

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY GEOFFREY FIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL 2020/2021

Introduction

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 gives schools a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children. This school recognises its legal duty protect children from harm, and respond to child abuse. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

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

This policy is written in conjunction with:

- **DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** September 2018/2019/2020 Updates
- **HM Government Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children**, July 2018 update
- **DfE Guidance Keeping children safe in education: childcare disqualification requirements - supplementary advice** June 2016 update
- **NSPCC guidance: when to call the police**
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Guidance for Schools** Metropolitan Police
- **Guidance on Forced Marriages** NASUWT
- **Tackling Child Exploitation** Guidance from Barnardos
- **The Prevent Duty** – Departmental advice for school and child care providers 2015 and the March 2016 update
- The School and Governing Body will also have due regard to the Statutory Guidance on **Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions**, August 2017 update
- The LA guidance on **Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions**, June 2020 version 6 draft.
- **OFSTED framework – inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings** (September 2019 update)
- **Mental health and behaviour in schools** guidance
- **Improving the educational outcomes of children in need of help and protection** review
- **Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education (June 2019 and updated July 2020)**
- **Safer working practices** guidance
- **Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines**
- **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges guidance (2018)**
- **Whistle Blowing Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**
- **Positive handling policy**
- **Online safety policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct and Guidance on Safer Recruitment**
- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**
- **Data Protection Act 2018**
- **Data Protection: toolkit for schools**

Every child, regardless of age, has a right to feel safe and protected from situations or practices that result in a child being physically or psychologically damaged.

We agree that we have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through the pastoral care we provide and the curriculum we teach in the context of the school's values. In order to achieve this, all staff and volunteers in this school, in whatever capacity, will act proactively in child welfare matters; and work with other agencies, to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

It is important to note that The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

The Governing body ensures relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow school to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. This includes:

- being confident of the processing conditions which allows school to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.
- understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows school to share special category personal data. This includes allowing school to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that school gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- for school not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harms test is met, we must withhold providing the data in compliance with schools' obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Where in doubt school will seek independent legal advice.

Aims and Objectives

The school aims to focus on the needs of the child, but also seeks to understand their family context as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. The school encourages parents and children to talk freely about any concerns or difficulties they may be facing and to see the school as a resource and place of safety.

Children's worries and fears are taken seriously. Staff cannot guarantee confidentiality if they feel that an onward referral is required in order to safeguard a child's welfare, however, unless it puts the child at further risk, the school will inform parents prior to any referral.

If the school suspects that a child's physical, sexual or emotional well-being is in danger, action will be taken.

Therefore, we

- Ensure that all staff (including volunteers, specialists and governors) are an integral part of the child safeguarding process;
- Ensure that all of the above are alert to the possibility that a child is at risk of suffering harm, and know how to report concerns or suspicions;
- Accept our responsibility for safeguarding children and see it as part of our function as a school.
- Designate senior members of staff (Child protection lead who is the Head teacher, Deputy, SENCO and Family Worker) with experience, knowledge and skills in recognising and acting on child protection concerns, to train and support staff and co-ordinate action within the school and liaise with other agencies;
- Share our concerns with others who need to know, and assist in any referral process;
- Ensure that if somebody is concerned that a child may be suffering abuse or neglect, they will refer such concerns to the designated members of staff, who will then consider what action needs to be taken.
- Safeguard the welfare of children whilst in school, through positive measures to address bullying, (see anti-bullying policy) and report when this is aggravated by sexual or racial factors, or disability or special educational needs;
- Ensure all that all staff are aware of the child protection procedures established by the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) and act on any guidance or advice given by them; see www.proceduresonline.com/berks/
- Ensure through our recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers that all people who work in our school are suitable to work with children.
- Take the appropriate action where an allegation is made against a member of staff

Designated Member of Staff

The designated member of staff for child protection in this school is:

Diana Choudhry - SENCO

The child protection team also includes

Shelly Hancock- Head Teacher, Dave Marks - Deputy Head and Dawn Burton – Family Worker
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- The designated member of staff and the child protection team, is central to ensuring that effective procedures and policies are in place and are followed with regard to child safeguarding issues. They also act as a support for staff, volunteers, governors and parents (where this is appropriate).

The school ensures that:

- At least one designated member of staff is a senior leader within the school;
- All members of staff are made aware of the designated person and the safeguarding team and how they can be contacted;
- The safeguarding team acts as a source of advice and coordinate action within the school with child protection cases;
- The safeguarding team liaises with other agencies and builds good working relationships with colleagues from these agencies, in the interests of the child.
- The safeguarding team has skills and experience in recognising and dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- Appropriate training and support is given to staff, governors and volunteers.
- The safeguarding team are the first people staff report cases to. It is then their responsibility to discuss the situation with the relevant agencies;
- The safeguarding team are responsible for referring cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies according to the procedures established Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Neither the designated person, nor the safeguarding team deal with allegations made against members of staff. This is passed on to the Local Authority Designated Officer LADO (LADO@reading.gcsx.gov.uk) or Jeremy.Curtis@reading.gov.uk 0118 937 3555, 07841253871

To be effective, the designated member of staff and the safeguarding team will:

- Receive appropriate training carried out every two years in order to act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the school and be responsible for coordinating action regarding referrals by liaising with Social Care and other relevant agencies regarding cases of abuse and allegations of abuse.
- Ensure that all staff have regular updates and training in line with the advice from the BWSCP
- Ensure each member of staff and volunteers at the school, and regular visitors (such as trainee teachers, supply teachers and students) are aware of, and can access readily, this policy;
- ensure there is always cover for the role;
- Ensure that this policy and procedures are updated and reviewed regularly, in line with changes to legislation and work with the designated governor for child protection regarding this;
- Keep accurate, secure records of referrals/concerns and actions: e.g. class logs, CPOMS and blue and pink concern forms.
- Ensure parents are aware of the child protection policy and its responsibilities for making referrals. The policy is on the school website and paper copies are available via the school office;
- Ensure, where children leave the school roll, that their file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, in accordance with local guidance to schools;
- Alert the DfE if a child leaves and the new school is not known, so that these children can be included on the database for lost pupils.

The designated members of staff also have an important role in ensuring all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training. They will:

- Follow the recommendations of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership; referring to <http://proceduresonline.com/berks>
- attend training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case;
- have a working knowledge of how Reading Area Child Protection Committee operates and the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these when required;
- attend any relevant or refresher training courses and then ensure that any new or key messages are passed to other staff, volunteers and governors;
- make themselves known to all staff, volunteers and governors (including new starters and supply teachers) and ensure those members of staff have had training in child protection. This should be relevant to their needs to enable them to identify and report any concerns to the designated teacher immediately.

Designated Governor:

The designated governor for child protection at this school is:

Katia Major

All members of the Governing body have had section 128 checks.

The Governing Body will ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under inter-agency procedures.

The Governing Body will ensure that the designated member of staff for child protection is given sufficient time to carry out his or her duties, including accessing training.

The Governing body will review child protection practices in the school on a regular basis, to ensure that:

- the school is carrying out its duties to safeguard the welfare of children at the school;
- members of staff and volunteers are aware of current practices in this matter, and that staff receive training where appropriate;
- child protection is integrated with induction procedures for all new members of staff and volunteers;
- the school follows the procedures agreed by the ACPC, and any supplementary guidance issued by the BWSCP;
- only persons suitable to work with children shall be employed in the school, or work here in a voluntary capacity.

Recruitment

In order to protect children, we ensure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

The school ensures that:

- One member of the recruitment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training.
- References are followed up before appointment and specific reference is made to the candidates' suitability to work with vulnerable children;
- The flow chart in Appendix A is followed to ensure that adults with access to children have the required enhanced disclosure check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before starting work, and prior to confirmation of appointment.
- Staff declare whether anyone in their household is disqualified from working with children on the form in Appendix B. This ensures that staff are not disqualified by association, from working with children.

In addition, we will ensure that the following checks are satisfactorily completed before a person takes up a position in the school:

- identity checks to establish that applicants are who they claim to be¹
- proof of necessary qualifications, to ensure that qualifications are genuine
- professional and character references prior to offering employment
- conditions satisfied as to health and physical capacity
- previous employment history will be examined and any gaps accounted for.

Volunteers

The school is alert to the possibility that people otherwise unsuitable for working with children may use volunteering to gain access to them. For this reason, volunteers in the school will go through the above checks.

Where a parent or other volunteer helps on a one-off basis, he/she will only work under the direct supervision of a member of staff, and at no time have one to one contact with children.

¹ e.g., through birth certificate, passport, driving licence, etc...

Induction and Training

New members of staff will receive induction training, which will give an overview of the school, its vision and values and its procedures for identifying and reporting abuse, and ensuring confidentiality.

New staff at the school will receive level 1 safeguarding training and a copy of this policy and be required to read the document 'Keeping Children Safe' (Appendix C).

Staff will be expected to attend training on safeguarding children that will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of child protection effectively and this will be regularly updated, ensuring that updated information is shared and applied. The school will provide this training through the Safeguarding Team.

Dealing with Concerns

Members of staff and volunteers are not required to investigate suspicions. If somebody believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, they refer such concerns to the designated person or a member of the child protection team, who will make the onward referral.

Social Care and the Thames Valley Police are empowered to carry out investigations and decide whether children have been abused or are at significant risk of abuse.

Staff (and volunteers) follow the procedures below:

1. Upon the receipt of any information from a child, or if any person has suspicions that a child may be at risk of harm, or
2. if anyone observes injuries that appear to be non-accidental, or
3. where a child or young person makes a direct allegation or discloses that they have been abused, or
4. makes an allegation against a member of staff

They record what they have seen, heard or know accurately, at the time the event occurs, on a Blue GFJS Raising Concern form (Appendix E) and possibly the body map form and guidance (Appendix F) and pass this on immediately, to the designated person or member of the designated team.

Concern forms and other written records will be kept confidential in line with the advice from the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Safeguarding in School

Covid 19

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) remains in force throughout the response to the coronavirus (Covid-19) and school will continue to adhere to any further Government advice with regard to keeping children safe during the pandemic. See separate risk assessments.

As well as ensuring that child protection concerns are addressed, the school also ensures that children are kept safe from harm while they are at school.

The school aims to have at least two emergency home contacts for each pupil in case of injury, accident or emergency medical issues.

To this end, this policy must be seen in the context of the school's policies on Personal, Social and Health Education and Sex and Relationships Education. Child protection issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate. Specifically, these will be:

- bullying - the school works with the children to identify bullying behaviour and gives strategies to address these issues (see anti-bullying policy)
- e-safety (see internet safety pupil agreement and my digital rights Appendix G)
- discriminatory incidents;
- confidentiality (see GFJS Confidentiality Policy)
- positive behaviour management (see behaviour policy and strategies for inclusion document);
- health & safety (see health and safety policy);
- physical intervention (see positive handling policy);
- allegations against members of staff (see appendix D which outlines the procedures set by BWSCP) .

In addition to the above, staff in school have regular training to support them in identifying children or families at risk of radicalisation, alcohol or substance abuse, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and child exploitation.

Through the school's PSHE programme and through the good relationships developed between pupils and their teachers, difficult issues like these are raised in class, when appropriate. At the heart of the school's strategy for

safeguarding is the development of the child's self-worth, their respect for others and their ability to develop their own set of values, in the context of the values held by the school.

Supporting children who need a social worker

All members of staff (including volunteers and governors) will be proactive in matters relating to children's welfare and safety. Where any member of staff fails to act in accordance with this policy, this may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

School has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and the Governing board ensures that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child'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. DSLs take responsibility to promote the educational outcomes of all children who are considered a safeguarding risk.

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership share the fact that a child has a social worker. As a matter of routine, the designated safeguarding leads use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both the BWSCP and school to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where children need a social worker, this informs decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

School has a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The Governing body ensures that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance.

Children Looked after

The designated teacher for CLA and post CLA is:

Diana Choudhry, SENCO and DSL

Children looked after and previously children looked after are potentially vulnerable and all staff should have the knowledge and understanding to keep current and previously children looked after safe. The designated teacher has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders; or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales. The designated teacher should work with the virtual school head to promote the educational achievement of children looked after.

Information will be kept on:

- The child's legal status
- Contact arrangements with those with parental responsibility
- Child's care arrangements and levels of authority delegated by the authority
- Details of the child's social worker
- The name of the virtual head in the authority who looks after the child clare.houlton@reading.gov.uk

Private fostering

When school staff become aware that a child younger than 16 (or 18 if disabled) is being privately fostered, they should notify designated teacher who will then inform BWSCP to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

SEND children

At our setting we recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. For example, additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

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

- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying and peer group isolation- without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Safeguarding SEND children's welfare is everybody's responsibility and awareness among staff about safeguarding this particular group of young people and what constitutes best practice is essential. The same procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns are applied to disabled and non-disabled pupils, but recognising that additional resources and support may be required for the young person and their family. Where necessary, the school will put into place extra pastoral support for children with SEND.

When the school is considering excluding, either for a fixed term or permanently, a vulnerable pupil or one who is the subject of a Child Protection plan or where there is an existing Child Protection file, we will call a multi-agency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude. In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, the risk assessment should be completed prior to convening a meeting of the Governing Body.

Alternative provision

Where school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil. School should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.

Mental Health

All staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals can make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviours suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken following the Child Protection Policy and speaking to a DSL.

Prevent

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the schools' wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. The Prevent Duty Guidance in England and Wales 2015 defines Extremism as: "Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs". This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("the CTSA 2015"), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

This school will approach the Prevent duty on three levels:

1. Be able to identify members of the school community who are vulnerable to and are at risk of being 'radicalised' and show signs of this.
2. Know how to respond when children or young people show indications that they are vulnerable to risk.
3. Ensure that the components of British Values are addressed implicitly and explicitly throughout the curriculum and other aspects of provision.

The Prevent Duty has four general themes

1. Risk Assessment This relates to the context of the school's geographical area. This school draws from a diverse catchment area. Within the context of England, Reading is considered a tier 3 priority area. The school will request relevant information from the Prevent lead in BWSCP to understand the risks faced by pupils in this area. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology but staff should be alert to changes in a pupil's behaviour.
2. Working in Partnership, policies will take into account the policies and procedures of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership
3. Training - all staff complete Prevent training <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/> and this is an induction requirement

Channel

As a school we assess the risk of children being radicalised and will make appropriate and timely referrals to Channel for multi-agency assessment should we suspect that a child is being subject to radicalisation themselves or in relation to parents or older siblings. Our aim in referral is to provide support at an early stage to those identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and forms of extremism. All staff undertake appropriate and regular Prevent training as part of the on-going range of safeguarding training.

So-called 'honour-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (previously known as 'honour-based violence' encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV or who has suffered from HBV, they will speak to the DSL. As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

Female Genital Mutilation (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. If it is suspected that a child has been subject to or may be subject to FGM, it is the responsibility under law for the individual to contact the police directly themselves to report this for a girl under 18 years old. (Section 5B Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003). Referral to the police must be made following a disclosure or evidence of FGM or in line with BWSCP indicators in the FGM Referral Pathways Pack provided by our Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Staff receive training as part of their annual safeguarding training as the number of reported cases is higher in South Reading than other areas of Reading.

Contextual safeguarding

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

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. It also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually or criminally exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

What is child criminal exploitation?

Child criminal exploitation is increasingly used to describe exploitation where children are involved, and is defined as:

"Child criminal exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology."

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines, and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

Child criminal exploitation: county lines

“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”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.”

County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

If staff, Governors, visitors suspect or have evidence that a child/children are at risk of CCE, they will immediately report this to the Designated Lead/team who will then contact Social Care and the police as necessary.

Serious violent crime

All staff are aware of the 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.

Peer on Peer Abuse

We recognise that abuse of pupils does not exclusively happen with an adult perpetrator and that children themselves can be abusers of other children. As a school we recognise that abusive behaviour can happen to pupils in schools and we take this as seriously as adult to child abuse.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms including:

- physical abuse – hitting, kicking etc.
- discriminatory abuse – against another pupil’s gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation/preference,
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault –the definition for young people who display harmful sexual behaviour refers to any young person, under the age of 18, who demonstrates behaviour outside of their normative parameters of development (this includes, but is not exclusive to abusive behaviours) (Hackett 2011, NICE 2014)
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting which is now a criminal offense – this is typically when a photograph is taken under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- bullying – imbalance of power, targeted and repeated
- cyber bullying – this would fall under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and The Communications Act 2003
- coercion – through threat or through gifts
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- emotional abuse

Prevention

At our school we will minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils by:

- Providing PHSE as part of the curriculum, which will help students develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe.
- Having effective systems within our school for students to be able to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be looked into and addressed. We encourage all pupils to identify a ‘trusted adult’.
- Liaising and working with other professionals to develop robust risk assessments for pupils that are identified as posing a potential risk to other students
- Liaising with specialists to deliver appropriate targeted work to pupils identified as being at potential risk

School response to allegations:

School will follow and be mindful of the guidelines set out in the Keeping Children Safe in Education document (including updates in September 2018/2019 and 2020). For example, if an allegation of peer to peer abuse is made to a member of staff, they must inform the designated safeguarding lead immediately using the raising a concern form. Staff should not investigate the allegations themselves.

When investigating an allegation of peer to peer abuse, the designated safeguarding leads should follow the schools safeguarding procedures including making a safeguarding referral to social care immediately if they believe that a child/children is at risk of significant harm. If a crime has been committed, social care will also

report this to the police. Where the child is not at risk of significant harm, the designated lead should consider whether a referral to social care for early intervention for the victim and/or the perpetrators would be beneficial. Parents of all parties must be informed of any allegation of peer to peer abuse whether a referral has been made to social care or not.

Domestic abuse/violence

Domestic violence and abuse is 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial; and
- emotional

Reading is an area that has been recognised as having a high prevalence of domestic abuse/violence. If any adults in school are aware that this is taking place, they will take the necessary steps identified above to inform the designated lead or a member of the designated team.

Missing Children

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Parents of children not in school without reason are contacted that day. Failure to establish contact is followed up by the Family Worker who may then liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer or Children's Services. A formal missing child report is made after 3 days of absence if no contact is made.

If a pupil is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the school reports any absence to Children's Services on the first day of absence.

The school will also report to the Educational Welfare Officer any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period
- Have been permanently excluded.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. As a school, the DSLs are aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local housing Authority so that we can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. If a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral to children's social care will still be made.

Photographing Children

We understand that parents like to take photos or video their children in the school play, or at sports day, or school presentations. We encourage parents to celebrate their child's success.

Parents are asked for their permission to photograph or film their children during a school activity and to use these images on the school websites, publicity or press releases; however photographs are only used when this permission is given. Individual children are not to be identified by name.

Confidentiality and data protection (see also the Confidentiality policy)

The school, and all members of staff at the school, will ensure that all data about pupils is handled in accordance with the requirements of the law, and national and local guidance. All child protection records will be kept separately from the child's main file; access is restricted to those who have a role to play in safeguarding the child. Child protection information held electronically will be password protected.

Any member of staff who has access to sensitive information about a child or the child's family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only disclosed to those people who need to know.

Regardless of the duty of confidentiality, if any member of staff has reason to believe that a child may be suffering harm, or be at risk of harm, their duty is to forward this information without delay to the designated member of staff for child protection.

Conduct of Staff

The school has a duty to ensure that professional behaviour applies to relationships between staff and children, and that all members of staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries.

At all times, members of staff are required to work in a professional way with children. All staff should be aware of the dangers inherent in:

- working alone with a child
- physical interventions
- cultural and gender stereotyping
- dealing with sensitive information
- giving to and receiving gifts from children and parents
- disclosing personal details inappropriately
- meeting pupils outside school hours or school duties

All members of staff must understand that in the event of an allegation that they have assaulted a child, or placed a child at risk of harm, the allegation will be multi agency, involving the Police and Social Services.

Allegations against members of staff (see also appendix D)

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

- the allegation will be dealt with in accordance with national guidance and agreements, as implemented locally (including any volunteer or governor)
- concerns should be referred to the Head Teacher
- where there are concerns/allegations about the Head Teacher, this should be referred to the chair of governors.
- Procedures are in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned.

The Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will gather information about the allegation, and report this without delay to the LADO. (LADO@reading.gov.uk) or Jeremy.Curtis@reading.gov.uk Tel: 0118 937 3555 or mobile 07841 253 871.

If an allegation is against an individual not directly employed by school, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business:

Whilst school is not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances should school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. The Governing Body should discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social services. The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing body when working in the school. They should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account by the school during the investigation.

When using an agency, school should inform the agency of its process for managing allegations. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

The Governing Body ensures that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns, or allegations against staff (including supply staff and volunteers) that might indicate they would pose a risk of harm to children.

Physical Contact and Restraint (see also positive handling policy and appendix N)

Members of staff may have to make physical interventions with children in order to safeguard the children. Members of staff should physically intervene where:

- it is necessary to protect a child, or another person, from immediate danger

- where the member of staff has had appropriate training
- Any incidents are recorded on a record of restraint and parents are informed.

We recognise the additional vulnerability of children with SEND and, where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are put into place and individual behaviour plans are drawn up to reduce the occurrence of the types of challenging behaviour that might lead to the need to use reasonable restraint.

Online Safety

See Online Safety Policy.

As schools increasingly work online (including online learning at home) it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As such, the Governing Body ensure appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place.

Before and after school activities/contracted services

The school has many after school opportunities for children. The Governing Body ensures that those responsible for these activities are vetted and are part of the school's Single Central Register and that they follow appropriate safeguarding procedures and are made aware of the school's procedures.

Monitoring and evaluation

Implementation and day to day working of this policy will be monitored by the Designated Person and Child Protection team who will liaise with the Safeguarding Governor and bring to their attention any concerns that the policy is not being adhered to. The Head teacher will report to the Governing Body termly (12 weeks)

- Incidents of bullying
- Racist incidents
- Complaints by parents about the above
- Number of allegations against members of staff
- Any concerns reported to the BWSCP designated Officer

This policy will be available to all staff, governors and volunteers in hard copy and will be available on the website for parents. Information relating to the named Designated Person will be displayed in the entrance to the school and in the staff room.

USEFUL LINKS AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

Berkshire child protection procedures: www.proceduresonline.com/berks/

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-if-suspect-abuse/>

Children's Single Point of Access (CSPA) : 0118 937 3641 (office hours) 01344 786 543 (out of office hours)

Using a web form to contact CSPA: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/childrensreferralfom>

Emailing CSPA: cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0118 937 3555

Policy Appendices

A Flow Chart for DBS

B Child care disqualification declaration form

C Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated Sept 2020)

D RBC Allegation against staff management

E Raising Concern form

F Body Map and Guidance

G Internet Safety Agreement and my digital rights (children's version)

H E Safety Policy

I Internet Safety Agreement (parent version)

J Definitions and indicators of abuse

K Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

L Allegations about a member of staff, governor or volunteer

M Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

N The use of reasonable force

Updated September 2020

Next review date September 2021