillary staff, undertake appropriate induction training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up-to-date by refresher training at three yearly intervals.

Safeguarding training is not a one-off event. In addition to induction and annual refresher training, all staff will receive regular updates throughout the year. This may be delivered via staff briefings, bulletins, email updates, or dedicated safeguarding sessions.

Updates will cover changes to statutory guidance, emerging safeguarding risks (including online harms and contextual safeguarding), and lessons learned from safeguarding reviews.

All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) are provided with the school's child protection guidance and informed of school's child protection and safeguarding arrangements on induction.

## **9. Related Policies, Procedures and Practices**

We recognise that safeguarding children is an integral part of all that we do as a school and so incorporate a safeguarding check during the review of each school policy, especially policies and procedures relating to

Anti Bullying, e-Safety, Work Experience arrangements, Health and Safety, School Trips, Confidentiality and Communication.

Child protection and wider child safety issues will be addressed through the curriculum, as appropriate, especially in Ethics – Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education and in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) - Online Safety.

This policy is also underpinned and written in reference to the following legislation and guidance:

<b>Type</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status / Notes</b>	<b>Link</b>
<b>Legislation</b>	Children Act 1989	In force	<a href="#">Children Act 1989 on legislation.gov.uk</a>
	Sexual Offences Act 2003	In force	<a href="#">Sexual Offences Act 2003</a>
	Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by Serious Crime Act 2015)	In force	<a href="#">FGM Act 2003</a> and <a href="#">Serious Crime Act 2015 amendments</a>
	Children Act 2004	In force	<a href="#">Children Act 2004</a>
	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	In force	<a href="#">Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</a>
	Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (corrected title)	In force	<a href="#">Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009</a>
	Equality Act 2010	In force	<a href="#">Equality Act 2010</a>
	Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)	In force (ensure using current consolidated version)	<a href="#">Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012</a>
	Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	In force	<a href="#">Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014</a>
	Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015	In force	<a href="#">Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015</a>
	UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) & Data Protection Act 2018	In force	[UK GDPR guidance (ICO)] and <a href="#">Data Protection Act 2018</a>
	Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018	In force	<a href="#">SI 2018 No. 794 on legislation.gov.uk</a>
	Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019	In force	<a href="#">Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019</a>
	Domestic Abuse Act 2021	In force	<a href="#">Domestic Abuse Act 2021</a>
Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022	In force	<a href="#">Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022</a>	

Type	Guidance / Statutory Guidance	Status / Notes	Link
Statutory Guidance	The Prevent duty (DfE) (originally 2015)	In force; schools must comply under CTSA 2015; check for latest practice notes	<a href="#">Prevent duty guidance (DfE)</a>
	Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)	Current version, replaces 2018; statutory multi-agency safeguarding duty	<a href="#">Working Together 2023 (GOV.UK PDF) (GOV.UK)</a>
	Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (DfE)	In force; related to the 2018 Disqualification Regulations	<a href="#">Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006</a>
	Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (DfE)	Most recent version; effective from 1 September 2025	<a href="#">KCSIE 2025 (GOV.UK PDF)</a>
	Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (2020)	In force	<a href="#">FGM statutory guidance (2020)</a>
	Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting People Vulnerable to Being Drawn into Terrorism (2021)	In force	<a href="#">Channel Duty Guidance 2021</a>
	Forced Marriage – Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance & Practice Guidelines (2023)	In force; use latest practice guidelines	<a href="#">Forced Marriage Guidance (statutory &amp; practice) – GOV.UK</a>
	SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years	Statutory guidance; Code published 2015 but page updated 12 September 2024; remains current	<a href="#">SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (GOV.UK)</a>

### Non-statutory guidance

- DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE (2017) 'Child sexual exploitation'
- DfE (2018) 'Information sharing'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- DfE (2021) 'Teachers' Standards'
- DfE (2022) 'Recruit teachers from overseas'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges'
- Department of Health and Social Care (2022) 'Virginity testing and hymenoplasty: multi-agency guidance'

## 10. Children Missing from Education

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation (particularly county lines), or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage.

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

Staff will monitor pupils that are absent from the school, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods, and report them to the DSL following normal safeguarding procedures, in accordance with the Attendance Policy. All staff understand their responsibility to treat CME as a safeguarding issue and to report concerns immediately to the DSL.

The school has robust procedures to follow up on unauthorised absences and to inform the Local Authority when a child is removed from the roll or fails to attend regularly. The school follows the Sheffield Local Authority procedures to alert appropriate agencies where students appear to be “missing from education”. Where students on roll at a school do not turn up for a continuous period of 10 school days or more without the school’s permission, and the school has made the usual enquiries, the school will inform the LA.

## 11. Confidentiality

Information about students is on a “need to know” basis and the schools SIM systems are protected to ensure this is maintained.

School has regard to “Information Sharing: Practitioner’s Guide” HM Government 2006 [www.ecm.gov.uk/deliveringservices/informationsharing](http://www.ecm.gov.uk/deliveringservices/informationsharing) “Where there is a concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child’s safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.” (The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe).

The school is aware of when information must be shared with Police and Social Care where the student is or may be at risk of significant harm and when the student’s and/or parent’s confidentiality must not be breached.

## 12. Student Information

We endeavour to keep up-to-date and accurate information in order to keep students safe and provide appropriate care for them. From November 2017 all CP and safeguarding concerns and reports are logged through CPOMs and hard copies are no longer made. All staff are trained in the use of CPOMs and all DSLs and DSDs have elevated access to allow them to act on these concerns.

On an annual basis parents or carers are asked to review and update the information we hold and are asked to update this during the year as required.

The school endeavours to maintain accurate and up-to-date personal information about each student regarding:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the student normally lives
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- Emergency contact details (if different from above)
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school (if different from above)

- Any relevant court orders in place, including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- Whether the child is or has been on or subject to a CP Plan or Care Plan
- Name and contact detail of GP
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

### **13. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **13.1 Governing Board/Board of Trustees:**

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body/board of Trustees (through the work of the link governor/trustee for Child Protection and Safeguarding) to ensure that:

- they have undertaken the appropriate Safeguarding training
- the school has a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with Local Authority guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures, and the policy is made available to parents on request
- the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children; and that any panel involved in the recruitment of staff has at least one member who has undertaken the Safer Recruitment Training
- the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the Local Authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures
- a senior member of the school's leadership team is designated to take lead responsibility for child protection issues, providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with the Local Authority and working with other agencies.
- ensure the DSL takes responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and procedures in place as part of their role.
- all staff, including the Headteacher, undertake appropriate child protection training which is updated every three years
- a Governor/trustee is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the LA and /or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head teacher
- where services or activities are provided on the school premises by another body, the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection and liaises with the school on these matters, where appropriate.
- ensure a link Governor/trustee is appointed to work with the DSL.
- policies and procedures are reviewed annually

#### **13.2 Headteacher**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to:

- ensure the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the Governing Body/board of Trustees regarding this
- ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body/board of Trustees are fully implemented and followed by all staff
- ensure that sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated person and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings and contributing to the assessments of children
- ensure that all staff, volunteers, visitors and other persons who are involved with Meadowhead students feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed Whistleblowing Policies.
- Incorporating curriculum activities and opportunities that equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and develop resilience.
- Making every effort to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and other agencies.

- Appointing a designated staff member for Online Safety Lead and Children Looked After (including those post-CLA).
- Ensuring the DSL and Online Safety Lead have appropriate time, funding, training, and resources, and that there is always adequate coverage if the DSL is absent.
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another staff member or volunteer, where appropriate.

### **13.3 Named Designated Safeguarding Lead**

It is the responsibility of the Senior Member of Staff with Designated Responsibility for Child Protection to:

#### **a) Make appropriate referrals**

- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies and liaise with other agencies
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the educational establishment
- Liaise with the Headteacher to inform them of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for this role.
- Manage the administration of CPOMs

#### **b) Ensure appropriate training takes place**

- Recognise how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral
- Have a working knowledge of how Sheffield LA operate, the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these and ongoing child protection plans
- Ensure that all staff have knowledge and understanding of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Ensure that all staff have safeguarding training as part of their induction including use of CPOMs
- Keep detailed accurate secure written records of referrals; discussions with other agencies and/or concerns
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses at least every year.

#### **c) Raise awareness of child protection issues**

- Ensure parents are made aware of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the establishment in this to avoid conflict later
- Where a child leaves the establishment, ensure the child protection file is copied for the new establishment as soon as possible and transferred to the new school separately from the main student file
- If a child goes missing or leaves to be educated at home, then the child protection file should be copied and the copy forwarded to the Education Social Work Service
- To alert Sheffield Local Authority through the FIS team if a parent or carer informs the school that they wish to 'home educate' their child

### **13.4 Expectations of adults involved with Meadowhead students – teaching, support, ancillary, visitors, external partners**

All staff and governors/trustees will read and understand Part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, and review this guidance at least annually.

It is the responsibility of any adult who is involved in any way with a Meadowhead student, and who has concerns about any child which **may** indicate:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse
- neglect
- mental health
- drug taking and alcohol abuse
- child on child abuse and sexual harassment
- radicalisation and extremism
- child criminal exploitation and gangs
- or any other concern or issue which may relate to safety or welfare of the student or students

Staff and governors/trustees will receive updates on child protection and safeguarding (including online safety), e.g. staff meetings/email as required, and at least annually.

Recognise that a student may not feel ready or know how to disclose abuse, exploitation, or neglect, and may not realise their experiences are harmful.

Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality in individual cases.

Reassure victims that they are taken seriously, supported, and kept safe.

Consult the DSL/deputy DSL's on any potential safeguarding concern, and then the details on CPOMS. Please note, that any further reference to DSL should be taken to mean DSL/deputy DSL's.

Report any injuries that are observed which appear to be non-accidental, or who are told anything significant by a child. School staff do not, however, carry out investigations, nor decide whether children have been abused. That is a matter for the DSL and/or specialist agencies.

Personally report any known cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to the police as soon as possible.

All staff will be aware of:

- The systems supporting safeguarding, including the child protection and safeguarding policy.
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow, including their potential role in these assessments.
- The steps to take if they identify a safeguarding issue or if a child discloses abuse or neglect, and how to maintain appropriate confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of various types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and the school's systems and processes to address these issues, ensuring all reported incidents are taken seriously.
- The expectations and responsibilities related to filtering and monitoring.
- Their duty to report incidents of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) directly to the police.

Teachers, including the headteacher, have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard students' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties, as outlined in the "Teachers' Standards".

Staff who observe injuries which appear to be non-accidental, or who are told anything significant by a child, **must** report their concerns to the designated teacher. School staff do not, however, carry out investigations, nor decide whether children have been abused. That is a matter for the specialist agencies.

### 13.5 The school's ICT Operations Team

- The school has effective filtering and monitoring systems in place to safeguard pupils from harmful and inappropriate online material. Responsibility for oversight rests with the Governing Body/board of Trustees, delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Network Manager. (See the [Online Safety Policy](#) for further details – add hyperlink)
- Review the filtering and monitoring provision at least annually in accordance with DfE requirements outlined in 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges.'
- Ensure any changes identified during the review are implemented effectively.
- Block harmful and inappropriate content without unduly affecting teaching and learning.
- Ensure the school has effective monitoring strategies that meet the safeguarding needs.
- Collaborate with the DSL to ensure they are informed about the filtering and monitoring systems in place.
- Assist in delivering staff training and support, where necessary, and help DSLs develop staff training regarding filtering and monitoring systems.

### 14. Recognising signs of child abuse

For the purposes of this policy, “abuse” is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child which involves inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing the ill treatment of others – this can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others, e.g. via the internet. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by one or multiple adults or other children.

Meadowhead School recognises that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff are trained to be alert to signs that pupils may be struggling with mental health and to follow safeguarding procedures accordingly.

The DSL will work closely with pastoral staff to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and, where necessary, referrals to external agencies.

For the purposes of this policy, “**physical abuse**” is defined as a form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse can also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

For the purposes of this policy, “**emotional abuse**” is defined as the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, such as interactions that are beyond their developmental capability, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, including cyberbullying, causing the child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, but it may also occur alone.

For the purposes of this policy, “**sexual abuse**” is defined as abuse that involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, and regardless of whether the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration, or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images,

encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by people of any gender and age.

For the purposes of this policy, “**neglect**” is defined as the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of a child’s health or development. This may involve a parent or carer failing to provide a child with adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger; failing to ensure adequate supervision (including through the use of inappropriate caregivers); or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

All staff will be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, and online. All staff will be aware that abuse, neglect and other safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be given a specific label, and multiple issues often overlap one another; therefore, staff will be vigilant and always raise concerns with the DSL. All staff, especially the DSL and deputy DSLs, will be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments; this includes being aware that students can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families (extra-familial harms). All staff will be aware of the appropriate action to take following a student being identified as at potential risk of abuse and, in all cases, will speak to the DSL if they are unsure.

## **15. Specific Safeguarding Issues**

There are certain issues that have become crucial in safeguarding. The school will strive to ensure that their staff, governing board/board of trustees, and volunteers are aware of these issues, including but not limited to:

- Radicalisation and the Prevent Duty
- Child on Child abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- Mental Health
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Cyber Crime
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Serious Violence
- County Lines
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Sexual Offences, consent, upskirting

### **15.1 Radicalisation and the Prevent Duty**

Extremism refers to the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Extremism also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Protecting students from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school’s wider safeguarding duties. The school will actively assess the risk of students being radicalised and drawn into extremism and/or terrorism. Staff will be alert to changes in students’ behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection.

Staff will use their professional judgement to identify students who may be susceptible to extremist ideologies and radicalisation and act appropriately, which may include contacting the DSL or making a Prevent referral.

Any Prevent referral will be made in line with Government guidelines. This will include a referral into Channel. (Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.)

The school will ensure that they engage with parents and families, as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation. In doing so, the school will assist and advise family members who raise concerns and provide information for support mechanisms. Any concerns over radicalisation will be discussed with the student's parents, unless the school has reason to believe that the child would be placed at risk as a result.

The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training to be able to provide advice and support to other staff on how to protect students against the risk of radicalisation. The DSL will hold formal training sessions with all members of staff to ensure they are aware of the risk indicators and their duties regarding preventing radicalisation.

## 15.2 Child on Child abuse

**All** staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. **All** staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

**All** staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead.

It is essential that **all** staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and

- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

**All** staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child on child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

### **15.3 Domestic abuse**

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

### **15.4 Homelessness**

The DSL will be aware of the contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so that concerns over homelessness can be raised as early as possible.

- Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include:
- household debt
- rent arrears
- domestic abuse
- anti-social behaviour
- any mention of a family moving home because "they have to".

Referrals to the Local Housing Authority do not replace referrals to CSCS where a child is being harmed or at risk of harm. For 16- and 17-year-olds, homelessness may not be family based and referrals to CSCS will be made as necessary where concerns are raised.

### **15.5 Mental Health**

It is crucial for staff to understand that children's vulnerabilities related to mental health may make them more susceptible to other safeguarding concerns. When making referrals, it is important to share information about the child's mental health.

Mental health issues can sometimes indicate that a child has experienced or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff should be vigilant for behavioural signs that suggest a child may have a mental health problem or is at risk of developing one.

If the mental health concern is not a safeguarding issue, consult the DSL to determine the appropriate course of action.

The school offers various support mechanisms for students' mental health. Significant concerns will be referred to the child's GP or directly to CAMHS.

Staff should not attempt to diagnose mental health problems; this should be done by a trained mental health professional.

### **15.6 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

"Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons." (World Health Organisation, 2016).

All suspected or confirmed cases of FGM are considered safeguarding concerns, and appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed, including a referral to the police. If any staff member has concerns about a student, they should refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the school before reporting the concern directly to the police.

It is a mandatory reporting duty for all teachers/staff to directly report to the police where it is believed an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 in the UK. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The decision to have their daughters undergo FGM is made by the parents, but they often face significant pressure from older family members, particularly when they return to their country of origin. However, FGM is illegal in most countries, including the UK.

Signs may include:

- Being repeatedly absent from school or absent for a prolonged period.
- Not participating in Physical Education.
- Unauthorised and or extended leave, vague explanations or plans for removal of a female in a high-risk category (parents from a country who are known to practice FGM) especially over the summer period.
- Plans to take a holiday which may be unauthorised, unexplained or extended in a country known to practice FGM.
- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable.
- Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously).
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating, or having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour.
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations.
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem.
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

FGM is included in the definition of so-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA)', which involves crimes that have been committed to defend the honour of the family and/or community. All forms of HBA are forms of abuse and will be treated and escalated as such. Staff will be alert to the signs of HBA, including concerns that a child is at risk of HBA, or has already suffered from HBA, and will consult with the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures if concerns arise.

## **15.7 Forced Marriage**

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. It is a form of abuse directed towards a child or vulnerable adult, including adults who are forced into marriage against their free will.

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

It is an offence to do anything intended to cause a child to marry before the child's eighteenth birthday, whether or not the conduct amounts to violence, threats, or any other form of coercion or deception. This applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them. Staff who have any concerns regarding a student who may have undergone, is currently undergoing, or is at risk of forced marriage will speak to the DSL or headteacher.

The DSL will: speak to the student about the concerns in a secure and private place, activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer.

## 15.8 Cyber Crime

For the purposes of this policy, "cyber-crime" is defined as criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. This includes 'cyber-enabled' crimes, i.e. crimes that can happen offline but are enabled at scale and at speed online, and 'cyber-dependent' crimes, i.e. crimes that can be committed only by using a computer. Crimes include:

- Unauthorised access to computers, known as 'hacking'.
- Denial of service attacks (DoS), known as 'booting'.
- Making, supplying or obtaining malicious software, or 'malware', e.g. viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and remote access trojans (RAT) with the intent to commit further offence.

All staff will be aware of the signs of cyber-crime and follow the appropriate safeguarding procedures where concerns arise. This may include the DSL referring students to the National Crime Agency's Cyber Choices programme.

## 15.9 Emerging Online Risks

The school recognises the rapid development of online harms, including risks from artificial intelligence, image-sharing platforms, deepfakes, cyberbullying, and radicalisation.

Staff will remain alert to these emerging risks, and pupils will be educated through form time, assemblies and the curriculum about how to stay safe online.

## 15.10 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Children and young people involved with gangs and criminal exploitation require help and support.

This includes those engaged in serious violent crime. They may be victims of violence or coerced into activities such as stealing, carrying drugs, or weapons. They might also face abuse, exploitation, and be placed in dangerous situations.

For the purposes of this policy, "**child criminal exploitation**" is defined as a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal activity, for any of the following reasons:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants.
- For the financial advantage or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- Through violence or the threat of violence.

Specific forms of CCE can include:

- Being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines.
- Working in cannabis factories.

- Shoplifting or pickpocketing.
- Committing vehicle crime.
- Committing, or threatening to commit, serious violence to others.

The school will recognise that pupils involved in CCE are victims themselves, regardless of whether they have committed crimes, and even if the criminal activity appears consensual. The school will also recognise that pupils of any gender are at risk of CCE.

School staff will be aware of the indicators that a pupil is the victim of CCE, including:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions.
- Associating with other children involved in exploitation.
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late.
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part.

### **15.11 Serious Violence**

Through training, all staff will be made aware of the indicators which may signal a student is at risk from, or is involved with, serious violent crime. These indicators include, but are not limited to:

- Increased absence from school.
- A change in friendships.
- Relationships with older individuals or groups.
- A significant decline in academic performance.
- Signs of self-harm
- A significant change in wellbeing.
- Signs of assault.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions.

Staff will be made aware of some of the most significant risk factors that could increase a student's vulnerability to becoming involved in serious violence. These risk factors include, but are not limited to:

- Being male.
- Having been frequently absent from school.
- Having been permanently excluded from school.
- Having experienced child maltreatment.
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Staff members who suspect a student may be vulnerable to, or involved in, serious violent crime will immediately report their concerns to the DSL.

The school is aware that the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act introduced a new duty in early 2023 on a range of specified authorities, such as the police, to share data and information, and put plans in place to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. Schools will be under a separate duty to cooperate with core duty holders when asked – We will ensure arrangements are in place to do so.

## 15.12 County Lines

County lines refers to gangs and organised criminal networks that transport illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other "deal lines." This activity occurs both locally and across the UK, with no specified distance of travel required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to transport, store, and sell drugs and money. Offenders frequently use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence), and weapons to enforce compliance among their victims.

As well as the general indicators for CCE, school staff will be aware of the specific indicators that a pupil may be involved in county lines, including:

- Going missing and subsequently being found in areas away from their home.
- Having been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence, e.g. knife crime.
- Receiving requests for drugs via a phone line.
- Moving drugs.
- Handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- Being exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- Being found in accommodation they have no connection with or a hotel room where there is drug activity.
- Owning a 'debt bond' to their exploiters.
- Having their bank account used to facilitate drug dealing.

Criminal exploitation of children is a safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the DSL who will seek advice from agencies and professionals. This will mean a referral into the Police and Social Care.

The DSL will consider referral to the National Referral Mechanism on a case-by-case basis and consider involving local services and providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

## 15.13 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) is defined as a type of sexual abuse where an individual or group exploits an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child into engaging in sexual activities, for any of the following reasons:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants.
- For the financial advantage, increased status or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- Through violence or the threat of violence

We appreciate that CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the student's immediate knowledge, e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. We appreciate that CSE can affect any student who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities, even if the activity appears consensual; this includes students aged 16 and above who can legally consent to sexual activity. We also recognise that students may not realise they are being exploited, e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

School staff will be aware of the key indicators that a pupil is the victim of CSE, including:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions.
- Associating with other children involved in exploitation.
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Misusing drugs or alcohol.

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late.
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part.
- Having older partners.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections.
- Displaying sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development.
- Becoming pregnant.

All suspected or actual cases of CSE are a safeguarding concern in which child protection procedures will be followed; this will include a referral to the police and social services. If any staff are concerned about a student, they should refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/s within the school.

### 15.14 Sexual Offences, consent, up skirting

For the purposes of this policy, “consent” is defined as having the freedom and capacity to choose to engage in sexual activity. Consent may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another and can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. A person only consents to a sexual activity if they agree by choice to that activity and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Children under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity. The age of consent is 16.

For the purposes of this policy, “sexual violence” refers to the following offences as defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with their penis, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally penetrate the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of their body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent:** A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally cause another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

For the purposes of this policy, “sexual harassment” refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline, inside or outside of school. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a pupil’s dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and create a hostile, offensive, or sexualised environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.

Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to:

- sexual comments, such as sexual stories, lewd comments, sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and sexualised name-calling
- sexual “jokes” and taunting
- physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes, and displaying images of a sexual nature

- Online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. This includes:
  - the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images
  - and/or videos
  - sharing unwanted explicit content
  - upskirting
  - sexualised online bullying
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media
  - sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats.

For the purposes of this policy, “upskirting” refers to the act, as identified in the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, of taking a picture or video under another person’s clothing, without their knowledge or consent, with the intention of viewing that person’s genitals or buttocks, with or without clothing, to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Upskirting is a criminal offence. Anyone, including pupils and staff, of any gender can be a victim of upskirting.

For the purposes of this policy, the “consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos”, colloquially known as “sexting”, is defined as the sharing between pupils of sexually explicit content, including indecent imagery. For the purposes of this policy, “indecent imagery” is defined as an image which meets one or more of the following criteria:

- nude or semi-nude sexual posing
- a child touching themselves in a sexual way
- any sexual activity involving a child
- someone hurting a child sexually
- sexual activity that involves animals.

## **16. Students potentially at greater risk of harm**

The school recognises that some groups of pupils can face additional safeguarding challenges, both online and offline, and understands that further barriers may exist when determining abuse and neglect in these groups of pupils. Additional considerations for managing safeguarding concerns and incidents amongst these groups are outlined below.

The designated teacher should also work with the virtual school head to promote the educational achievement of previously children looked-after. Statutory guidance on promoting the education of children looked-after contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of virtual school heads.

### **16.1 Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Children Looked After (PCLA)**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Because of this, they can be at potentially greater risk in relation to safeguarding. PCLA, also known as care leavers, can also remain vulnerable after leaving care.

We are also aware that a previously looked-after child potentially remains vulnerable and this requires staff to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep them safe. We understand that all agencies must work together and take prompt action on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly

vulnerable group. The school will also ensure that care leavers are supported with pathways including liaison with the local authority where a personal advisor will be appointed.

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep children looked-after and previously children looked-after safe. We will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements.
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads.
- We have appointed a designated teacher, who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children looked-after and previously children looked-after in line with statutory guidance.
- The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role. The designated teacher for looked after and previously children looked-after.

Further details of safeguarding procedures for CLA and PCLA are outlined in the Children Looked After Policy.

### **16.2 Parental alcohol and drug use**

Parents' dependent alcohol and drug use can negatively impact on children's physical and emotional wellbeing, their development and their safety.

The impacts on children include:

- Physical maltreatment and neglect.
- Poor physical and mental health.
- Development of health harming behaviours in later life, for example using alcohol and drugs and at an early age, which predicts more entrenched future use.
- Poor school attendance due to inappropriate caring responsibilities.
- Low educational attainment.
- Involvement in anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will make a referral to children's social care.

### **16.3 Students with special educational needs or disabilities**

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children.
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- Communication barriers which may exist, as well as difficulties in overcoming these barriers

We are mindful of these additional challenges, and where required, will provide extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities. Staff need to be aware of the additional challenges faced by those with SEN or disabilities. The DSL will liaise with the school's SENDCo, as well as the student's parents where appropriate, to ensure that the student's needs are met effectively, and the child is kept safe.

### **16.4 Students who need/have social workers**

Students may need social workers due to safeguarding or welfare needs. These needs can leave students vulnerable to further harm and educational disadvantage.

As a matter of routine, the DSL will hold and use information from the LA about whether a student has a social worker in order to make decisions in the best interests of the student's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.

Where a student needs a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence, and promoting welfare, e.g. considering the provision pastoral or academic support.

Where a child has a social worker and safeguarding concerns have come to light, the DSL will work in partnership with the allocated social worker where appropriate and necessary.

- Students may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.
- The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.
- Where we are aware that a student has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the student's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:
  - Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.
  - The provision of pastoral and/or academic support.
- The school will provide as much information as possible as part of any referral process to help social care assessments consider contexts outside of the home and enable a contextual approach to harm.
- Child protection records should include:
  - A clear and comprehensive summary of a concern.
  - Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
  - A note of any action taken, decisions reached and outcomes.

The designated school key worker will ensure that Child Protection and Child in Need files are up to date and are stored on CPOMs or other similar safeguarding systems.

### **16.5 Home Educated Children**

Home educated children can be more vulnerable than other children and with regard to the motivations of the intention to home educate. The school has a responsibility to those who are thinking about or who are about to home educate, including those who have been removed from the school roll with a view to home educate.

In line with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the school will inform the LA of all deletions from the admissions register when a student is taken off roll.

Where a parent has expressed their intention to remove a student from school to home educate, the school, in collaboration with the LA and other key professionals, will coordinate a meeting with the parent, where possible, before the final decision has been made, particularly if the student has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. The school must follow their guidance and processes and ensure all necessary paperwork and permissions are completed/recorded.

### **16.6 Young carers**

Young Carers can be more vulnerable or placed at risk. It is important to identify young carers and ensure they are supported to help reach their potential with an understanding that the school will need to refer into early help social care services for an assessment of their needs.

## 16.7 Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. The school has a duty to notify the local authority if it is thought or known that a child or young person may be Privately Fostered or subject to a host family arrangement which is unclear or ambiguous.

## 16.8 LGBTQ+ students

The fact that a student may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm; however, staff will be aware that LGBTQ+ students can be targeted by other individuals. Staff will also be aware that, in some cases, a student who is perceived by others to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as students who identify as LGBTQ+.

Staff will also be aware that the risks to these students can be compounded when they do not have a trusted adult with whom they can speak openly. Staff will endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by these students and provide a safe space for them to speak out and share any concerns they have.

## 17. Procedures to ensure that students are safe

All staff follow the Sheffield Child Protection procedures which are consistent with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010' and 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'.

It is **not** the responsibility of the school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of students will be recorded and discussed with the designated senior person with responsibility for child protection (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated person) prior to any discussion with parents. All staff will report disclosures or concerns through CPOMs.

### Staff must immediately report:

- any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (eg worrying drawings or play)
- any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment or emotional maltreatment
- any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (eg living in a household with children present)

### Staff communications with home

Communications with home should be maintained at a professional level. The procedures that should be followed - either for staff to communicate with home or to inform the school of receipt of a communication from home - are regulated by the school's Communication Policy

## 18. Responding to disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from students, parents or other members of the public. School recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity.

The school endeavours to ensure that appropriate support is provided for EAL students or students who may have difficulties in communicating. Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated person and make a contemporaneous record.

Staff will understand that students might not feel ready or know how to disclose abuse, exploitation, or neglect, and they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This awareness should not deter staff from exercising professional curiosity and discussing any concerns they have about a student with the DSL or deputy DSL's.

### **If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or is in immediate danger**

Contact should be made with the DSL if anyone believes a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or is in immediate danger. The DSL should then promptly inform children's social care and/or the police. In emergency situations, if the DSL or Headteacher is not immediately available, **anyone can make a referral by calling the Police or the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub at 0114 2374855.**

The local authority will decide on the course of action within one working day of a referral and will inform the person who made the referral of the outcome. The DSL or the person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not provided and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not appear to be improving after the referral, the DSL or the person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns are addressed and the child's situation improves.

### **18.1 Principles of dealing with a disclosure**

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL in order that they can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of school staff
- clarify the information
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature, eg 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?'
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person
- reassure and support the person as far as possible
- explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate.
- ensure your record of the details is recorded onto CPOMS (See appendix 2 for guidance). Further actions will be added to this by the relevant staff.

### **18.2 Action following disclosure required by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or other senior person in their absence)**

Following any information raising concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child
- *making an enquiry to find out if the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan*
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
- consulting with appropriate persons, e.g. Safeguarding Officer and/or Social Care
- the child's wishes,

then decide:

- wherever possible, to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk
- whether to make a child protection referral to Social Care because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately
- whether **not** to make a referral at this stage
- if further monitoring is necessary
- if it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (eg FCAF) and/or make a referral for other services.

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, must be fully documented and placed in a secure place.

### **18.3 Allegations of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment**

Systems are in place for children to report abuse confidently, knowing their concerns will be taken seriously. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment can be complex, requiring difficult professional decisions to be made quickly and under pressure. Preplanning, effective training, and well-developed policies provide the foundation for a calm, considered, and appropriate response to any reports.

The Governing body/board of Trustees ensures that the school contributes to a multi-agency way of working in accordance with statutory guidance, such as *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Important considerations include:

- The wishes of the victim regarding how they want to proceed, especially in cases of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should have as much control as reasonably possible over decisions about the investigation and the support they receive, balanced with our duty to protect other children.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) has been displayed.
- The ages of the children involved.
- The developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, whether the alleged perpetrator(s) are significantly older, more mature, or confident, and whether the victim has a disability or learning difficulty.
- Whether the alleged incident is a one-off or part of a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can accompany other forms of abuse, and a sustained pattern may not solely be sexual).
- The possibility that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur within intimate personal relationships between children.
- Understanding intra-familial harms and the necessary support for siblings following incidents.
- Ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or school staff.
- Other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

As always, when concerned about a child's welfare, all staff should act in the best interests of the child. Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim, the alleged perpetrator(s), and any other children involved or impacted.

## **18.4 Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and videos**

This approach, informed by guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety for all staff, DSLs, senior leaders, and the Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership Online Safety (Sept 21), outlines the school's responsibilities when responding to an incident involving sexting (also known as 'youth produced sexual imagery').

- if staff become aware of such an incident, you must report it to the DSL immediately.
- staff must refrain from:
  - viewing, downloading, or sharing the imagery yourself, or requesting a student to do so. If you accidentally view the imagery, you must report this to the DSL.
  - deleting the imagery or instructing the student to delete it.
  - soliciting information from the student(s) involved regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility).
  - sharing details of the incident with other staff members, the student(s) involved, or their parents and/or carers.
  - engaging in actions or comments that blame or shame any young people involved.
- instead, staff should explain the need to report the incident and reassure the student(s) that they will receive support and assistance from the DSL.

## **19. Action following a child protection referral**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or other appropriate member of staff will:

- *make regular contact with the Social worker involved to stay informed*
- wherever possible, contribute to the Strategy Discussion
- provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference
- if the child or children are made the subject of a Child Protection Plan, contribute to the Child Protection Plan and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Conferences
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings
- where a child is on the Child Protection Register and subject to a Child Protection Plan moves from the school or goes missing, immediately inform the key worker.

## **20. Recording and monitoring**

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions, and actions taken will be recorded in chronological order on the school's safeguarding system (CPOMS). Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated (where possible), any information given will be recorded verbatim where possible and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen. Records will be kept securely, transferred in line with statutory requirements when a pupil moves school, and accessed only by those with safeguarding responsibility.

Any paper-based Child Protection documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file. This will be locked away and only accessible to the Headteacher and designated senior persons on a "need to know" basis. These records will be copied and transferred to any school or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Safeguarding Lead. Child Protection files not relating to sexual abuse will be retained securely for 25 years from the date of birth of the child (32 years for SEN children). Where Child protection files relate to sexual abuse, they will be retained for 75 years from the date of the incident. If the child goes missing from education or is removed from roll to be educated at home, any Child Protection file should be copied and the copy sent to the Education Social Work Service

The DSL is responsible for ensuring record quality and for reviewing chronologies to identify patterns or repeated concerns.

## **21. Allegations regarding person(s) working in or on behalf of school (including volunteers)**

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the school that he or she 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
- has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

the school will always follow the Sheffield Local Authority processes. Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be retained securely by the Headteacher.

Whilst we acknowledge such allegations (as all others) may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

### **Initial Action following an allegation**

- The school will proceed at all times in line with Sheffield LA Disciplinary procedures taking advice from the Human Resource section of the LA and the LADO in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by school or if there needs to be a referral to Social Care and/or the Police for investigation
- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the Headteacher and make a written record
- In the event that an allegation is made against the Headteacher, the matter will be reported to the Chair of Trustees who will proceed as the 'Headteacher'
- The Headteacher will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical needs
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children
- The Headteacher may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however no person will be interviewed at this stage
- Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of students, parents and staff
- The Headteacher will inform the Chair of Trustees of any allegation.

### **Low-Level Concerns**

In addition to the statutory procedures for allegations against staff, the school operates a "low-level concerns" policy. This enables all staff to share concerns—however small—about a colleague's behaviour or conduct.

- Low-level concerns include any action that does not meet the harm threshold but may be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Concerns should be reported to the Headteacher or the DSL.
- The school will maintain a confidential record of all low-level concerns and the rationale for decisions made.
- Patterns of low-level concerns will be monitored to ensure early intervention and support.

## **22. Use of school premises for non-school activities**

Where the school provides the activities under the direct supervision or management of school staff, child protection arrangements will apply. Where activities are provided separately by another body, this may not be the case; therefore, school will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place, including inspecting these as needed. Extra-curricular activities and clubs hosted by external bodies, e.g. charities or companies, will work in collaboration with the school to effectively safeguard students and adhere to local safeguarding arrangements.

Staff and volunteers running extracurricular activities and clubs need to be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and promote the welfare of students. Paid and volunteer staff need to understand how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to social care or the police, if necessary.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Named persons with responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding**

*To be updated as required to maintain accuracy*

#### **The designated person for all Child Protection matters (Designated Safeguarding Lead):**

Mr Geoff Dearman

#### **Designated Safeguarding Deputies:**

Mrs Ruth Humphreys	Safeguarding Manager
Miss Abi Grocutt	Safeguarding Manager
Mr George Simpson	Assistant Safeguarding Officer
Miss Lancaster	Safeguarding Learning Support Mentor
Miss Jennifer Fletcher	Year 7 Pastoral Manager
Mrs Janis Jackson	Year 8 Pastoral Manager
Mr Alex Eyre	Year 9 Pastoral Manager
Mrs Nicola Brummitt	Year 10 Pastoral Manager
Miss Milly Bradwell	Year 11 Pastoral Manager
Miss Kobi Cookson	Year 12 Pastoral Manager
Miss Fozia Shabir	Attendance Manager
Mrs Jill Lewis	Education Welfare Officer
Mrs Moira Newman	Education Welfare Officer
Miss Jodie Burton	KS3 Engagement Centre Manager
Mr Tim Raby	KS4 Engagement Centre Manager

#### **Safeguarding is the responsibility of:**

Mrs Kam Grewal-Joy	Headteacher
Geoff Dearman	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Assistant Headteacher

#### **The link Trustee for Child Protection and Safeguarding:**


Mrs Jen Goodison

**Last update: January 2026**

## Appendix 2

Photo guide for how to input concerns onto CPOMS. Shared with staff during the annual update in September and also as part of the induction process for all new members of staff:

# SG CONCERNS USING CPOMS



The diagram shows the cpoms.net logo on the left. A blue arrow points from the logo to a purple button labeled "Add Incident". Another blue arrow points from the "Add Incident" button to the incident form on the right.

**Student**

**Incident**

**Categories**  GENERAL STAFF CODE

**Linked student(s)**   
Type a student's name to link them to this incident.



# SG CONCERNS USING CPOMS

**Maps**

**Date/Time** 26/06/2024 14:47

**Status** Active

**Assign to**

**Files**

**Alert Staff Members**

Type a colleague's name or select an alert group to alert them to this incident. Colleagues highlighted in red would not normally be able to view this incident.

**Submit Incident**





