



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families/carers has a role to play in safeguarding and should consider at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

The Governing Body of Old Palace Primary School recognizes and is committed to its responsibility to safeguard, being responsible for ensuring the schools understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and promote the welfare and wellbeing of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. For the purpose of this policy, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing the impairment of a child's physical and mental health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives. We adopt an attitude of it could happen here and therefore staff are required to remain vigilant at all times.

Furthermore, we recognize that no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. The school is therefore committed to multi-agency working.

Aims

This policy is for the use of all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors and is also available to parents on the school website. The purpose of the policy is to provide all staff with key information to enable them to identify safeguarding concerns, know what action to take in response and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Also:

- To ensure consistent good practice throughout the school
- To demonstrate the school's commitment to safeguarding to the whole school community: pupils, parents and other partners
- To ensure children and young people are listened to, valued and respected and pupils are provided with a safe, stable environment in which they can learn
- Staff are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns
- All staff are given appropriate support and regular training (including induction for all new members of staff and volunteers)
- Staff are able to carry out their roles and responsibilities in the context of safe working practices.

Responsibilities

To fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities, the school takes account of DfE guidance, THSCP arrangements and the procedures set out by our Safeguarding Partners (local authority, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups) to:

- Ensure we have a named Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for safeguarding and child protection, and also a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, both of whom receive appropriate training every 2 years, as well as regular updates at the DSL forums.
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and governors know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their role, as well as their personal responsibilities regarding being alert to the signs of abuse, including the impact on Mental Health and referring any concerns.
- Ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed, including pre and post-employment checks and the use of the Teacher Services' system to check for prohibition orders. The school's safer recruitment procedures comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 part 3 and the local safeguarding partner arrangements by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identify, qualifications and work history. At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.
- Maintain a Single Central Record, including details of recruitment checks undertaken, which is regularly reviewed for compliance.
- Ensure that the relevant DBS checks are completed for all members of staff, governors and volunteers.
- Request and ensure receipt of written confirmation from supply agencies and contract services that relevant checks have been carried out and that agency/ contract staff are suitable to work with children.
- Carry out relevant checks on trainee teachers and volunteers.
- Ensure the school visitor's policy is implemented and visitors to the school are appropriately supervised following completion of a risk assessment.
- Make all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors aware of the use of mobiles and cameras in reference to the Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.
- Ensure all staff maintain a professional relationship online with pupils, in line with the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Ensure all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training (including Online) during their induction and continue to receive regular updates, including an annual refresher.
- Ensure that the school contributes to multi-agency working, including providing a co-ordinated offer of early help, when required, and contributing to multi-agency plans to support children subject to child protection plans
- Keep appropriate written records of any concerns that have been raised, the discussions regarding them, the decisions made and the reasons for these.
- Ensure all records are kept securely and that their storage and transfer complies with GDPR regulations.

- Ensure children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material through the use of appropriate filters, monitoring systems, using an effective approach to the teaching of online safety (protecting and educating the whole school) and following the guidance in the Online Safety Policy.
- Ensure the school follows the advice provided by DfE on safeguarding and remote education (DfE, 2021b), should children need to learn remotely online.
- Ensure that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which teaches the children about safeguarding, for example through PSHE and RSE lessons and focus weeks.
- Carry out risk assessments for extended and off-site activities, ensuring the Child Protection Policy and procedures apply.
- Transfer CP files (securely) to a child's new school and proactively contact them in advance to help ensure a smooth transition.

In addition to this policy, all members of staff are required to read the DfE guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021) Part 1 and complete Educare training at the beginning of each academic year (or during induction should they join the school later in the year), including Online Safety training. As agreed with Governors and proprietors, those who do not work directly with children need to read (at least) Annex A.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Debbie Kurup** (Deputy is **Gary Palmer**). They are responsible for making referrals to the duty officer when there have been concerns raised by any member of staff. The Designated Link Governor for Safeguarding is **David Jones**.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy will liaise closely with children's social care and other agencies in line with the practices set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'THSCP Arrangements'. They will be given the time, funding, training and support to provide advice and guidance to other staff on child welfare and protection matters, to take part in multi-agency meetings (or to support other staff to do so) and to contribute to the assessment of children.

Types of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

There are four main types of child abuse, although in most cases multiple issues will overlap.

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

Sexual - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (not necessarily involving violence), whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative

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

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

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. The school is aware of the borough's [LBTH Neglect Guidance](#) and understands its important role in identifying children who may be suffering from Neglect.

In addition, members of some communities hold beliefs that may be common within particular cultures but which are against the law in England. So called 'honour based' violence are all forms of abuse and should be handles as such, regardless of the family's motivation. If staff have any doubts, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Examples of particular practices include:

Forced Marriages - 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). This should not be confused with arranged marriages between consenting adults.

Under-age Marriages - In England, a young person cannot legally marry nor have a sexual relationship until they are 16 years old.

Female Genital Mutilation-This 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 abuse with long lasting harmful consequences. Staff need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM or already having suffered FGM, ensuring that any concerns are referred to the Designated Person for Child protection. Where a teacher discovers an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, they have a legal duty to personally report this to the police and to discuss the case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Breast Ironing- This is a traditional practice in the West African republic of Cameroon by which girls as young as 10 have their chests pounded with hot objects to disguise the onset of puberty.

Ritualistic Abuse -Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children). What should never be condoned is the use of any physical violence to get rid of the possessing spirit. This is physical abuse and people can be prosecuted even if it was their intention to help the child.

Contextual (Extra Familial Harm)

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and family. All staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside of their families. These risks take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms, including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines. When/if referring to Children's Social Care, the school will consider what is known about the child's wider context and ensure it is reported clearly to the relevant agencies.

Child Sexual Exploitation

CSE is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Some of the following can be indicators of CSE:

- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

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 any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) 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. CCE can include children being coerced into moving drugs or money, being involved in County Lines, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.
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It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however staff should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Serious Youth Violence

All staff are aware of indicators, which may signal that children 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 performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. The following can increase the likelihood of involvement (however not limited to), such as being male, frequently absent or permanently excluded, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

If practitioners have concerns that a child may be a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking then a referral should be made to the National Referral Mechanism¹², as soon as possible.

In addition, in a similar way to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse, schools also have a responsibility to protect children from the **risk of radicalisation and extremism**. Similar to protecting

children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' safeguarding approach.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This 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.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

The Prevent Duty has four general themes:

1. Schools are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. The school will demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them.
2. The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. Safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of the THSCP Board. Effective engagement with parents is essential, as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation, and assistance will be provided to support families who raise concerns.
3. Schools must ensure that Prevent awareness training is provided so that staff are equipped to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has undertaken Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
4. Schools must also ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school. The school's internet provider, LGfL provides a filtering system.

The school will discuss any concerns in relation to possible radicalisation with a child's parents in line with our safeguarding policies and procedures, unless there are specific reasons to believe that doing so will put the child at risk. Staff will remain alert to signs which may indicate radicalisation, such as changes in a child's behaviour, expression of radical views or attempts to seek to hide their views. Any concerns will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in the same way as for other forms of abuse and reported in the same way. Where appropriate a referral may then be made to the Channel programme. Across the curriculum, the school will equip children with the skills needed to stay safe online and will promote fundamental British values to allow children to build their resilience to radicalisation, by teaching them to explore issues critically, to weigh up evidence, to debate and to make reasoned arguments.

Peer on Peer Abuse

The school recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers and do not assume it is not happening if there are no reports. Abuse is abuse. It will not be tolerated or should not be dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. All staff have a role in challenging inappropriate views and behaviours, as dismissing or tolerating them risks normalizing such behaviours. Cases of peer on peer abuse must therefore be alerted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the usual way via CPOM and all staff are aware of the procedures. This can include (but is not limited to):

- Bullying- including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying. Prejudice and discrimination are behaviours which cause a person to feel powerless, worthless or excluded originating from prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, for example, prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.
- physical abuse such as biting, hitting, kicking, shaking, hair pulling, online (encouraging/threatening physical action).
- 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 maybe standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) including pressuring another person to send sexual imagery or video content.
- 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;
- upskirting – taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, which is a criminal offence
- initiation/hazing -a 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)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Online abuse- this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

Those impacted by peer on peer abuse will be offered a 'check in chat' to speak with the Year Group Leader or another trusted adult and through the discussions any further support will be identified. The Behaviour, Anti Bullying and Online policy identify additional support and procedures in place.

Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. Although it is deemed more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously

It is important to remember that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a

sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. It is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Some examples include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment (non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos; sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

It is essential that all victims are reassured 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 sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Depending on the type of abuse, additional guidance may also be found in the school's policies on behaviour, anti-bullying and online safety. All incidents of bullying, including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, are logged and monitored to ensure that the victim and perpetrator receives the appropriate support.

Online

Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As a school we are to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in the use of technology and identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. Additional information can be found in the Online Safety Policy. All staff should report any online issues via CPOMS, alerting the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Parents/carers are regularly advised that children under the age of 12 are not permitted to have social media accounts. Should it be found that a child has an account, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed via CPOMS. The parents will be informed and the school will monitor the account to ensure that it is closed. Parents/carers are also informed that children should not have instant messenger (such as Whatsapp) until the age of 16. The school holds workshops and has monthly articles in the newsletter, to remind parents and pupils of the risks posed by social media and instant messenger and to promote strategies to help children to stay safe online, using links such as <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>. The school also offers 1:1 support with the ICT technician for parents/carers.

Children are not permitted to use mobile phones on the school premises. Any mobile phones brought into school must be handed into the school office immediately and then collected at the end of the school day.

Annex D of the KCSIE 2021 provides additional information which the school refers to, to help keep children safe online (including remote learning) and is referenced in the Online Safety Policy.

Mental Health

The school has an important role in supporting the mental well-being of children and to identify behaviour that may suggest a child is experiencing mental health problems. All staff recognise that mental health may be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are aware of the trauma and mental health impact on a child who has had adverse childhood experiences including abuse, bereavement and separation of parents. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

In regards to concerns, staff report it as a 'cause for concern' via CPOM to the DSL and Deputy. Using the Pyramid of Need (Young Minds), along with the LBTH threshold guidance, appropriate steps will be taken which could involve a referral to the nurture group, an Early Help referral, referral to the School Social Worker, School Therapist or CAMHs.

Recognising Signs of Abuse

It can often be difficult to recognize abuse. The signs listed in this document are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for a variety of reasons as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what **could** indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

- Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm
- Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone, other electronic device or on the Internet
- Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a complete stranger

In general staff employed within Old Palace Primary School will not have the expertise to diagnose child abuse, but do have a responsibility to be alert and aware of the signs. The presence of one or more signs, or their repeated presence, might raise concerns and should be used as a prompt for discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Similarly, if staff are unsure they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for further guidance.

Possible Indicators and Signs of Abuse

Neglect	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Abuse
Hygiene	Bruising or other significant signs on the body	Showing an awareness of sexual behaviour that is not attributable to their age	Erratic, sometimes violent, behaviour
Inappropriate clothing	New injuries frequent and recurring	Abnormal behaviour: tearful, withdrawn, flinches when touched	Overly physical or affectionate

Lack of Social Skills	Giving inconsistent or false excuses for injury	Aggressiveness	Reliance on adult contact
Underweight	Refusal to change for PE	Physical evidence ie. bruising	Short concentration span
Under stimulated	Excessively nervous behaviour, such as rocking, hair twisting	Medical evidence ie. Toilet problems transmitted disease, itching or discharge	Unusual emphasis on a normal family life
Inadequate medical provision	Withdrawal and backing away from adults	Play representations and drawings with disturbing features	Regularly tearful
Reluctant to go home	Fear of medical help	Written evidence in writing	Isolation or attention seeking
Low self esteem	Aggressive behaviour	Complaints for other children	Overeating/loss of appetite
Delayed social development – poor language & speech	Unable to play, no sense of joy	Child complaining of soreness, discomfort or recurring abdominal pain	Self-inflicting injury

Further information on the signs and symptoms of abuse can be found at: NSPCC-
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>

Procedure for Reporting Concerns

Listening to the Child

Regardless of how knowledge of abuse arises, the first steps when talking to a child are critical. Often a child will be frightened, confused and feeling vulnerable.

The child should be reassured in a calm manner that he/she is safe and has done the right thing by telling someone. Listen carefully to the child without leading their conversation or showing any kind of shock reaction.

A child often assumes an irrational guilt complex, feeling that the abuse is somehow his/her fault. Again reassurance that he/she is not to blame should be given. Emphasise that the claims are taken seriously and that it will be necessary to involve someone else to ensure that the abuse stops.

Disclosure

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult, another child or a member of staff, it is important that you:

- Be accessible and allow the child to speak freely
- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour
- Remain calm and let the child know that you take what they are saying seriously
- Do **not** use leading questions or attempt to interview them yourself
- Do **not** jump to conclusions, speculate or accuse anyone
- Do **not** promise to keep what they tell you a secret. Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them
- Sign into the CPOM system and create a record of the incident (cause for concern), alerting the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy.
- If for any reason you are unable to access CPOM, complete a paper **Record of Concern** form, available in the staffroom and hand this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. If they are not available, speak to another member of the senior leadership team

It is essential that a written record is kept of any concerns raised and the discussions regarding them. The decisions made and the reasons for these must also be recorded in writing. When completing a written report as much detail as possible should be provided, including:

- The nature of the allegation.
- Details of any bruising or other injury.
- Times, dates and any other relevant information.
- Dates, times and names of those adults involved in the conversation with the child.
- Initials should be used when using staff and children's names.

A copy of any other relevant information (e.g. a picture or a piece of writing) can be uploaded and attached. The DSL will identify where the disclosure falls on the LBTH Threshold. The DSL will make a referral to children's social care, if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, or the child is considered to be in need, that is a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services. If the child is already known to Children's Social Care, then the DSL will communicate safeguarding concerns with the allocated Social Worker.

When a call is made to the MASH advice line, the school will then wait to receive advice from the duty officer. Once this is received, the school will act upon this, contacting parents if advised to do so. If parents are advised to carry out further discussions with the allocated social worker, the school will arrange any joint planning meetings as necessary. The Headteacher will be kept informed of the referral and any subsequent action.

Where a child is at risk of immediate danger or harm a call must be made straight away to the MASH Advice Line (0207 364 3444) or the Police. Anyone can make a referral, so action must not be delayed if the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy cannot be found, such as out of normal working hours. Where referrals are not made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they should be informed of the referral as soon as possible. In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, including calling 999 if necessary.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy also understand when they should consider calling the police and what they expect when they do, following the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) guidance.

If, after a referral to Children's Social Care, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves. In accordance with the Tower Hamlets Threshold Guidance the DSL will first make contact with the team manager followed by the service manager followed by the divisional director. At every level of escalation there should be discussion and concerted effort to resolve any professional difference.

Allegations Against Members of Staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff (including contractors, supply staff and volunteers), the school's procedures will be followed. The procedures are compliant with KCSIE 2021 part 4 and THSCP supplementary guidance- Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff – September 2020.

An allegation is made against a member of staff including supply staff, volunteers and contractors when a member of staff has:

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

In the case of an allegation against a member of staff, the Headteacher should be told and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed and the school will await their advice on how to proceed.

When an allegation is made against a supply member of staff, the Headteacher will be the case manager and take the lead in contacting the LADO and also informing the relevant agency. In the event of an allegation being made against the Designated Safeguarding Lead, this should be reported to the Headteacher. If the allegation is against the Headteacher this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will then liaise with the chair of the Governing Body.

Respect for the child's privacy is paramount and the staff involved must not discuss details of the disclosure with anyone other than those necessary to carry out the procedures outlined above. The wishes of the child will be taken into consideration when determining what action to take, but ultimately any action taken will be based on their best interests. Details of the child's views and feedback will be recorded within the written record of the referral.

The school recognises that a disclosure can be distressing for a member of staff to deal with. Should this be the case, the member of staff should discuss this with the Headteacher so support can be arranged.

Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is not considered serious enough to refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO). Examples of low-level concerns could include
- being over friendly with children
- having favourites, including giving gifts.
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone (when not agreed with SLT for school purposes)
- engaging with a child one-to-one in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Low-level concerns should be reported directly to the DSL. If there are concerns about the DSL, these should be reported directly to the Headteacher. Staff are encouraged to self-refer if they have found themselves in a situation which might be misinterpreted or they have behaved in a way that falls below professional standards. The DSL records all low-level concerns, which are reviewed so that patterns of concerning behaviours can be recognised and appropriate action can be taken.

Early Help

All staff need to be aware of the Tower Hamlet's early help process, understand their role in it and are able to identify children. From time to time concerns may come to light, which despite not reaching the threshold for intervention, help to build up a picture of a child at risk of possible harm. It is important that such concerns are identified early, so help can be provided before they escalate. Staff should log any 'cause for concern' on CPOM. This will be reviewed weekly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the school's Attendance and Welfare Adviser and School Social Worker. In addition, the identification of vulnerable pupils is a standing item on the agenda of fortnightly progress meetings.

Where concerns are identified, support may be provided by the Parent Support Workers, the School Social Worker, School Therapist or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together, this may include signposting families to other agencies or supporting other agencies in completing a multi-agency assessment. If a child has been receiving early help support from the school and other agencies and there is no improvement in the child's outcomes, then the DSL will refer to Children's Social Care.

Staff should, in particular, be 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.

Children Missing From Education

The school closely monitors attendance, absence and exclusions. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation or mental health problems. The school follows up on absences as part of its safeguarding duty. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. The school has the following procedures in place to help prevent the risks of children going missing:

First day calling – the school will attempt to contact parents by telephone on the first day of absence

Home Visits – if the school has been unsuccessful in contacting the parents by telephone, a visit to the child's home will be carried out on the second day of absence

Notifying the Local Authority – should a child be absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days, the school's Attendance Welfare Adviser (AWA) will be notified. It is their responsibility to pass this information on to the local authority

Taking pupils off roll – At the point a child becomes eligible to be taken off the school admissions and attendance register, a notification form will be completed and emailed to the local authority's Pupils Admissions Team

Requesting Records – The AWA will be notified when, following a request, the records of a child transferring to the school have not been received. Likewise the AWA will be notified if the school a child has transferred to does not issue a request for their records to be sent.

Record Keeping – Full records will be kept where pupils change school, so that these can be referred to should any issues subsequently arise.

When a pupil does not return to school and the whereabouts of the child and their family are not known after the school has made initial inquiries, the school must refer to the Local Authority using a Missing Children referral form.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

If parents/carers decide to EHE, the school expects the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, sometimes this is not the case, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and

supported in line with their needs. Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school to EHE, the schools AWA will coordinate a meeting with parents/carers (and any other key professionals) before a final decision is made to ensure the parents/carers have considered the best interests of the child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. If the decision has been made to EHE, the Local Authority will be informed to engage with the parents/carers.

Vulnerable Pupils

SEND

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- 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.

Staff are trained to understand and be aware of these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

Looked After Children

Staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to safeguard Looked After Children. The DSL and year team will work with relevant agencies (including the Virtual School Headteacher) to support and promote the educational outcomes of this vulnerable group of children, including taking immediate action to safeguard when required.

Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) 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. Such arrangements may come to the attention of school staff through their normal interaction with parents and children. The school will notify the local authority to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

Young Carers

School recognises that Young Carers have the right to an assessment by the local authority to identify their needs and the support required. The DSL will seek information and support from the LBTH Young Carers Program (Young.Carers@towerhamlets.gov.uk), when young carers are identified.

Children and the Court System

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. In such cases, guidance of each step of the process will be provided by a familiar adult and additional support and special measures will be offered.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. The school can provide additional support for the child's wellbeing, should they want it.

Family Members in Prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children. The school can also offer additional support for the child's wellbeing throughout this time, should they want it.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. As part of the schools Early Help offer, referrals can be made to the Local Housing Authority, via the School Social Worker. A referral directly to children's social care may also be necessary where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Raising Further Concerns

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding procedures. These should initially be discussed with the Headteacher, unless there is reason not to do so, and will be taken seriously. Alternatively, the staff member could follow the school's Whistle Blowing procedures, a copy of which is displayed in the staffroom. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue using either of these avenues, they could contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline on 0800 028 0285. Where a member of staff feels that the actions taken following a referral have not improved the child's situation, they should bring this to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Should they continue to be unhappy with the situation they should contact the MASH Advice Line (0207 364 3444) directly to alert them to their concerns. The school recognises the expertise staff build up by undertaking safeguarding training and by managing concerns on a daily basis. Staff are therefore encouraged to contribute to and shape the safeguarding arrangements put into place by the school.

Information Sharing

Early information sharing between staff, organisations and agencies is essential for effective identification and to ensure that an individual receives the right services at the right time. Information should be shared with the right people between and within agencies. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Every practitioner must take responsibility for sharing the information they hold, and cannot assume that someone else will pass on information, which may be critical to keeping a child safe.

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe.

Additional Sources of Support

Useful Numbers

LBTH MASH Advice Line 0207 364 3444/5601/5606

Early Help Hub 020 7364 5006

Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) 0208 217 6484 (or use 999 if not available)

Children's Social Care Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team (5:00pm onwards) 020 7364 5006- option 3 DfE

Extremism Line: 020 7340 7264

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Childline England 0800 1111

Websites

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

Related Policies & Document

Staff Handbook & Code of Conduct

Supply Teacher Class Packs

Induction Policy

Volunteer Policy

Safer Recruitment Policy

Managing Allegations Against Members of Staff

Behaviour & Anti bullying (including physical restraint)

Online Safety Policy

Attendance Policy

Confidentiality Policy

NPCC guidance

DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

DfE: The Prevent Duty

DfE: Working Together to Safeguard Children

DfE: Children Missing in Education

HM Government: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

THSCP arrangements 2019

Safeguarding Disabled Children Practice Guidance, July 2009

Last Review: September 2021