



## **The Societas Trust**

# Governors' Safeguarding Handbook

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## Contents:

### [Aim of this handbook](#)

1. Guidance and legislation to be aware of
2. [Safeguarding responsibilities](#)
3. [Definitions](#)
4. [Monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding](#)
5. [Safer recruitment](#)
6. [Types and indicators of abuse and neglect](#)
7. [Pupils with increased vulnerability to harm](#)
8. [Concerns about a pupil](#)
9. [Managing disclosures](#)
10. [Early help](#)
11. [Appropriate behaviour towards pupils](#)
12. [Whistleblowing and concerns about staff](#)
13. [Self-reporting](#)
14. [Training and further information](#)
15. [Monitoring and review](#)

## Aim of this handbook

The **Societas Trust** is committed to safeguarding and promoting the physical and mental welfare of every pupil in our trust. We pride ourselves in delivering a whole-academy preventative approach to managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken. For the purpose of this Handbook, the terms trustee(s) and governor(s), Trust and academy, are interchangeable. Governing Board may apply to either the Trust Board or the Local Governing Board at academy level.

This handbook informs you of all the vital information you will need to familiarise yourself with as a governor. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – a copy of which will be distributed to you during induction. It is important that you read and understand the documents – any questions you have can be directed to the CEO for Trustees or the DSL for governors in academy settings.

The names of the DSLs and their deputies within the Trust's settings are as follows:

Name of DSL	Contact number	Name of deputy DSL	Contact number
<b><u>Alsagers Bank Primary Academy</u></b>			
Lisa Chell	01782 720406	Julie Prideaux	01782 720406
		Stacey Coll	01782 720406
<b><u>Ash Green Primary Academy</u></b>			
Jodie Kessel	01782 658997	Alice Worthington	01782 658997
		Charlotte Bishop	01782 658997
		Jacqui Jarvie	01782 658997
		Nina Kessel	01782 658997
<b><u>Ball Green Primary School</u></b>			
Kathryn James	01782 378771	Jonathon Hankey	01782 378771
		Laura Green	01782 378771
		Joy Robinson	01782 378771
		Natasha Porter	01782 378771
		Vicky Claery	01782 378771

		Gemma Bourne	01782 378771
		Jo Bourne	01782 378771
<b>Burnwood Primary Academy</b>			
Emma Wickham	01782 235577	Erica Clifford	01782 235577
		Sam Flynn	01782 235577
		Wendy Brian	01782 235577
<b><u>Carmountside Primary Academy</u></b>			
Jo Cowden	01782 234676	Lisa Challinor	01782 234676
		Joanne Degg	01782 234676
<b><u>Ellison Primary Academy</u></b>			
Lorna Pateman	01782 613674	Jill Dawson	01782 613674
		Ian Sterio	01782 613674
		Angela Prince	01782 613674
<b><u>Gladstone Primary Academy</u></b>			
Claire Annese	01782 957267	Tracie Brindley	01782 957267
		Stephen Stanford	01782 957267
<b><u>Goldenhill Priamary Academy</u></b>			
Andrew Bagley	01782 235790	Steve Martin	01782 235790
		Emma Pitt	01782 235790
		Claire Meadowcroft	01782 235790
		Tiffany Woodward	01782 235790
<b><u>Oaklands Nursery</u></b>			
Sally Lynch	01782 987075	Claire Smith	01782 987075
		Liz Davies	01782 987075

<b><u>Summerbank Primary Academy</u></b>			
Clare Pearson	01782 233611	Mrs J Johnson	01782 233611
		Mrs H Potts	01782 233611
		Mrs K Shortt	01782 233611

Please be aware that this handbook contains sensitive topics that may be upsetting for some people to read; however, you are encouraged to read this handbook in full where possible.

# 1. Guidance and legislation to be aware of

In relation to safeguarding and child protection duties and responsibilities, you will need to be aware of certain legislation, statutory guidance and non-statutory guidance in order to do your part in keeping children safe at school.

You will need to be aware of:

## Legislation

- The [Children Act 1989](#), and the [Children Act 2004](#).
- The [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#).
- The [UK General Data Protection Regulation](#), also known as the UK GDPR or Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
- The [Data Protection Act 2018](#), also known as the DPA.
- The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#).

## Statutory guidance

- The DfE's statutory guidance, '[Keeping children safe in education](#)', also known as KCSIE, which is guidance specific to the education sector on how to identify and manage safeguarding concerns, and how to avoid putting children at risk in the first place.
- The DfE's statutory guidance, '[Working Together to Safeguarding Children](#)', also known as WTSC, which outlines how schools and other agencies should work together and communicate in order to keep children safe in all settings.
- The Home Office's statutory guidance, '[Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales](#)', also known as the Prevent duty, which outlines how authorities should respond to concerns of somebody at risk of becoming radicalised, and outlines how schools are involved in this duty.
- HM Government's statutory guidance, '[Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation](#)', also known as the Channel duty, which outlines the relevant authorities' duties to intervene where somebody has been radicalised or is at risk of radicalisation.

## Non-statutory guidance

- The DfE's non-statutory guidance, '[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)', which details the signs of neglect and abuse and the actions to take if you are concerned for a child.
- The DfE's non-statutory guidance, '[Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services](#)', which provides guidance on how to manage safeguarding information between agencies and staff, and how to manage disclosures.
- The DfE's guidance, '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)', which is statutory from 19 August 2024, and outlines how schools work together with other agencies to ensure children attend school as expected.
- The DfE's non-statutory guidance, '[Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#)', also known as the digital technology standards, which outlines how education settings should set up their ICT frameworks to ensure children can be kept safe online at school.

Other legislation and guidance to be aware of is listed in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Recommended reading**

It is recommended that you read, as a minimum, Part 1 or Annex A of KCSIE in order to understand your role in child protection and safeguarding. It is also recommended that, as a governor, you read KCSIE in full, with particular attention to the management of safeguarding in Part 2, and the school's safer recruitment duties in Part 5.

## **2. Safeguarding responsibilities**

In line with the DfE's statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE), all adults who come into contact with children have a responsibility to safeguard them and promote their welfare. As a governor, this responsibility is particularly important for you to be aware of, as you have a legal responsibility to help cultivate a safe environment that protects children from harm and promotes their welfare in academy.

You will have a number of responsibilities to help ensure the safety and security of our pupils, staff and stakeholders. Governors are expected to adhere at all times to the responsibilities below; failure to do so may result in that governors removal.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and schools should adopt a culture where all staff, volunteers and governors consider that **"it could happen here"**.

You and the rest of the governing board have a responsibility to:

- Ensure the academy safeguards pupils' wellbeing.
- Ensure you, the governing board and the academy maintain public trust in the profession.
- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of pupils.
- Ensure the academy provides a safe environment in which pupils can learn.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- Ensure staff are suitably aware of the signs of abuse, exploitation and neglect, and other safeguarding issues that can put pupils at risk of harm.
- Ensure staff are aware of the behaviours linked to issues such as drug-taking, alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, serious violence, sharing indecent images, and other signs that pupils may be at risk of harm.
- Be aware of the academy's systems which support safeguarding, including any policies, procedures, information and training provided upon staff and governor induction
- Be aware of the roles and identities of the DSLs within the trust and their deputies.
- Undertake safeguarding training, including online safety training, as required.
- Receive and understand child protection and safeguarding (including online safety) updates, e.g. via email, as required, and at least annually.
- Ensure staff are prepared, and understand how, to identify pupils that may benefit from early help.
- Ensure staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in it.

- Act in accordance with academy procedures with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure staff act with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including in relation to child-on-child abuse.

With regard to specific cases of safeguarding concerns, you have a responsibility to:

- Be aware of and understand the procedure to follow in the event that a child confides they are being abused, exploited or neglected.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, that they will be supported, and that they will be kept safe.
- Be aware of, and understand, the process for making referrals to CSCS, as well as for making statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, and your role in these assessments.
- Make a referral to CSCS and/or the police immediately, if at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child.
- Support social workers in making decisions about individual children, in collaboration with the DSL.
- Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with individual cases.
- Speak to the DSL if you are unsure about how to handle safeguarding matters.
- Challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns, where necessary.

### **The role of the DSL**

A responsibility of the safeguarding trustee is to monitor that the DSLs within the trust have the training, support, resources and opportunity to perform their role effectively and have been given a specific job description for the role.

The trust board should also ensure that there is alternative provision in place in the event of a DSL's absence, or if they are away during the academy day for any length of time. Trusts are permitted to appoint deputy DSLs who should have the same level and standard of training as DSLs and the role be explicit in their job description. The DSLs and their deputies should always be available to discuss safeguarding

The DSLs should regularly share with the governing board, via the safeguarding trustee, any information on safeguarding for quality assurance or audit purposes. This includes any information submitted to the relevant LA's identified safeguarding partners.

The DSLs can complete reports to the trust board to inform them of the safeguarding practices in place at their academy. It should include topics like whole-academy training, safeguarding inductions for new staff and individual safeguarding issues. Governors should use this information to inform any discussions about the safeguarding practices of individual academies and the wider trust.

### **Role of the safeguarding governor**

The governing board must ensure that they appoint a suitably skilled and knowledgeable governor to take responsibility for oversight of the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and practice. All governors should ensure they have received training about safeguarding in order to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and to be able



to ensure the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and processes are robust and compliant.

Key aspects of the safeguarding governor role include:

- Understanding the statutory safeguarding requirements of the academy, and the governing board specifically.
- Supporting the work of the DSL.
- Reporting back to the governing board about how effective safeguarding is.
- Checking that the academy's policies and processes are compliant with statutory guidance.
- Monitoring consistency in safeguarding across the whole academy.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to keep vulnerable pupils safe.
- Developing a culture where safeguarding is a priority, ensuring environments are safe and that everyone understands their responsibilities.
- Ensuring safeguarding is a standard agenda item on reports to the governing board.

The safeguarding trustee should act as the link between the governing board and the headteacher and DSLs within the academy, reporting back to governors on how the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is being implemented and how resources are used or required.

It is important that governors understand that academies can hold some extremely sensitive information about pupils and their families. There is no strategic benefit and it is inappropriate for governors, including the safeguarding governor, to be in receipt of any confidential or sensitive information relating to the safeguarding of any pupil in the academy.

The safeguarding governor should not expect to participate in, or observe, any meetings where specific pupils are discussed; this is not necessary to fulfilling their monitoring role effectively and would be a breach of data protection.

### 3. Definitions

KCSiE is a statutory document published by the DfE that outlines the safeguarding procedures in all academies and academy trusts. It is recommended that all governors read at least part one of KCSiE in order to familiarise themselves with key safeguarding issues; however, reading KCSiE in full ensures that governors know about the wider safeguarding issues that the governing board needs to be aware of, such as safer recruitment and the role of the DSL and their deputies in full. A “**child**”, in a safeguarding context, refers to anyone under the age of 18. The legal age of consent is 16; however, there are certain stipulations around what is considered sexual abuse even at the age of consent. A child under the age of 13 can never consent to sexual activity, and the age a child can assume criminal responsibility is 10.

For the purposes of this handbook, “**safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children**” is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of pupils as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting pupils from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing the impairment of pupils' mental and physical health or development.

- Ensuring that pupils grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all pupils to have the best outcomes.

**“Abuse”** is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child which involves inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. It can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Abuse comes in various forms, including physical, emotional and sexual, and may be by an adult or another child.

**“Neglect”** is defined as a form of abuse which involves 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 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.

**“Exploitation”** is when someone uses a child for financial gain, sexual gratification, labour, or personal advantage. Exploitation can take many forms and often uses cruel, manipulative or violent treatment to force a child to take part in criminal or sexual activities.

**“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 they 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.

**“Early help”** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life.

## 4. Monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding

Safeguarding will be a standard agenda item on each meeting of the full governing board, even if there is no new information to report.

All governing board members will receive at least one annual report which provides an opportunity for you and fellow governors to discuss the effectiveness of the academy’s safeguarding and child protection arrangements, usually provided by the academy’s DSL. This should include information on training to ensure that all staff are compliant with the academy’s safeguarding policies.

You should have regard to safeguarding issues in any monitoring visits you undertake at the academy.

When monitoring safeguarding, you should ensure you listen to the views of pupils and staff, and consider how those views can be represented when agreeing academy safeguarding policies. For example, you may choose to undertake pupil conferencing, include safeguarding

questions on staff surveys, create pupil and staff exit surveys or attend pupil council meetings to gain a range of views and opinions.

All staff members should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. Governing boards are responsible for ensuring all staff undergo the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training both at induction and as required thereafter. In addition, all staff should receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard pupils effectively. Training and updates provided should reflect advice from the academy's local safeguarding partners.

## **5. Safer recruitment**

**“Safer recruitment”** is the safeguarding and protection of pupils during the recruitment and selection process of new members of staff. Its key purposes are to deter, reject or detect candidates who may pose a risk to pupils.

Academy leaders and the governing board have a responsibility to ensure decisions about the suitability of a prospective employee are based on the right checks, including DBS, barred list and prohibition checks, alongside references, information gained from interviews and any other evidence.

The governing board will ensure that at least one of the people who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training and has read and understood part three of KCSIE.

Governing boards may choose appropriate training and may take advice from the local three safeguarding partners in doing so. The training, at minimum, should cover what is outlined in KCSIE.

## **6. Types and indicators of abuse and neglect**

It is imperative that you understand what constitutes abuse, neglect and Exploitation against children to ensure that instances in which pupils are subject to unsafe circumstances, at risk of harm, or potentially already facing harm can be identified and handled appropriately and effectively.

You should ensure that a culture is fostered whereby staff always exercise professional curiosity in order to identify abuse and neglect as early as possible.

You are expected to be aware that abuse, exploitation, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be given a specific label and multiple issues often overlap one another. You should consider how effectively staff in academy can identify the risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence.

You should also bear in mind that the academy has a responsibility to respond to all safeguarding concerns, whether they occur inside or outside of academy, or occur online or in person. Technology has increasingly become an instrument through which abuse or exploitation can be carried out, and it is important that you are aware that online abuse can be as damaging and severe as abuse committed in person.

You are expected to read and understand the information on abuse and neglect below.

## **Abuse**

As well as more commonly documented forms of abuse, you must remain cognisant of the fact that abuse can be committed by, or against, a child or group of children – this is known as “child-on-child abuse”. You can find further information on abuse amongst peers in the academy’s Child-on-child Abuse Policy, with which you are expected to familiarise yourself.

### **Types of abuse**

**“Physical abuse”** is a form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, suffocating and poisoning, 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.

**“Emotional abuse”** is defined as a form of abuse which involves the emotional maltreatment of a child to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving them the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of how they communicate. It can also involve age-inappropriate expectations, e.g. interactions beyond a child’s developmental capability, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing them from taking part in normal social interactions.

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.

**“Sexual abuse”** is defined as a form of abuse which involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical assault, such as penetrative assault and touching, or non-penetrative actions, such as kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as grooming, showing a child sexual images or encouraging them to behave in inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse can take place online, and can be committed by other children. The sexual abuse of a child can be committed by both adults and children of any gender.

The term **“sexual harassment”** is used to describe any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, both online or offline, which violates a child’s dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive 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, e.g. sexual stories, lewd comments, sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and sexualised name-calling.
- Sexual “jokes” and taunting.

- Physical behaviour, e.g. deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes.
- Displaying photos, pictures or drawings of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is defined below).
- 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.
  - Sexualised online bullying.
  - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
  - Sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats.

The term “**sexual violence**” encompasses the definitions provided in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including:

- **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.

“**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.

The “**consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos**”, colloquially known as “**sexting**”, is defined as the sharing of sexually explicit content between pupils, including indecent imagery. “**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

### **Child-on-child abuse**

Child-on-child abuse is when one child or young person causes harm to another. This can be at academy, online or in other social situations. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying.
- **“Teenage relationship abuse”** – abuse in intimate personal relationships between children.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse, including online sexual abuse.
- **“Sexting”** – consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, also known as youth-produced sexual imagery (YPSI).
- Upskirting.
- Initiation and **“hazing”** type violence – harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group, e.g. as part of a ritual, including abuse and elements to the ritual that take place online.

### Indicators of abuse

You should be aware of the following potential indicators of abuse in children:

- Unexplained injury
- Visible desire to cover bruises or other injuries
- Acting frightened in response to sudden movements, raised voices, someone entering their personal space, etc.
- Avoiding being alone with others
- Sudden lack of confidence or self-assurance
- Struggling to control emotions
- Difficulty making or maintaining friendships
- Frequent self-deprecatory comments
- Withdrawing from social situations and/or social isolation
- Displaying sexual knowledge inappropriate for their age
- Pregnancy or STIs

### Exploitation

#### Types of exploitation

**“Child sexual exploitation” (CSE)** is a form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity, for either, or both, of the following reasons:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants
- For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator

CSE does not always involve physical contact, as it can also occur online. It is also important to note that a child can be sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

CSE affects children of any gender, particularly children who are being, or have been, trafficked. An example of CSE is when a child is led to believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship with somebody for the purpose of exploiting the child to engage in sexual activities – this can occur even if the child is of the legal age of consent.



**“Child criminal exploitation” (CCE)** is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity:

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

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact – it can also occur through the use of technology. Children involved in CCE may themselves commit crimes as part of criminal exploitation and are, therefore, also considered victims alongside those they have wronged or harmed.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, being forced to shoplift, pickpocket, committing vehicle crime, or being forced to committing or threatening to commit, serious violence to others.

**“County lines”** is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of ‘deal line’.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including academies.

Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, both from home and academy, where the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. This can also involve having been the perpetrator or victim of serious violence, such as knife crime, being made to conceal illegal substances and/or items, including inside their body, are found in accommodation they have no connection with, e.g. a hotel. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, staff in academies will refer their concerns to the DSL who will also consider the availability of local services and other agencies who offer support to victims of county lines.

As part of the governing board, you will need to ensure that staff are aware of this duty and the procedures in place to identify and refer instances of trafficking are robust and effective. These procedures should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are up-to-date with the latest statutory safeguarding guidelines and reflect current good practice.

**Child financial exploitation** is defined under circumstances in which adults use children and young people under the age of 18 for their own financial gain. It can involve criminals targeting a child or young person and using their bank account to launder money, and in return, they get to keep some of the money themselves. Recruitment is often via social media and is sold as a simple process to make money. Children and young people often do not realise that what they are doing is illegal and, if caught, can face a criminal investigation and have their bank accounts closed

### **Indicators of CSE and CCE**

You should be aware of the following potential indicators of exploitation in children:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly going home late
- Regularly missing lessons
- Appearing with unexplained gifts and new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older partners and/or friends
- Undergoing mood swings or drastic changes in emotional wellbeing
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised or criminal behaviour
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Misuse of drugs and alcohol
- Regularly missing education or not taking part in education

## Neglect

### Types of neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which is likely to result in the impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve:

- A parent failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, and includes exclusion from home or abandonment.
- Failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger.
- Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Failing to secure adequate supervision, including through the use of inappropriate caregivers.
- Neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### Indicators of neglect

You should be aware of the following potential indicators of neglect in children:

- Poor appearance and hygiene
- Health and development problems, e.g. untreated injuries, medical or dental issues, a recurring illness
- Housing and family issues, e.g. having to take on the role of carer for another family member, unsuitable living conditions, parents appearing under the influence of drugs
- Mood and behavioural changes, e.g. changes in emotional wellbeing, lacking in concentration, becoming defensive or aggressive
- Concerning behaviour, e.g. missing academy, being persistently late, getting into trouble at academy or with the police
- Other warning signs, e.g. alcohol or substance abuse, discomfort around being touched, flinching at sudden movements

## Other safeguarding issues

### Domestic abuse

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, “**domestic abuse**” is defined as abusive behaviour of a person towards another person (including conduct directed at someone else, e.g. the person's child) where both are aged 16 or over and are personally connected.

“**Abusive behaviour**” includes physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour,



controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, or another form of abuse.

**“Personally connected”** includes people who:

- Are, have been, or have agreed to be married to each other.
- Are, have been, or have agreed to be in a civil partnership with each other.
- Are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other.
- Each have, or had, a parental relationship towards the same child.
- Are relatives.

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. KCSIE refers to the latter as teenage relationship abuse. This can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

The [NSPCC](#), [Refuge](#) and [SafeLives](#) all have advice on how children who are affected by domestic abuse can be identified and supported. [Operation Encompass](#) operates in the majority of police forces across England – it helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The school actively engages in Operation Encompass – please ask the DSL for more information on this.

### **Serious violence**

You should be aware of the indicators, which may signal pupils are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- Increased absence from school
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- A significant decline in education performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries

There are a number of risk factors that could increase a pupil's vulnerability to becoming involved in serious violence which may 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.

### **Homelessness**

This is also a serious safeguarding concern of which you must be aware. In some cases, children could be living independently from their parents, e.g. through exclusion – the DSL and deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise and progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. In some cases, 16 and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians (e.g.

through exclusion from their home), and will require a different level of intervention and support than the context of homeless children who live with their families.

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”.

### **So called ‘Honour-based’ abuse (HBA)**

So-called HBA encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including FGM, forced marriage. All forms of HBA are abuse and will be treated as such by schools.

### **FGM**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. The FGM mandatory reporting duty places a statutory duty upon teachers to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions.

### **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent, if they have learning disabilities, for example. Some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage.

Further guidance on warning signs of FGM or forced marriage as HBA can be found in the [‘Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation’](#) and the [‘Forced marriage’](#) guidance.

### **Radicalisation**

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

“**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.

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

Protecting pupils from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school's wider safeguarding duties, and the school will actively assess the risk of pupils being radicalised and drawn into extremism and/or terrorism. You will be expected to be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection, and use your professional judgement to identify pupils who may be susceptible to extremist ideologies and radicalisation and act appropriately, which may include contacting the DSL or making a Prevent referral.

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 pupil'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 pupils 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.

### **The Prevent duty**

Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, all schools are subject to a duty to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism", known as "**the Prevent duty**". The Prevent duty will form part of the school's wider safeguarding obligations.

### **Cyber-crime**

Cyber-crime is defined as criminal activity committed using technology 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.

Pupils at our school who show particular aptitude or skill for technology or computing may be at increased risk of entering into cyber-crime. Where you have any concerns about a pupil, you should talk to the DSL. The DSL may consider referring pupils where concern exists to the [Cyber Choices programme](#), which can help them to use this talent in a positive way, and prevent them from being drawn into cybercrime.

### **Child abduction and community safety**

Child abduction is defined as the unauthorised removal or retention of a child from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents and other relatives, other people known to the victim, and strangers.

The school aims to give practical advice and support to pupils on keeping themselves safe when vulnerable, e.g. when walking to and from school, and it is important that all of our staff are on high alert for any suspicious behaviour, e.g. someone loitering near the school, or a pupil's parent whose parental responsibility was revoked turning up to pick them up from school.

### **Modern slavery**

Modern slavery is an umbrella term which encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. This can include CCE, CSE, and other forms of exploitation.

Modern slavery is a serious crime that violates human rights. Victims are forced, threatened or deceived into subjugating situations, degradation and control which undermine their identity. We expect you to familiarise yourself with the Home Office's [statutory guidance](#) on modern slavery, which outlines the types of modern slavery and the indicators that a child, or a someone whom a child is dependant on, is a victim of modern slavery.

## **7. Pupils with increased vulnerability to harm**

You should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to abuse than others. This does not mean that all pupils with the below characteristics will be abused, or that they cannot be perpetrators of abuse themselves; however, it is important that you remain aware that the risk for these pupils may be heightened and they may need to be observed more closely.

### **Pupils who need a social worker**

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. A pupil's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL overseeing safeguarding for each academy within the trust has a record of all the pupils with a social worker and will use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of these pupils' safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

### **Pupils requiring mental health support**

The academy recognises that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Academy staff are expected to observe children day-to-day, where appropriate, and be able to identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. They must not, however, attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, as this can only be done by an appropriately trained professional.

The governing board will be responsible for ensuring that staff are provided the relevant information and know how to act. This information and its procedures should be regularly reviewed to ensure it is clear and effective. Monitoring of how staff respond to mental health concerns raised by pupils should also be in place to ensure that support is swiftly offered by an appropriately trained individual. Staff should be reporting mental health concerns to the DSL in their academy immediately.

### **LAC and previously LAC**

Children most commonly become looked after because of abuse and/or neglect. Because of this, they can be at potentially greater risk in relation to safeguarding. PLAC can also remain vulnerable after leaving care.

The governing board will need to ensure all academy staff receive training as part of their induction, and then annually, to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and previously LAC safe.

The DSL overseeing safeguarding for each academy will hold a record of the details of pupils' social workers and the name of the virtual academy head (VSH) in the LAs that look after each

pupil. Staff members, if appropriate to their role, should also have access to the information they need in relation to a pupil's looked after legal status and the pupil's care arrangements. The designated teacher in each academy will work with the relevant LA to promote the educational achievement of LAC and previously LAC at the academy.

### **Pupils with SEND**

The academy recognises that pupils with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline and understands that further barriers may exist when determining abuse and neglect in this group of pupils.

You, as a governor, must be aware that pupils with SEND are at increased risk of child-on-child abuse. The governing board will ensure that there are mechanisms in place to support pupils with SEND in reporting abuse, with due regard paid to the fact that these pupils may face additional barriers to reporting abuse and that spotting signs of abuse in these pupils may be harder.

You should be aware of the following:

- Certain indicators of abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, may relate to the pupil's disability without further exploration; however, it should never be assumed that a child's indicators relate only to their disability
- Pupils with SEND are more prone to peer group isolation or bullying, and can be disproportionately impacted by this, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers may exist, as well as difficulties in managing and reporting these
- Cognitive understanding issues, such as being unable to appreciate the difference between fact and fiction in online content, and then repeating the content or behaviours in academy

When staff need to report concerns or make referrals for pupils with SEND, the above factors will always be taken into consideration. When managing a safeguarding issue relating to a pupil with SEND, the DSL will liaise with the academy's SENCO, as well as the pupil's family where appropriate, to ensure that the pupil's needs are effectively met. Extra pastoral support and attention, where appropriate, will also be put in place for pupils with SEND.

The practices and procedures in place to protect pupils with SEND need to be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they remain robust and effective. Failure to monitor these procedures could result in an increased risk of harm for some of the academy's most vulnerable pupils.

### **Girls**

The academy recognises that girls are more likely to be on the receiving end of some forms of abuse, particularly sexual abuse and child-on-child abuse, than their male peers, and that sexual violence and harassment against girls is very common and accounts for the majority of cases.

Taking into account that sexual violence and harassment against girls is widespread in society, and largely based in gender inequality, the academy aims to encourage gender equality in all aspects of its operations. You are expected to challenge any incidents of misogynistic language or gender-based abuse, whether of a sexualised nature or not. This should also be

monitored at academy level, to ensure that staff and pupils are upholding the academy's ethos and values towards gender equality.

### **LGBTQ+ pupils**

The academy recognises that pupils who are LGBTQ+, or are perceived to be LGBTQ+, are more likely to be targeted by their peers, e.g. for discriminatory bullying, and may face increased risk of abuse outside of academy. The academy aims to provide a safe space for pupils to speak out or share their concerns, reducing the additional barriers LGBTQ+ pupils face and ensuring there is a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

The academy holds a zero-tolerance policy towards pupils using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, regardless of whether or not the language is being directed at another individual. As a governor, you are also responsible for challenging such behaviour in academy and helping foster a culture that any abuse towards pupils who are LGBTQ+, or who are perceived to be, is unacceptable.

### **Pupils vulnerable to racism and discrimination**

The academy holds a zero-tolerance policy towards the use of racist language, regardless of whether the language is being directed at another individual. You are responsible for challenging such behaviour within the academy and helping foster a culture that any abuse towards pupils from BAME backgrounds is unacceptable.

You should be aware that girls, pupils with SEND, or LGBTQ+, or perceived LGBTQ+, pupils are likely to face increased abuse due to the intersection of these identities. The governing board should ensure staff in the academy always remain vigilant with regard to these pupils and the ways in which other pupils behave towards them, in order to ensure any incidents or potential incidents can be handled as soon as they occur.

You should also be aware that minority ethnic pupils, particularly black pupils, may be less likely to report abuse committed against them, and may be more likely to be misidentified as perpetrators of abuse.

### **Children with family members in prison or who are involved with the court system**

Where pupils have parents or other family members in prison, they are more likely to be at risk of poorer outcomes, including poverty, isolation, poor mental health, substance misuse and partaking in criminal activity themselves.

It is also important to remember that pupils who are required to give evidence at criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed, are likely to face increased stress and poor mental health. Such instances can also entrench conflict in families.

We offer increased support to pupils who have dealt with criminal activity and criminal justice, whether through witnessing or being the victim of crime, or having their family member imprisoned; the governing board will need to ensure that staff record and report any concerning behaviour from these children without delay, and that this process remains effective.

### **Children missing from education**



Where pupils are missing from education, particularly persistently, this can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues and staff should report this to the academy's DSL. Staff should be regularly reminded not to assume that someone will already have flagged concerns about a pupil – they should be aware that it is always better to raise a concern someone else has already raised than not to share the concern at all.

### **Elective home education (EHE)**

Although many children receiving EHE have positive experiences, some children can be put at increased risk of harm, particularly as being home educated can, in some instances, make children less visible to services put in place to ensure children's needs are met. Although it is unlikely that you will come into immediate contact with safeguarding concerns surrounding children receiving EHE, we still expect that you will be aware of this issue as it may affect the academy, e.g. where the academy needs to make a disclosure.

## **8. Concerns about a pupil**

Although it is unlikely that you will personally need to report a safeguarding concern, the academy expects that you will familiarise yourself with the procedure and understand your responsibilities in relation to confidentiality and information sharing. This may be particularly relevant if something is disclosed to you during a academy visit.

If at any point you have **any** concerns about a child's welfare, you must act on them **immediately** by speaking to the academy's DSL or a deputy. Where the DSL is not available to discuss the concern, you should contact the deputy DSL with the matter.

The academy aims to ensure that there is a trained DSL or deputy DSL on the academy site at all times; however, in the rare occasion that this is not possible, e.g. due to sickness absence, you should speak to the headteacher immediately. It is important that you do not delay.

Once you have referred this to the DSL, the academy will make one of the three following decisions:

- Managing any support for the child internally via the academy's own pastoral support processes
- Undertaking an early help assessment
- Making a referral to statutory services

Where a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer from, harm, the case will be referred to children's social care immediately. If a referral is made about a child by anyone other than the DSL, the DSL will be informed as soon as possible. The LA will decide what action is required within one working day of the referral being made and will notify the referrer. Staff within the academy are required to monitor a referral if they do not receive information from the LA regarding what action is necessary for the pupil.

If the situation does not improve after a referral, the DSL will ask for reconsideration to ensure that their concerns have been addressed and that the situation improves for the pupil. If early help is appropriate, the case will be kept under constant review. If the pupil's situation does not improve, a referral will be considered.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, as well as the reasons for making those decisions, will be recorded in writing by the DSL and kept securely in a **locked cabinet** in the **head teacher's office**.

If a pupil is in immediate danger, a referral will be made to CSCS and/or the police immediately. If a pupil has committed a crime, such as sexual violence, the police will be notified without delay.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, the academy will ensure that the pupil's wishes are always considered, and that there are systems available for pupils to provide feedback and express their views.

## **9. Managing disclosures**

We pride ourselves on creating a trusting atmosphere between academy staff and pupils. This is particularly important for when an incident happens and a pupil needs to disclose information but may be apprehensive about the consequences.

We are committed to ensuring our staff are sensitive to the personal barriers pupils may face when disclosing information, so it is essential that pupils are reminded in exercises, such as PSHE days, what sort of behaviour is unacceptable and the importance of reporting said behaviour. The governing board should regularly review the effectiveness of these exercises to ensure pupils have the information they need to disclose any concerns they may have.

It is important that all staff maintain a professional curiosity and speak to the academy's DSL with any concerns, recognising that pupils may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

In the instance that a pupil makes a disclosure to you, e.g. during a governor visit to the academy, you should act calmly and supportively, ensuring that the pupil feels like they are being listened to and taken seriously, and reassure them that they have done the right thing by talking to you and they will be supported and kept safe.

You should ensure that you bear in mind that trauma can impact memory, meaning pupils may not be able to recall all details or a timeline of abuse, and you should not take this as an indication that the pupil is not being truthful, nor should you use this as an opportunity to interrogate the pupil on specific details. It is also important to recognise that an initial disclosure may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident. You should attempt to gather essential facts without asking leading questions, being sensitive and avoiding pressing the pupil for information they do not, at this point, feel comfortable sharing. Remember to make notes so you can accurately report the disclosure to the academy's DSL.

You must, at all costs, avoid promising a pupil that you will keep the disclosure confidential, and be honest and upfront with them about who you will have to share the information with and why. The information must not be shared with anyone who does not need to know.

Upon receiving a disclosure, confidentiality will be maintained at all times and you must adhere to the seven principles outlined in the DfE's '[Information sharing](#)' advice when disclosing information to either the DSL or an external agency – these are:



- **Necessary and proportionate:** consider how much information needs to be released – only share information that is necessary and adheres to your obligations under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- **Relevant:** only information that is relevant to the purposes should be shared.
- **Adequate:** information should be adequate to enable a thorough investigation to be conducted, ensuring it is understood and reliable.
- **Accurate:** information given should be accurate and up-to-date and should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion.
- **Timely:** you should not wait to disclose information. Prompt information delivery can reduce the risk of missed opportunities to offer support and protect a child.
- **Secure:** wherever possible, the information provided should be shared securely to avoid data breaches – you must always adhere to our Data Protection Policy.
- **Record:** information sharing decisions should be recorded, even if the information doesn't get shared – the reasons should be cited along with what information has been shared and who shared it. This should be done in line with our Records Management Policy.

## 10. Early help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life.

Any pupil may benefit from early help, but this is particularly prominent for pupils who:

- Are disabled or have certain health conditions and have specific additional needs.
- Have special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory EHC plan).
- Have a mental health need.
- Are young carers.
- Show signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Are frequently missing from care or from home.
- Misuse drugs or alcohol.
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- Are returned home to their family from care.
- Show early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- Are at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Have a family member in custody or are affected by parental offending.
- Are at risk of 'honour-based' abuse such as FGM or forced marriage.
- Are at risk of being radicalised.
- Are privately fostered.
- Are persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the academy day.

You should be aware that early help is not limited to pupils affected by the above and be mindful of a variety of additional circumstances in which pupils may benefit from early help, for example, if they are:

- Bereaved.
- Viewing problematic or inappropriate online content or developing inappropriate relationships online.
- Returning home to their family from care.
- Missing education, or are persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education.

You should be mindful of all signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and use professional curiosity to raise concerns to the DSL.

Early help will also be used to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour to prevent escalation.

You should inform the DSL immediately if you feel as though a pupil may benefit from early help.

## 11. Appropriate behaviour towards pupils

You must be aware of the standards of appropriate behaviour expected of you when interacting with pupils, e.g. when speaking to pupils during a academy visit.

You must have due regard to the fact that:

- You are in a unique position of trust, care, responsibility, authority and influence in relation to pupils.
- There is a significant power imbalance.
- There are more stringent expectations on your behaviour with regard to pupils due to your position as a academy governor.

You must remain aware of the fact that all pupils under the age of 18, regardless of the phase they are at within the academy, are children by law – as a result, you must ensure that you do not assume maturity on behalf of a child and do not engage with children as they would with their own peers. You should be aware that, where there is any doubt regarding whether the behaviour of another adult is appropriate, this should be reported to the academy's DSL immediately.

You should report any concerns you have related to your own behaviour or the behaviour of other adults, including staff members, volunteers and other governors; concerns should be reported even if they are low-level. Low-level concerns are differentiated from concerns that can cause harm. The **“harms threshold”** is the point at which a concern is no longer low-level and constitutes a threat of harm to a child. This threshold is defined as accusations that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour that has happened outside of academy.

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

- **Being overly friendly with children** – this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with a child or children, e.g. conversations that are about your personal life.
- **Having favourites and treating those favourites differently** – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment or buying pupils gifts.
- **Taking photographs of children on a personal mobile phone or device.**
- **Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.**
- **Humiliating pupils.**

You should be aware that some of the above low-level concerns may meet the harms threshold depending on certain factors, e.g. the age or needs of the child or the content of exchanged messages, and that some of the above incidents may not be concerns in context, e.g. a pre-approved, one-to-one meeting with a child behind a closed door between the child and a academy counsellor who has received all appropriate safety checks. You should read the academy's Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy.

When reporting concerns about members of staff, volunteers or leaders of the academy, you are protected in law, and by the 'Whistleblowing and concerns about staff' section of this handbook.

## **12. Whistleblowing and concerns about staff**

### **Whistleblowing**

A “**whistleblower**” discloses confidential information regarding an employee, which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct which is connected with the workplace.

Any of the following people can raise a concern:

- Employees of the academy.
- Employees of contractors working for the academy, e.g. agency staff, builders and drivers.
- Employees of suppliers.
- Voluntary workers working with the academy – this includes governors.
- A trainee, such as a student teacher.

We recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to take; as such, we will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect staff who raise a concern in good faith.

You are protected in law by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which gives those working within the academy environment protection from detriment and dismissal where they have made a protected disclosure, providing the legal requirements of the Act are satisfied. Concerns will be expressed in writing to the headteacher (or the CEO if the concern pertains

to a headteacher; or the Chair of the Trust Board if the concern pertains to the CEO), and will include: the background to the concern, names, dates and places where possible, and express the reasons for the concern.

Individuals are encouraged to let themselves be known, either in person, or through their union representative, as concerns expressed anonymously are difficult to investigate.

You can seek confidential advice at any time from Protect, a registered charity which advises on serious malpractice in the workplace. For more information, visit their [website](#) or ring them on 020 7404 6609.

You are not responsible for investigating the alleged illegal or dishonest activity, or for determining fault or corrective measures. Once the academy has been informed of the concern, the headteacher (or chair of governors where the concern is about the headteacher) will write to the whistleblower within 10 days of the initial meeting to confirm that the concern has been received, as well as indicate proposals for dealing with the matter.

The initial stage will be an interview between you and the headteacher (or chair of governors where the concern is about the headteacher), then an assessment of further action will be discussed. If an investigation is carried out, you will be informed of the final outcome.

If the investigating officer needs to talk to you, you are permitted to be accompanied by a professional association representative, a friend, or a fellow member of the academy not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates. This person will provide support only, and will not be allowed to become involved in the proceedings.

If no action is to be taken, and/or you are not satisfied with the way the matter has been handled, you can make a complaint under the academy's complaints procedure.

Although we are committed to ensuring everyone working in the academy environment can report concerns about another's conduct, if, for any reason, you feel unable to raise an issue with the SLT, you should access other whistleblowing channels such as the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline:

- Telephone: 0808 800 5000 – available from 8:00am to 8:00pm Monday to Friday
- Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Any allegations of abuse made against staff members in the academy will be dealt with in accordance with the academy's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

In the event that an allegation is made about you, the academy has welfare support on offer. We recognise the sensitivity of the issue, and how distressing it can be to be the subject of an investigation; the headteacher and other relevant personnel will provide you with information about the support available in the event that an allegation is made about you.

## **13. Self-reporting**

You are encouraged to self-report in the event you feel as though you have acted inappropriately or in a way that:

- Could be misinterpreted, by a pupil or bystander.
- Could appear compromising to others.
- Upon reflection, falls below the standards set out in the Governor Code of Conduct.

We aim to be sympathetic and understanding to those who self-report.

Self-reporting does not mean you will be treated more favourably during any resulting investigations than those who were reported by someone else; however, your self-awareness and intentions will be taken into consideration when a final decision is being made on the severity of the incident.

## **14. Training and further information**

### **Training**

In addition to this handbook, you will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction, which will be regularly updated on an **annual** basis or whenever there is a change in legislation.

The induction training will cover:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The Behaviour Policy
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- The Children Missing from Education Policy
- The identity of the DSL and any deputies
- The role of the DSL and deputy DSLs

You will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually. You will receive opportunities to contribute towards and inform the safeguarding arrangements in the academy.

The DSLs and deputy DSLs within the trust will undergo updated child protection training every two years, as well as additional training to refresh their skills and knowledge at regular intervals (at least annually), to allow them to keep up-to-date with any developments relevant to their role.

### **Further information**

This handbook includes a general summary of the academy's approach to safeguarding, and your role within it. For more detailed information on specific aspects of our approach, we strongly encourage you to ensure you have read and fully understand the following academy policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Reporting Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy

## **15. Monitoring and review**

We recognise that many governors may use this handbook as a reference point throughout their term at the academy; therefore, we will review and update the handbook **annually**, and in response to any new or updated government guidance or legislation.