



**Safeguarding and Child
Protection Policy**

Kings Norton Girls' School and Sixth Form

2026-2027



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1. Safeguarding Policy Statement

A whole-trust and whole-school, child-centred approach is fundamental to all aspects of everyday life at our schools. At West Midlands Academy Trust (WMAT) we strive to create a culture which enables children to express their wishes and feelings and talk about anything that is of importance to them. We believe that every child deserves to receive an education within an environment where they feel safe to learn and develop. We want our pupils, staff, parents and carers to have confidence and trust in our goals and know that collaborative working is fundamental to create and maintain a child-centred approach to safeguarding.

Kings Norton Girls' School promotes an inclusive, respectful and anti-discriminatory culture across all schools. We recognise that safeguarding is strengthened when children feel valued, included and protected from discrimination. All forms of discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse and prejudice related to protected characteristics, are actively challenged as part of our safeguarding responsibilities.

We recognise the increased safeguarding risks arising from generative artificial intelligence, including AI-generated grooming, deepfake sexual imagery, impersonation, misinformation and disinformation. Staff and pupils will be supported to understand these risks, and our filtering, monitoring and curriculum will be adapted annually to address emerging threats.

In practice this means we endorse the key principle that the welfare of a child is paramount, keeping them at the centre of all decision making in our partnership working with them, their families, and those supporting them.

In line with our duties set out in the Children Act (1989, 2004), Working Together to Safeguard Children and KCSIE, we are committed to providing support and help as soon as possible, underpinned by our values that children are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives where possible. We are also committed to ensuring that we work with agencies, including the Local Authority, to access support and targeted interventions for families when we consider that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm.

We hope that parents and carers will support us to undertake our statutory duties to offer early help support and to liaise with agencies to protect children who have suffered or otherwise likely to suffer significant harm without doing so. The core objective of early help support is to prevent any child from being harmed or placed at risk of harm and therefore halt any escalation where possible.

This policy outlines the commitment to our legal duties to safeguard children, the responsibilities for all our staff and the specific roles and responsibilities for our key Designated Safeguarding Leads and Governance.

Roles	Responsibilities
Safeguarding Trustee	A Trust Board member who has an oversight of Trust-wide safeguarding and reports directly to the Board
Trust Safeguarding Lead	A member of the executive team who has an oversight of Trust-wide safeguarding and leads on the development of the WMAT safeguarding policy and who takes responsibility for peer audits, the DSL peer network and who liaises closely with the safeguarding trustee and the executive leadership team.

School Board Safeguarding Link	A member of each School Board who has an oversight of safeguarding in their individual school and reports back to the Trust board. They also have the Safeguarding Trustee as point of contact to the Trust Board.
Designated Safeguarding Leads (including Head Teachers)	Member/s of staff responsible for safeguarding and child protection within their individual Trust. They liaise closely with key stakeholders, such as their staff, Head Teacher, Safeguarding Link School Board member and relevant external agencies.

Kings Norton Girls' School fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils by protecting children from maltreatment; preventing the impairment or development of mental and physical health and by ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This is in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002; and in line with government publications; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

West Midlands Academy Trust is committed to meeting its moral and statutory responsibility, ensuring that robust procedures are in place, outlining the actions that it will take to prevent harm, to promote wellbeing, to create safe environments and to respond to specific issues and vulnerabilities. Safeguarding determines the actions taken to keep children safe and protect them from harm in all aspects of their Trust life to ensure they have the best outcomes. This is underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, able to talk, and believe that they are being listened to. West Midlands Academy Trust maintains an attitude of 'it could happen here' and expects that all staff, visitors and volunteers share and demonstrate their commitment to protecting children. In addition to the 'central single central record', all schools are required to maintain a single central record to provide reassurance that all staff and volunteers are recruited safely. This is in line with the recommendations made in KCSIE 2026, whereby an Enhanced DBS with children's barred list information will be required for all persons involved in regulated activities.

West Midlands Academy Trust is committed to the following safeguarding key principles:

- Responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff, volunteers, School Board Members, and Trustees must share this commitment
- All staff, volunteers, School Board Members and Trustees have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home or in the community
- When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members are to always act in the interests of the child
- Where there is a safeguarding concern, schools will ensure, where reasonable and appropriate, that the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account. Children will be clear about the ways they can report abuse and that their concerns will always be taken seriously
- We commit to a whole Trust approach to safeguarding
- Students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate training and support

West Midlands Academy Trust expects that each school will follow the West Midlands Safeguarding procedures and adhere to guidance provided by Local Authority Children's Services departments. Crucially, there may be safeguarding issues that are specific to their local area and communities. This policy outlining the local procedures for each of the schools across the Trust will be made available on the school websites. They have been developed to ensure compliance with legislation including Section 175 the Education Act

2002, Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2026, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2026.

All school are expected to follow the escalation policy if they have concerns about the management of a case by Children's Social Care.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy works in conjunction with other relevant policies in place at both Trust and at a local level, safeguarding the interests and welfare of children e.g. recruitment and selection, anti-bullying, confidential reporting (Whistleblowing), health and safety, special education needs and disabilities, equality policy, mobile phone policy and staff code of conduct.

West Midlands Academy Trust has the following roles and responsibilities in place to ensure that all Trusts are compliant and have a strong safeguarding culture:

Our policy applies to all staff (teaching and non-teaching) including those from the executive and central team, peripatetic, supply staff, contract staff and third-party contractors, members, trustees, School Board members, volunteers and visitors in the Trust.

Rather than duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education in this policy, it should be understood that the Trust will always refer to KCSIE and West Midlands Safeguarding Procedures as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice and decision-making.

Governance

West Midlands Academy Trust Safeguarding Trustee oversees the governance arrangements for Safeguarding and is a point of contact for the School Boards' Safeguarding Link members. West Midlands Academy Trust Safeguarding Trustee meets with the Trust Safeguarding Lead at the end of each term to evaluate the outcomes of scheduled audits and checks. The Safeguarding Trustee reports a summary of findings at the full Board meeting. The Headteachers are responsible for the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at school level, and are monitored by the School Board and Board of Trustees. Safeguarding will be included on the agenda and monitored at every Trust and School Board meeting.

Each School Board is required to have a Safeguarding Link member to provide feedback at Trust board meetings.

The Safeguarding Link School Board member meets regularly (at least twice per year) with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to discuss:

- Safeguarding peer audits or external reviews
- Risks/vulnerabilities
- Compliance issues
- The effectiveness in the application of practices
- Any lessons that can be shared and best practice

The Supporting Structural and Quality Assurance Arrangements

Focus	Process
Quality Assurance	Each school has an external review of safeguarding practice once every two years. This is carried out by an expert safeguarding consultant. One Term after the review the Trust Safeguarding Lead will carry out a review of the action plan instigated as a result of the review. One year after the review, a peer review of safeguarding practice will be conducted by DSLs from across the Trust. If serious concerns are raised in peer audits or external checks, they will be shared immediately with the Trust Safeguarding Lead and CEO

	who will inform the Safeguarding Trustee and the Executive Leadership Team.
Strategic oversight and connection with the Trust Board	The Safeguarding Trustee meets with the Trust Safeguarding Lead on a termly basis to evaluate findings from audits and checks and to monitor School Board meeting minutes. Findings will be reported back to the Board of Trustees.
School Boards	School Board Safeguarding Link member meets with DSL in school at least twice per year and/or is part of the audits/checks. School Board Safeguarding Link can contact the Safeguarding Trustee if they have concerns in relation to safeguarding in their individual school. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item to be discussed at each School Board meeting.
Peer support and collaboration	Half-termly meetings led by the Trust Safeguarding Lead for Trust DSLs
Other duties (including statutory)	West Midlands Academy Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection policy is reviewed and updated annually or as and when required.

The DSLs across West Midlands Academy Trust meet and network on a half-termly basis, to pool expertise, knowledge and experience in the development and application of policies and procedures, to share good practice and to develop and embed best practice. This ensures that the core competences on child protection and safeguarding matters are being fully utilised. The DSL's network supports the development and growth of a centre of excellence on safeguarding matters across the Trust.

Policy Review

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed and agreed as a minimum on an annual basis. This may be more frequent if national guidance requires ensuring that key statutory requirements are incorporated. Local Arrangements - The following section contains local arrangements and procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

2. Important Safeguarding Contacts

Chief Executive Officer	Mike Dunn: mdunn@wmatrust.co.uk
WMAT Safeguarding Trustee	Ally Sophia: asophia@wmatrust.co.uk
WMAT Safeguarding Lead	Claire Place: cplace@swanshurst.org
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lucy Merrell: lmerrell@kngs.co.uk
Head Teacher	Laura Sullivan: lsullivan@kngs.co.uk
Chair of Trustees	Philip Thickett: pthickett@wmatrust.co.uk
School Board Safeguarding Link	Billy Feenan: bfeenan@kngs.co.uk
Deputy DSL	Anna Mugridge: amugridge@kngs.co.uk Jo Burke: jburke@kngs.co.uk Marie O'Toole: motoole@kngs.co.uk

Single point of contact (SPOC)	Lucy Merrell: imerrell@kngs.co.uk
Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC	Marie O'Toole: motoole@kngs.co.uk
School online safety lead	Laura Sullivan: lsullivan@kngs.co.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	https://lscpbirmingham.org.uk/working-with-children/lado 0121 675 1669 ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
Local Authority Education Safeguarding Team	educationsafeguarding@birmingham.gov.uk
Prevent	CTU_Gateway@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk
Birmingham Children's Trust	https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/ Monday to Thursday: 8:45am to 5:15pm: • Friday: 8:45am to 4:15pm • Telephone: 0121 303 1888 CASS emergency out-of-hours: Telephone: 0121 675 4806
Early Help	Early Help Support Team: Telephone: 0121 303 8117 or contact your <u>local</u> Birmingham Families First team
NSPCC Helpline	Call: 0800 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) which sets out the legal duties that all schools and colleges in England must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under the age of 18.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, places a duty on schools and Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which sets out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least 1 person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques.

Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Academy trust governance guide - 7. Compliance - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) provides guidance for boards on how to meet their legal and regulatory responsibilities with regards to compliance. It covers various aspects of compliance, including admissions, attendance, complaints, education, funding and finances, health and safety, inspections, political impartiality, protecting and sharing information, safeguarding and pupil welfare, pupil behaviour, schools causing concern, school day and school year, management of academy premises, control and community use of academy premises, school uniform, staffing, and whistleblowing.

This guidance is a reference document for those involved in trust governance. It provides essential information from a range of sources on the trust board's roles and legal responsibilities. The Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) and our funding agreement have more information on contractual requirements.

Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance outlines what organisations and agencies must and should do to help, protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England

The Lead Safeguarding Partners for Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership are Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police, NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board, working in close collaboration with Birmingham Children's Trust. They have a joint and equal duty to ensure multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are in place at a local level, and organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard children and promote the welfare of children.

Serious Crime Act 2015, Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children

Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our Trustees, School Board Members and headteachers should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils regarding these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it is proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there is evidence that they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination

Working collaboratively as professionals is a key part of providing services to children and families. When professional disputes happen that cannot be resolved in a timely manner the BCSP Resolution and Escalation policy should be followed.

DfE Information Sharing Advice For Practitioners 2024 produced by the DfE, outlines the importance of sharing information about children, young people, and their families in order to safeguard children. It provides clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally to achieve improved outcomes. It also includes the “Seven Golden Rules for Sharing Information,” which provide a framework to support information sharing where practitioners have reason to believe failure to share information may result in the child being at risk of harm. It is non-statutory and has been produced to support practitioners in the decisions they take to share information, which reduces the risk of harm to children and young people and promotes their well-being. Where staff have concerns that a child may be at risk of harm, they must share information without delay, even where consent cannot be obtained.

4. Definitions: Safeguarding and Child Protection

All our staff are expected to be familiar with the wide range of policies and procedures we have to keep our children safe and promote their wellbeing at all times.

Safeguarding as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education, means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online; 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

Working Together to Safeguard Children further extends this definition to include:

- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

WMAT recognises that prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia, discrimination related to disability, sex, sexuality, gender identity or other protected characteristics, can cause significant harm to children. Such incidents may constitute safeguarding concerns in their own right and must not be viewed solely as behaviour or equality matters.

Child/ren: The legal definition of a child in the UK includes everyone under the age of 18.

Early Help

Early Help refers to support provided when needs are **emerging or at a low level**, before problems escalate. This can include:

- Universal services such as schools, health services, youth services, and community support.
- Community-based interventions.
- Support that does not require statutory social care involvement.
- Identifying concerns early and coordinating support around the child and family.

Targeted Early Help (Family Help)

Targeted early help sits at a **higher level of need** than universal/community Early Help but **below statutory intervention**.

It is aimed at children and families who:

- Have multiple or more complex needs.
- Require coordinated multi-agency support.
- Need a structured Family Help response to prevent escalation to child protection or children's social care intervention.

Child in Need: Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are under a general duty to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. A child in need is defined under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as 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, or a child who is disabled. To fulfil this duty, practitioners undertake assessments of the needs of individual children, giving due regard to a child's age and understanding when determining what, if any, services to provide.

Child Protection: Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make such enquiries as it considers necessary to decide whether to take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Such enquiries, supported by other organisations and agencies, as appropriate, should be initiated where there are concerns about all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation whether this is taking place in person or online, inside or outside of the child's home. There may be a need for immediate protection whilst an assessment or enquiries are carried out. Schools are required to cooperate with children's social care when carrying their inquiries and therefore we have a duty to share information when requested to do so.

Significant Harm is the threshold for a child protection response to support and or protect children. Harm is defined in the Children Act 1989 as the ill-treatment of a child or the impairment of their health or development. This can include harm caused by seeing someone else being mistreated, for example by witnessing domestic abuse. The phrase 'significant harm' was introduced by the Children Act 1989. The Act does not define 'significant.' The question of whether or not harm is 'significant' relates to its impact on a child's health or development.

Operation Encompass is an information-sharing scheme between the police and education settings. KCSIE 2026 notes a statutory duty on police to notify a child's education setting, and where relevant local authorities, where they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse.

Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) provides a single point of contact for professionals and members of the public who want to seek support or raise concerns about a child.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a fully integrated multi-agency team which involves key safeguarding agencies including professionals from social care, police, health and education. These agencies work together to identify the need of children and their families and signpost to the appropriate agency or resources where threshold is met.

The main aim of a MASH is to improve the quality of information sharing when making decisions between agencies at the earliest opportunity.

Children in Care: A child is 'looked after' (in care) if they are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours. Children can be in care by agreement with parents or by order of a court. The placement providing the care can be a connected person to the child or a Local Authority approved foster carer.

Kinship Care refers to a type of care where a child who cannot be looked after by their birth parents is cared for by relatives or friends. The government in England has launched a Kinship Care Strategy to improve kinship carers' financial stability, education, training, and partnership with local authorities and other agencies.

These arrangements can be known as either family and friends care or private fostering.

- **Family and Friends Carers:** If you are a grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, or family friend looking after a child who cannot be cared for by their birth parents, you are known as a family and friends carer. Sometimes these carers will be given Parental Responsibility for the children through a Child Arrangements or Special Guardianship Order.
- **Private Fostering:** You are a private foster carer if you are not a close relative and you are looking after a child who is under 16 (or under 18 if they are disabled) for more than 28 days in a row.

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children and their parents and carers) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what is appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

5. Equality Statement, Children with Protected Characteristics

Some children are at greater risk of harm, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. At Kings Norton Girls' School we are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and ensuring that all children are provided with the same protection regardless of any additional needs, barriers or protected characteristics they may have. As stated in the Equality Act 2010, we recognise the protected characteristics that may be applicable to our pupils:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

Kings Norton Girls' School recognises that racism and faith-targeted abuse can have a significant impact on a child's welfare, wellbeing, emotional health and sense of safety. Such incidents will be taken seriously, recorded appropriately and responded to in accordance with safeguarding procedures where necessary.

All staff and volunteers understand the importance of recognising that a child may benefit from community based Early Help or targeted family intervention, and it is integral to our whole school approach to look and listen out particularly for children:

- who have a special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions
- who are a young carer or SIBS
- who could experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- have English as an additional language
- are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- are asylum seekers
- are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- are in care or were previously in care (see Section 11)
- who have ongoing unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
- whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be provided with elective home education (EHE).

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We know who our pupils are with special educational needs, disabilities, or additional health needs and recognise that they may face additional barriers, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, relate to the child's impairment without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- assumptions that children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.
- reluctance to challenge carers (professionals may over-empathise with carers because of the perceived stress of caring for a disabled child)
- disabled children often rely on a wide network of carers to meet their basic needs and therefore the potential risk of exposure to abusive behaviour can be increased
- a disabled child's understanding of abuse
- lack of choice/participation.

Children in Care (CiC)

The most common reason for a child to become looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We therefore ensure that the appropriate arrangements are in place to support these children and keep them safe from further harm. This includes:

- appointment of a Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care
- appropriate staff made aware of a child's looked after status
- ensure that necessary staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding of the child's needs

- ensure the child's record contains a clear understanding of their legal status and care arrangements, including the levels of authority delegated to their carer and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility
- keep contact details of the child's social worker, carer(s) and name and contact details of the virtual school head for DT to liaise with.

Children with a Social Worker

Virtual School Heads have a responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of:

- **children in care,**
- **children previously in care;** and
- **children with a social worker** – defined as any child who has been assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and currently has a social worker; it also includes those who have been assessed as needing, or previously needing, a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding or welfare reasons.

We maintain a live register of all children with a social worker and monitor attendance, behaviour and safeguarding trends to ensure early identification of emerging needs

In line with Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) this has been extended to include:

- **children who have previously had a social worker** – the cohort of children with a social worker and those who have previously had a social worker who are aged from 0 to 18; and
- **children in kinship care arrangements** - this means any friend or family member, who is not a child's parent but raising them for a significant amount of the time, either as a temporary or permanent arrangement.

Kings Norton Girls' School ensures that the Designated Teacher has the appropriate training, so they are able to take the leadership of this crucial area of our safeguarding arrangements in collaboration with our Designated Safeguarding Lead which includes:

- working closely with virtual school heads to ensure that funding is best used to support the child's educational achievement and development needs that are identified in their personal education plans
- collaborating with the virtual school heads to also promote the educational achievement of children previously in care.

Children Absent from Education and Children Missing Education

Absence from education can be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, criminal or sexual exploitation, mental health concerns, risk of radicalisation, or other unmet need. Kings Norton Girls' School will respond to unexplained, repeated and/or prolonged absence as a potential safeguarding concern and will not treat attendance and safeguarding as separate processes.

We have clear attendance and safeguarding procedures which identify who is responsible for first-day contact, follow-up, home visits or welfare checks, information sharing, escalation to the DSL, and referral to the local authority or children's social care.

Kings Norton Girls' School will:

- monitor attendance and admissions information daily and follow up unexplained absence promptly using more than one contact method where necessary;
- consider the child's known vulnerabilities, family circumstances, social care involvement, SEND, health needs, transport arrangements, patterns of absence and any previous safeguarding concerns when deciding the level and urgency of response;
- ensure attendance staff alert the DSL or deputy without delay where absence is unexplained, repeated, prolonged, linked to a known risk, or where attempts to establish the child's welfare and whereabouts are unsuccessful;
- make reasonable enquiries, record each contact attempt, information obtained, decisions, actions and reasons for escalation or non-escalation, and keep the situation under review;
- work with parents or carers, the child, the local authority and relevant agencies to understand and address barriers to attendance, unless doing so would increase risk to the child;
- refer concerns to local authority children's social care and/or the police immediately where there is reason to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, is in immediate danger, or their whereabouts cannot be established and risk is significant;
- comply with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and statutory guidance before adding or deleting a pupil from the admission register, including making required returns and notifications to the local authority; and
- notify and work with the local authority Children Missing Education service where a child of compulsory school age is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school, or where the school's enquiries indicate that a pupil may become missing education.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of Staff including Leadership and Management

Role and Responsibilities of the Whole School

Safeguarding is **everyone's** responsibility at Kings Norton Girls' School. This policy applies to all of our staff including permanent, temporary and supply, volunteers, School Board members and contractors. It also applies to our safeguarding arrangements for extended school and off-site activities.

All Schools in the Trust play a crucial role in preventative education for their young people. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by each school's:

- Behaviour Policy
- pastoral support system
- Online safety education
- planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) in an age appropriate way, which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
 - healthy and respectful relationships
 - boundaries and consent
 - stereotyping, prejudice, and equality
 - body confidence and self-esteem
 - how to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
 - the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
 - what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they are always unacceptable.
 - Online safety

Role and Responsibility of all staff (permanent, temporary, supply and trainee teachers), volunteers and contractors

All staff, volunteers and contractors will be required to:

- Attend and participate in a safeguarding induction to the school in which they are working, volunteering or being contracted to work.
- read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and the reviewed version of this guidance at least annually. Where necessary, these may be provided in a translated version.

Translated versions of Part One Keeping Children Safe in Education can be found at [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 Translations | LGFL for staff, volunteers, parents and carers](#) whose first language may not be English, should they wish to use this

- read Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education which outlines important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues to ensure we have a culture that recognises that children within the specific circumstances can be at greater risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and a working knowledge to identify indicators.
- sign confirmation that they have read the expected sections according to their role, have understood the content and their roles and responsibilities in our whole school approach to safeguarding.
- All pupil facing staff will successfully complete an appropriate assessment to demonstrate this understanding.
- participate in additional training if required
- promote and raise awareness about the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents and carers aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they will be interacting with online, including risk associated with artificial intelligence)
- contribute to creating a culture for pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning to speak out and share their concerns. Under KCSIE 2026, gender-questioning children are addressed as a safeguarding matter, with schools expected to take a cautious, child-centred approach. The guidance does not require schools to affirm or facilitate social transition automatically. Instead, schools are expected to make carefully considered decisions based on the child's best interests.
- KCSIE 2026 states that pupils must not use toilets, changing rooms, residential accommodation, or participate in single-sex sports designated for the opposite sex where sex-based provisions apply. Schools should consider alternative arrangements where necessary while maintaining privacy, dignity, and safety for all pupils
- contribute to creating a culture for any child defined as having a protected characteristic to speak out and share their concerns (see Section 5).

All staff will be aware of:

- The school's safeguarding arrangements and systems which is explained to staff as part of their induction and annual update training. As part of staff induction new staff/ volunteers are provided with the following key guidance and information provided by our school senior leadership team:
 - Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - the role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies in the school
 - the Behaviour policy
 - online safety policy

- acceptable usage policy
- mobile phone policy
- our expected safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods. We operate a daily attendance monitoring system that flags unexplained absence in real time. Concerns are escalated to the DSL promptly in line with CME statutory guidance (2024).
- signs of vulnerabilities to look out for in children who may benefit from Early Help or Targeted Family Support, we explain to staff the Early Help process for children and their families and what their role is in this to support DSLs in ensuring children and their families receive support as soon as problems emerge
- what to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- the process for recording and sharing information internally to DSLs and on children's safeguarding records
- the process of making referrals to the Local Authority Children's Social Care and/or Police where required and the statutory processes that may follow
- the signs of specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines. The DSL should assess risk to the individual pupil and others, consider wider information, and take appropriate action. Depending on the risk, this may include a safety and support plan and consideration of action to de-escalate peer conflict.
- the need to recognise that racism, faith-targeted abuse and other discriminatory behaviour can cause significant harm to a child's welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety and should be responded to using safeguarding procedures where appropriate.
- the contextual safeguarding information relevant to the school and its community
- how to support and speak to children when they may share their worries or make disclosures of abuse, neglect or exploitation and contribute to creating a culture where children feel able to speak with the relevant safeguarding leads
- the importance of reassuring children that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- the importance of supporting families and providing a culture of support to encourage parents/carers to seek support and engage with our school and professionals when issues emerge or become a concern
- children can be at risk of harm inside the home (familial harm) and outside of their home (extra familial harms) and that any form of harm can happen directly or online
- the fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning can be targeted by other children.
- the specific safeguarding vulnerabilities experienced by LGBT and gender-questioning pupils, including online harassment, targeted bullying and misinformation. Staff will use respectful, appropriate language and ensure concerns are recorded and responded to sensitively, in line with statutory guidance.
- Young carers and SIBS may experience increased safeguarding vulnerabilities, including fatigue, poor attendance, social isolation and barriers to disclosure. Staff will proactively identify young carers and ensure early help pathways are activated promptly.

- Children with medical conditions may be at increased risk of harm due to medication needs, fluctuating attendance or reliance on adults. Staff will follow individual healthcare plans, monitor attendance closely and ensure concerns are escalated to the DSL without delay.
- what to look for to identify children who need help or protection in accordance with statutory provisions under the children act section 17 (child in need) and section 47 (significant harm).

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL team in each school includes a member/s of the senior leadership team. Our schools also have Deputy DSLs (DDSL) within the staffing group. Whilst one of the DSLs is referred to the 'lead' and will coordinate the DSL team, they are all trained at the same level to ensure that at all times one or more of them are available to carry out all of their designated functions in safeguarding.

- The DSL takes lead responsibility for the school's child protection and wider safeguarding arrangements. This includes online safety and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.
- Whilst all of our staff are part of our safeguarding culture, it is the role of our DSL to receive information, review and make decisions about any necessary further considerations or actions needed to respond to any safeguarding matters that arise.
- The DSL will act as the main contact in the school when a child and their family are receiving support from the school, external agencies and statutory services.
- During term time, the DSL or one of the deputies via a clearly published timetable will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. This will enable staff to be clear on who to go to with a concern at any time.
- DSLs may also work outside of these hours when matters of support of child protection require the school's involvement. This will not include an assumption that a DSL is available to deal with a concern outside of working hours.
- Details on how to raise concerns outside of normal working hours (8am – 4pm) will be clear to all staff. Non-urgent matters arising out of school hours, our DSLs can be contacted, if necessary via the each school's DSL email address which is available on the safeguarding page of each school's website.
- When the DSL is absent, Deputy DSL(s) are contactable via each school's clearly published timetable will be available during school hours.
- If the school's DSL and Deputy DSLs are not available or cannot be reached, the details listed in Appendix E and Section 1 of this policy, provide details of who to contact.
- During holiday periods, each school has a rota of DSL team availability for checking in periodically to ensure that any safeguarding requests or queries are responded to as soon as possible i.e section.17, section 47, MARAC/Court requests.

The lead DSL in each school will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- take part in and/or lead early help support
- take part in strategy discussions organised by the Local Authority's Children's Social Care and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so when required
- contribute to the assessment of children (when a child may have suffered harm or is at risk of harm)

- refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (Local Authority Children's Social Care, Channel Programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or Police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- have a good understanding of behaviours that may impact on a child's engagement and learning that may require consideration through safety/support planning, this includes the impact on themselves but also to other children
- have a good understanding of harmful behaviours that may require risk management, safety planning and/or support in school, this includes those presented by children within the setting, their parents/carer or associated adults where necessary
- have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school
- assist the Headteacher to review and respond to low-level concerns that may arise regarding staff
- share information and/or take part in statutory processes that involve reviewing and analysing of safeguarding practice and policies. This can include meetings held by Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership in response to significant safeguarding incidences, child death and/or where a safeguarding practice review is required to determine learning and practice analysis.

The DSL will also:

- keep the Headteacher informed of any issues, the conversations with children and their families, universal services and referrals to external agencies and statutory services
- liaise with universal, targeted and statutory agencies, Local Authority workers (Children's Services and other key practitioners) when there are safeguarding concerns as appropriate (includes early help and child protection)
- share information about incidences of sexual violence and sexual harassment with statutory colleagues such as Police and Children's Social Care colleagues in order to prepare and implement the school's policies
- be confident about what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment
- be aware that children are entitled to have an 'Appropriate Adult' to support and help them in Police investigations or if there is threshold met for them to be searched.

Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL or deputy will carry out an immediate risk and needs assessment. For sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered case-by-case. Assessments should be recorded, regularly reviewed and used to inform safeguarding decisions.

For reports of rape or assault by penetration, while facts are established and agencies are consulted, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any shared classes with the victim and the school should consider reasonable separation across premises and transport. These actions are in the best interests of all children and should not be treated as a judgement on guilt.

Role and Responsibilities of the Governance

Our Trust Board, and School Boards have a strategic role within our leadership and management team and must ensure that all staff comply with legislation and local guidance at all times.

The Trust Board will:

- facilitate a whole-Trust and whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development for the setting

- evaluate and approve this safeguarding and child protection policy along with other policies related to safeguarding at each review, ensuring they comply with the law, and hold the relevant Trust Leaders and Head Teachers to account for their implementation
- evaluate and approve recommendations/action plans identified through quality assurance activities that the Trust undertakes to review safeguarding practice through audits and termly Trust Board Reports, and School Board Reports to ensure that they have regular oversight and hold Trust Leaders and Head Teachers accountable for the practice improvement
- be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- ensure that safeguarding arrangements promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture and that leaders actively monitor and respond to discriminatory incidents that may impact upon children's safety, welfare and wellbeing.
- ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety according to their roles, and that such training is regularly updated and in line with statutory guidance.
- The Trust Board will review the annual online safety risk assessment, including filtering and monitoring effectiveness, and will evidence challenge and oversight of safeguarding data trends.
- ensure that all Trustees and School Board Members:
 - read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety, and review compliance of this task at least annually
 - sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the above guidance.
- ensure that Trust's schools have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:
 - making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
 - reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards.

School Boards will make sure:

- the DSL in each school has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
- online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
- the DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
- the school has effective procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) that arise. This includes those related to child welfare concerns, low level concerns and allegations made against staff
- that this policy reflects those children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, or other protected characteristics can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised
- where another body is providing services or activities on the school site (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):

- seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place and inspect them if needed
- make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate.
- make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises under the school's Letting Policy and Transfer of Control Agreement (TOCA), and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply.
- the CEO will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation is made against the Headteacher or a central team employee. The Chair of Trustees will do so if an allegation is made against the CEO, where appropriate (see Section 11 Managing Concerns and Allegations)
- all Trustees and School Board Members receive appropriate safeguarding training, including at induction. This training should equip School Board members with the knowledge and skills to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and contribute to a safe school environment as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Training will be allocated via an online platform with records held and maintained as part of the Trustee and School Board training records.
- annual safeguarding training will include AI-related risks, filtering and monitoring responsibilities, suicide prevention guidance, and Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance

Role and Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher of each school will:

- implement this policy and ensure that all staff:
 - are informed of our school's systems which support safeguarding, including reading and understanding this policy, as part of their induction
 - follow the procedures included in this policy, what they should know and do in relation to information sharing and referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- make this policy available to parents/carers, professionals and the community to ensure there is transparency and clear expectations about the school's duty to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and the arrangements for responding to children presenting with needs that may require early help or support to protect them. The Trust's safeguarding policy is available here: <https://wmatrust.co.uk/policies/>. Each school's safeguarding policy is available via the policies section of each school website.
- ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- act as the 'case manager' representing the school in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer
- managing cases where there are low-level concerns regarding the conduct of staff, or oversee delegation to the DSL
- Ensure the school's Health and Safety policy is implemented
- Ensure the school's Allergy Safety policy is implemented
- Ensure a periodic site security, emergency procedures (including lockdown, invacuation and evacuation), critical incident management (including cyber incident) reviews and relevant practices take place at least one per term

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

Our Designated Teacher takes leadership of promoting the educational attainment of Children With a Social Worker which includes:

- working closely with Virtual School Heads to ensure that funding is best used to support the child's educational achievement and development needs that are identified in their personal education plans
- to carry out their duties in line with Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK and extended duties as outlined Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK working closely with our DSL for those children who are supported by a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan to ensure support for the education attainment of these children is appropriately entwined with safeguarding processes.

7. Working with Families

Alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education WMAT adopts the fundamental principal of ***working in a child-centred approach within a whole family focus*** as promoted in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

This principle is underpinned by the findings and recommendations within the Government's 2023 publication Stable Homes, Built on Love in response to the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The strategy sets out how children's social care is to be committed to supporting every child to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. For most children this means growing up within their family. The strategy also emphasises the importance of having stronger expectations of support through early help and family networks.

As such, we endeavour to work in partnership and collaboration with children and their families so that they are supported from an early stage by being a part of and leading the conversations about change and aims for their children. We are keen to support families in a strength and solution-based approach, encouraging motivation and confidence to improve their own agency to make safe and positive decisions for themselves and their children.

Our principles include, but are not limited to:

Promoting effective partnership working with parents and carers e.g. build strong, positive, trusting, and co-operative relationships by:

- approaching families and their wider family networks and communities with empathy, respect, compassion, and creativity
- avoiding reinforcing family shame, suffering, and blame
- making efforts to understand the impact of the parental trauma influencing the dynamics and experiences of the family
- using strength-based approaches, working with parents and carers to identify what is working well and how their strengths could support them to effect positive change
- ensuring we work sensitively with parents, carers, and children, to identify and understand the impact of adversity and trauma in their lives; seeking to understand how adversity and trauma might manifest and affect children and parent's engagement and use their expertise to adapt their response with care and compassion
- adapting our responses to meet the diverse needs of parents and carers, including fathers and male carers, and the specific challenges being faced, including parents and carers of disabled children, and where harm is outside the home

- ensuring we understand the family's background, ethnicity, religion, financial situation, ability, education, sex, ages and sexual orientation, and potential barriers these create in seeking and accessing help and support
- being alert and recognising where parents or carers may not be acting in the best interest of the child or where children may be experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation as a result of actions by parents, carers, or other individuals in their lives. Practitioners use their skills and expertise to adapt their response to secure engagement
- being mindful of negative stereotypes when making decisions which might lead to false assumptions.

Communicating effectively verbally and non-verbally by:

- communicating with respect, being clear, curious and inclusive; adapting to parent's and carer's needs
- providing materials to children, parents, carers, and families which are jargon free, developmentally appropriate and in a format that is easily understood
- ensuring any materials, such as minutes or reports, capture the school's contribution but also those from the children, parents and carers which must include their views and wishes
- supporting families to access support to translate information where English is not their first language. Our school will access interpreters where needed including British Sign Language.

Empowering our parents and carers to participate in decision-making to help, support and protect children by:

- creating a safe culture which is an open and accepting forum free from discriminatory or prejudicial judgements
- ensuring the open culture is one which still provides reflection and challenge where the information has the potential to be a risk or influencing factor which may impact on a child's safety and wellbeing
- asking families for their perspective on a situation or issue that arises, ensuring we consider their point of view and factor this in when thinking about support
- promote families' rights to support through use of advocates, family members or a supporter
- ensuring parents and carers are fully aware of who will attend meetings and discussions, if the child will be invited to participate, and the format of the meeting or discussion
- giving parents and carers adequate preparation at every stage, relevant information, a safe and appropriate environment for participation, and suitable access arrangements
- signposting parents and carers to sources of help and support available locally or through the Local Authority
- provide opportunities for feedback and review to ensure acknowledgement of positive progress but also reviewing and discussion of any new or increasing issues to readapt a family's plans
- being transparent about our concerns and why we may need to request support from an outside agency; and the potential actions should our concerns increase for the children
- helping parents and carers to understand what the issues are and how these impact on the child, what decisions could be made, what changes need to be made, why and how, timescales and possible outcomes
- providing information about different types of support, what it involves and expects from parents and carers so they can make an informed choice and decision about which support pathways will be more helpful and effective for them.

8. Confidentiality and Sharing Information

Trusted relationships are at the heart of working with children and their families at Kings Norton Girls' School. We strive to uphold good practice and work in partnership with children and families, communicating effectively and listening well so that we have sufficient information to understand and be able to meet their needs.

An open culture is imperative when deciding whether to share information and it is important to get the lawful basis right. The legal framework can appear complex, and a lack of clarity can lead practitioners to assume, incorrectly, that no information can be shared because consent has not been provided. Our school understands the lawful basis in which our DSLs can share information with other people, agencies and organisations about the children and families we are supporting.

In line with our principles of working with families outlined above, we strive to be transparent, open and clear when we need to discuss any information or concerns that worry us about a child's wellbeing. If we feel that we need to share information, we will explain how information will be shared or used so that families can make an informed choice about whether to consent.

If we feel that we need to share information with services due to concerns about a child's safety or welfare to provide the family with specific support, we will be upfront, transparent and honest about our concerns and the ways in which such services could help the family. We will endeavour to support and encourage the family to consent and engage with such support. We believe that this collaborative approach will support children to have the confidence to speak up and share their views as well as encouraging parents and carers of children at our schools to have a willingness to engage with services that provide support.

If there is a concern about a child's safety and the school have decided to share information to protect them from a risk of harm, staff will endeavour to gain cooperation and understanding from parents and carers. We will strive where possible to gain consent and where we believe our concerns have increased and warrant the sharing of information to statutory services such as Police and Children's Social Care, we will have made efforts to discuss, explore and provide support to address these with families in a collaborative way beforehand; concerns should not be a surprise to families unless in situations where a one off or unprecedented incident occurs.

However, for a small number of children, seeking parental consent is not always possible and may place a child or others at risk of harm, for example:

- the child would be placed at increased risk of significant harm through the action of gaining this consent
- there would be an impact on a criminal investigation
- a delay in making the referral would impact on the immediate safety of the child.

In situations where our professional or legal duty is exercised to share certain information in the absence of consent, we will inform them as soon as possible if it is safe and appropriate to do so. We will be clear about what we have shared, with whom, the reasons why and how the information will be used.

In any situation where a child or their parent/carer object to consent or particular information sharing and we decide that it is proportionate to do so, a clear rationale, outlining our decisions and the reasons why, will be recorded on the child's safeguarding file.

In situations where there are allegations of child-on-child abuse, we will notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. If a child or group of children have suffered significant harm or are considered at risk of

harm either directly or online, we will have a duty to consider making a referral to Children's Social Care and the Police if a crime has been committed. The process for this can be found in Section 9 and our principles for information sharing and consent will apply unless we have a legal obligation to report the incident.

In addition to sharing information, our DSLs will endeavour to arrange a meeting with the parents and carers of all children to share information about the incident, plan safety strategies and/or risk management plans. Our DSLs will endeavour to keep families up to date and provide reassurance on any measures being taken, whilst respecting the privacy of each individual child involved.

The Data Protection Act, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Kings Norton Girls' School recognises that timely information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding. Whilst we promote collaboration and partnership with our families, 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 when required.

The following principles apply to our confidentiality agreement:

- timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- if staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- if a victim asks the school or Trust not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
 - even if a victim does not consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there is another legal basis under the Data Protection Act that applies
 - the DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
 - the DSL should consider the following points:
 - parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk)
 - the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care where the child resides
 - where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the Police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the Police remains.
- regarding anonymity, all staff will:
 - be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system

- do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
- consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities
- have regard for the Government's publication Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information with all relevant parties.

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they can seek advice from the school's Head Teacher, DSL, any person in a position of senior leadership or wider DSL team.

9. Recognise and Respond to Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (what all staff must know and do if they have concerns)

Abuse, neglect and exploitation

All our staff are aware of what abuse, neglect and exploitation (including modern slavery) is and have an understanding of the different types of indicators which could suggest a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm.

We encourage our staff to be professionally curious about what to look out for as this is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection at the earliest opportunity.

Staff must recognise early indicators of serious violence, including weapon-carrying, association with older peers, unexplained multiple phones, and exposure to misogynistic or incel-related online content.

AI-generated content may be used to coerce, threaten or manipulate children; any such concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Our staff are aware that children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children, and that children may also cause harm to other family members. This is often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which 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 (Fabricated Induced Illness FII).

Emotional Abuse

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
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- 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
- a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying)
- causing a child to feel frightened or in danger
- exploitation or corruption of children.
- It may also include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling or name calling

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone. It can be difficult to recognise emotional abuse and children may not always realise they are experiencing it. However, there may be indicators in the way a child behaves and reacts to certain situations.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting 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, or penetration with an object
- **Non-contact 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
- **Online abuse:** sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by adults or by other children. Children are more likely to be sexually abused by someone they know than by a stranger – they are more likely to know their abuser than not. Staff should also be aware that children under the age of 13 can never legally consent to sexual activity.

Neglect

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

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

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

Exploitation

Exploitation in relation to children refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification, or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression or ill-treatment.

Our staff are aware that there are several types of child exploitation, including, but not limited to:

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):** this is a type of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. It can involve contact and non-contact activities and can occur without the child's immediate recognition; this is due to their grooming by the abuser.
- **Child Labour Exploitation:** this involves the use of children in work that is harmful to their physical and mental development. It deprives them of their childhood, potential, and dignity.
- **Child Trafficking:** children are recruited, moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold. They are often used for forced labour, sexual exploitation, or illegal activities.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):** this is where children are involved in activities of a criminal nature, often in gangs. They may be forced or manipulated into committing crimes, such as selling drugs or stealing. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and victims may identify as part of this group...This may constitute modern slavery.

Safeguarding Issues and Specific Forms of Abuse

All our staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues that may arise at home, or exploitation in situations outside their families. They are aware that extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, radicalisation, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, including AI generated imagery (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) and can put children in danger.

Staff are aware that Extra Familial Harms can present online, in a child's environment/neighbourhood, school and any place/space that children occupy or access such as:

- Child abduction
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines

- Children and the Court system
- Children absent from education
- Children with family members in prison
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- Mental health
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Preventing radicalization
- The Prevent Duty
- Channel
- Sexual violence and Sexual harassment between children in schools
- Serious Violence
- FGM and the mandatory reporting duty for teachers
- Forced marriage.

Child-on-Child Abuse

At Kings Norton Girls' School, we know that children can cause harm to other children. As a school we have a zero acceptance of child-on-child abuse and create a culture of keeping an open mind and attitude that "it could happen here." Our staff are aware that even if no reports are being made in our school, it does not mean it is not happening.

Our staff understand that it is important to challenge inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature, and we have clear expectations that incidents are not downplayed or suggested to be jovial or part of growing up as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and unsafe environments for children and young people. We are also aware that both the victim and the alleged perpetrator need safeguarding support and intervention.

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying, discriminatory behaviour, racism, faith-targeted abuse and hate incidents)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images (including pseudo images/videos) and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Kings Norton Girls' School recognises that discriminatory behaviour, including racism and faith-targeted abuse, may constitute child-on-child abuse and may require a safeguarding response in addition to any behaviour or equality procedures.

We will use the NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework to assess, respond to and manage incidents. Written safety plans will be created for all children involved, including witnesses.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. They may also experience it within their own intimate relationships.

Our staff understand that these experiences can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

Our staff are aware that domestic abuse can include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse and that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM includes '*all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs.*'

FGM is illegal in the UK and is considered as a form of child abuse that has significantly harmful and long-lasting consequences. It can also be referred to as 'female genital cutting,' 'circumcision' or 'initiation.'

Our **teachers** are aware of their mandatory reporting duty and the requirement to immediately contact the Police if they are

- informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her
- observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 (and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth).

The duty for teachers above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. In these circumstances, teachers know they must report to the DSL who will follow local safeguarding procedures.

Our members of staff who are not teachers, are aware that if they suspect a child is at risk or that FGM has been carried out, they should report this to the DSL immediately.

Prevent and concerns about extremism

Kings Norton Girls' School is aware of our duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of our functions, to have "*due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism*" (known as the Prevent duty).

The Prevent duty is one of our wider safeguarding obligations. Our DSLs and senior leaders are aware of the revised Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which focus on education and childcare. The guidance covers 3 general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities, and reducing permissive environments.

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, which aims to:

1. negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
2. undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
3. intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2)

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

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.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to Children's Services and Channel, the Government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which all staff and School Board Members can call to raise concerns about extremism for a pupil. In non-emergency situations DSLs can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

Concerns about mental health

Mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns in their own right, including self-harm, suicidal ideation and risk of suicide. They may also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should be alert to children who may be self-harming, experiencing an eating disorder, expressing suicidal thoughts, or presenting with indicators of suicide risk. Potential warning signs may include significant changes in behaviour, ongoing difficulty sleeping, withdrawing from social situations, loss of interest in activities typically enjoyed, and physical signs of self-harm or self-neglect. School staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions. Their role is to identify concerns, record observations and report concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures. Where urgent mental health support is required but the situation is not an emergency, consideration should be given to contacting NHS 111 and selecting the mental health option, alongside local SPA/Crisis Team arrangements where appropriate.

What all staff need to do to respond if abuse, neglect and exploitation is suspected or been disclosed.

At Kings Norton Girls' School we adopt a whole Trust and whole-school approach and safeguarding - it is everyone's responsibility. Staff and volunteers, and School Board members must comply with our safeguarding procedures as set out below:

Concerns about child-on-child abuse

In most circumstances, incidences of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy. Our safeguarding and child protection policy will apply to all incidents that raise safeguarding concerns where the alleged behaviour:

- is serious, and potentially a criminal offence

- could put pupils in the school at risk
- is violent
- involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including AI generated/deepfake images).

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- staff must record the allegation on CPOMS and report to the DSL, staff should not investigate the matter
- the DSL will assess and consider the relevant next steps which may include, speaking with the child and parents, accessing relevant consultation lines provided to schools by the Local Authority, making a request for support to Children's Services as well as the Police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), if appropriate
- the DSL will consider whether a risk assessment or a safety and support plan would be beneficial for any children involved, including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected, with a named person they can talk to if needed. This should include consideration of all aspects and areas of the school environment and beyond, for example off-site activities and school transport
- the DSL will usually speak to the child and their parent/s or carers to share the concerns, gain their views and consent to liaise with other agencies if there are any identified risks and unmet needs
- if the incident is a criminal offence school have a duty to report this and thereafter work closely with the Police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any measures to manage risk. For incidents which involve significant harm and/or a potential criminal offence, the DSL will endeavour to gain consent but may override this should not gaining consent increase the risk to a child
- our DSLs are committed to ensuring that where concerns are raised about child-on-child abuse, incidences are taken seriously and dealt with fairly. DSLs will consider all information available to them and ensure that any action or decision is proportionate for all children involved, and that such decisions do not disproportionately impact on their access to education, although at times some restrictions or adaptations may be required to manage identified risk.

Creating a culture where children feel safe in school and minimising the risk of all forms of abuse.

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of any form of abuse, neglect and exploitation irrespective of from whom and where this comes from, including child-on-child abuse. Creating a supportive environment where children can feel confident in reporting incidents is key to our safeguarding culture at Kings Norton Girls' School.

We expect all staff to:

- challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images including nudes/semi nudes, deepfakes/AI generated images.
- be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders, for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent

- ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems in the school or elsewhere that could be addressed by us updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with our safeguarding partners
- support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, and alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- consider intra-familial harms (adults close to the child and family) and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment.

Our staff are trained to understand:

- how to recognise the signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
- even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an open mind and attitude of “it could happen here”
- if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told; and always speak to the DSL should they be unclear
- children may not always make a direct disclosure and therefore they must be aware that:
 - children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to; it may be that their difficulties emerge from behaviour when they do not have the language to express themselves
 - a friend of the child may share information to a staff member or make comments; professional curiosity is key, do not fear exploring the information and asking open ended questions
 - staff overhear a conversation between children
 - a child’s behaviour may change suddenly with no clear reason or precipitating event that might offer some explanation
 - some children can face additional barriers to telling someone, for example they have a disability, special educational need, age gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation etc.
 - one child’s concerning/abusive behaviour towards another could be an indicator of that child having been harmed themselves.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or volunteer

All staff are aware they should always be prepared as children can disclose spontaneously to anyone anywhere.

Kings Norton Girls’ School is situated within Birmingham which has a rich and diverse population. We cannot, and do not, assume that all children and their families have the ability, understanding, language and resilience to convey any difficulties they may experience. It is key to our ethos to recognise the needs of children and their families and to recognise and provide support where English may not be their first language and/or the children or family members have special educational needs; and without doing so may impede their ability to represent their voice, wishes and feelings.

All staff know that we place the voice of children at the centre of everything we do and endeavour to place their best interests at heart. We ensure we know who our children are, staff are encouraged to be curious by speaking and listening to children whilst respecting any protected characteristics. We hope our children have confidence and trust in our staff, believing they will be taken seriously and be supported with their issues or concerns sensitively.

Staff also know that children may not always feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, neglected or exploited and do not always recognise their experiences as harmful.

We listen to children by:

- showing patience regardless of a child's age as we know they can find it hard to find the words to express themselves
- encouraging children to tell their story in their own words
- avoiding the use of leading questions or suggesting what may have happened, instead we maintain genuine curiosity, and only ask open-ended questions / prompts.

We reassure children by:

- making sure a child does not feel they are in trouble and that they have done the right thing in speaking to staff
- we let a child know it is not their fault as children are often made to feel blame by those harming them
- never promising confidentiality and being transparent about our obligations to share information if we are concerned that they are at risk of harm
- helping children to understand how we plan to support them and their family and let them know what action we will need to take next to support them.

Recording concerns

Our staff know that reporting concerns is a procedural requirement when safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Our staff are clear that they must:

- record all conversations relating to any level of concerns on the school's recording systems, CPOMS; ensuring that the record is as detailed as possible, is factual, does not contain assumptions or personal judgement and captures the child's account in their own words
- inform the DSL about their concern as soon as possible; where the concern involves a disclosure or concern that the child is at risk of harm they must inform the DSL immediately.

Our staff are aware that such information is confidential and should be shared with the DSL only who may hold additional information about the child and their family and therefore can form a view on its significance and whether any action is required. Staff will not share information amongst themselves and will not share the information outside of the formal reporting process unless asked to by the DSL. This ensures that information is shared without delay enabling the DSL to carry out any necessary functions of their role whilst upholding confidentiality for the child and their family.

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

Kings Norton Girls' School is committed to ensuring that all children feel safe and comfortable to share and report any concerns and/or allegations about their personal experiences at home, in the community, online

or regarding a member of staff or other children in the school. As outlined above, all our staff are clear on the importance of listening to and supporting children when making disclosures, and the need to reassure them.

Our staff are aware that children can share information with anyone in our school but there are clear reporting processes when such information sharing raises concern about their welfare. Children may talk about worries and anxieties around friendships and school life which they need support with but on other occasions they may share information about their family life which indicates that the children and their family may need help. They may also share fear or experiences which cause staff to be concerned about whether they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed. Where such situation arises, our staff are clear on the reporting processes.

Any member of staff, including supply teachers, contract workers, volunteers, school board members/trustees and visitors at Kings Norton Girls' School who has any concerns about a child's welfare should:

- maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and always act in the best interests of the child. Never promise a child confidentiality
- reassure the child they have done nothing wrong and if appropriate explain to them how they will be supported and who you will need to share information with
- record what the child or others have disclosed using their language - or describe what you have seen or suspect and your rationale for this. Also ensure you make a note of any injuries observed or described by the child
- consider if the child needs medical attention and if so, prioritise ensuring they receive this
- you must never delay reporting your concerns about the welfare of a child and always act immediately by reporting/speaking to the school's DSL/deputies
- record what the child or other has disclosed in their language or describe what you have seen or suspect and your rationale for this (*if it is the latter two*)

The DSL or deputy will:

- use the Right Help, Right Time guidance to initially assess the concerns raised and consider the impact on the child's welfare, at the same time their safety. They will also review the child's record in order to establish if there has been any previous concerns (records help to establish relevant history and risk factors for example even if a concern appears low level on the surface, a series of incidents can highlight patterns of ongoing abuse and neglect.) The DSL will use the Right Help, Right Time guidance to support their analysis and rationale for any decision
- DSL or deputy will speak to the child to verify their wishes and feelings, contact the child's parents or carers to either inform them of the concerns and also to gauge their view (it will be at the discretion of the DSL team to carefully consider if this action may place a child at further risk, e.g. if the child has disclosed abuse and neglect caused in the family home)
- if it is immediately apparent that a child has suffered significant harm or is at risk of harm e.g. suffered abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, the school's DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care to request support at the earliest opportunity; consent will be gained where appropriate. If there has been a crime committed within the circumstances of the abuse, they will also report this to the Police.

What will the Local Authority Children's Social Care do?

Within one working day of a referral being made, a social worker should acknowledge its receipt to the school's DSL and make a decision about the next steps and the type of response that is required. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides details of the assessment process
- there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides details of the assessment process
- further specialist assessments are required to help the Local Authority to decide what further action to take
- the DSL or deputies should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.

Anyone working/volunteering with children can make a referral, if in an emergency staff are unable to locate or do not have time to inform DSL of a serious concern, they can contact Children's Services/ the Police directly.

What children and young People need to know and do to report safeguarding concerns (abuse neglect and exploitation)

At Kings Norton Girls' School we cultivate a culture of openness and transparency and want to make it clear to all our children that we are available at any time to listen to them and will always take their concerns seriously, however small they may consider them to be.

Our pledge is:

- we will ensure we provide children with the space away from public areas for you to talk
- we will listen without judgement and endeavour to respect children's wishes and feelings
- we want children to feel safe and we will be honest about our duty to prioritise their wellbeing and longer term safety, this means, depending on the circumstances, we cannot offer total confidentiality. We understand that this may create uncertainty, but we are confident that often when matters are dealt with as they emerge the longer-term prospects can be much improved for them and their family
- we will respect children's place but if we consider that they have suffered significant harm or are at risk of harm, we will need to share this information so that they and their family can be offered the right support. We will be clear on what information needs to be shared, with whom and how it might be used
- when the concerns suggest they may benefit from early help support this may include considering support to their parents and carers with matters that will improve the situation

- we will provide a named mentor for the child/ren so that you can have the confidence and trust to know that they have someone to go to at school if they are feeling vulnerable and experiencing difficulties
- every child's education and welfare is important to us and we want to reassure children that their experience at school remains positive and they feel safe.
- to use a range of methods to communicate each school's systems for children to report concerns. This will include but is not limited to posters around school, desktop backgrounds on computers, assemblies and/ or tutor time.

What children can do to report concerns:

- they can speak to any member of staff of their choice. Those staff will listen and support but we have a team of DSLs in each of our schools who have a specific role to support children and therefore it is likely that the staff members will talk to them or arrange this.
- they can use the school's reporting system and/ or email to submit their concern electronically

If a child is being abused, neglected or exploited they can call Children's Services (the details are on page 4). If they are in immediate danger and/or think a crime has/is being committed, they can call the Police on **999**. They can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Risk management and safety planning

The DSL, with support from deputy DSL, will take the lead role in managing any proposed risk by the alleged perpetrator(s) and will provide support at the same time, it is not our intention to villainise children, but it is everyone's responsibility to uphold the Behaviour Policy and standards within the school to maintain a safe environment. Our plans will be robust but sensitive to the individual needs of the children to ensure any identified risk is managed as effectively as possible whilst also supporting them to continue accessing a satisfactory level of education.

Risk management strategies can be put in place while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the Police. Although another agency such as the Police or Children's Services is or has investigated an incident, it is our duty to ensure we identify and implement our own assessment and management of the concerns, informed by the needs of our schools and the children we care for and the advice and outcomes of those agency's actions. This is to ensure that all children and staff are supported and always protected. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, considering whether:

- taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the Police and/or Children's Services to determine this
- there are circumstances that make it unreasonable or inappropriate for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing.

10. Online Safety and Filtering

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone, and smart device use. For full details about our school's policies in these areas, please refer to our online safety policy and mobile phone policies which can be found on our schools' websites.

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our Trust and our schools aims to:

- have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and School Board Members
- protect and educate the whole school community to be safe and responsibly use technology, including mobile and smart technology (including artificial intelligence)
- Implement the Mobile Phone policy, adapted for local policy rules
- establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following 4 categories of risk as identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026:

Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories

Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, for example: child-on-child pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

Conduct – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes harm, for example: making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, including pseudo images), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:

- the safe use of social media, the internet and technology (including smart technology/ artificial intelligence)
- keeping personal information private
- how to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
- ensuring children know not to meet up with a person they have met online without a safe adult
- how to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim.

We will also:

- train staff, as part of their induction, on how to keep themselves safe online as well as children, in line with the school's online safety policy. This needs to include issues for example: cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring, including the use of artificial intelligence. All staff members will receive refresher training as required at least once each academic year

- educate parents/carers about online safety through letters and emails sent directly to them. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their personal mobile phone and cameras, which is set out in the staff code of conduct
- make all pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and School Board members aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology (including artificial intelligence)
- explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies.
- make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that appropriate staff designated by the Headteacher, have the power to search pupil's phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation if there is a concern regarding a child's safety or a crime in which case the Police will be contacted
- put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems. This is covered in detail by our online safety policy.
- carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by each of our school communities.
- provide regular safeguarding and child protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
- complete an annual online safety risk assessment, including evaluation of filtering and monitoring systems against the DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards. This will include assessment of AI-generated content risks.
- Filtering and monitoring systems will be reviewed at least annually, with outcomes recorded and overseen by the DSL and IT manager. These systems must be capable of identifying AI-generated content risks, live-streaming, covert recording, and harmful online behaviours. Pupils are not permitted to carry multiple mobile devices, as this is a known indicator of exploitation and online harm.

Meta smart glasses (including Meta Ray-Ban models) are strictly prohibited on the school site. These devices contain integrated cameras and live-streaming capability, which present significant safeguarding, privacy and data-protection risks. Any pupil, visitor or member of staff wearing Meta glasses will be required to remove them immediately and store them safely off-site.

11. Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors

Section 11 of the 2004 Children's Act places an expectation on our school to have a clear policy in line with the BSCP Child Protection & Safeguarding procedures for dealing with allegations against staff who work with children. All staff based within our school will be considered to be in either a position of trust or working with children.

A 'position of trust' is one in which a teacher or other member of staff/volunteer is in a position of power or influence over a child, by virtue of the work or nature of activity being undertaken. The Sexual Offences Act

2003 (ss.16-24) and/or Crown Prosecution Service Website sets out detailed definitions and a range of criminal offences associated with abuse of such a position.

A person aged 18 or over is said to be in a position of trust in relation to children at the school if they:

- look after children at the school. "Looking after" is defined as regularly involved in caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of such persons
- a professional who has power and authority in a child's life and may have a key influence on their future is regarded as being in a 'position of trust'
- such a person will have regular contact with the child and may be acting in loco parentis.

The Police, Crime, Sentences and Court Act (August 2022) extended the roles which fall into the definition of 'Position of Trust' within the Sexual Offences Act (2003). The new legislation makes it an offence for anyone who coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs a child under 18, on a regular basis, in a sport or a religion to engage in inappropriate relationships with those children/young people.

On receipt of any information which raises a concern about any member of WMAT staff or staff in one of its schools, the CEO (for WMAT staff, including Head Teachers) Headteacher (for staff in schools), or the Chair of Trustees (for the CEO or a member of a School Board), will consider whether the information suggests it is the following:

Allegation is a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically one made without proof. The threshold for an allegation that is considered by the LADO is wider than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, harm. The LADO threshold is, in respect of all people working or volunteering with children in a position of trust, where they have:

- 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
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Any information or concern which meets the above threshold should be referred to the LADO service prior to the school taking any action.

Concern about the Quality of Care/Practice is an accusation, not of a child protection nature, that the care/practice provided to a child does not meet the standards expected and is about the level of value provided by any care/practice resource, as determined by some measurement. As with quality in other fields, it is an assessment of whether something is good enough and whether it is suitable for its purpose.

These types of concerns should be addressed internally using performance management processes.

Complaint is a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.' A complaint therefore can be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.'

These issues must be addressed through the Trust's complaints policy and procedures.

When concerns/allegations meet the harm threshold WMAT and its schools are required to comply with both Part Four of KCSiE and also Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures manual section Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

All staff and volunteers are required to immediately report any level of concerns about behaviour and/or conduct of adult working/volunteering with children towards a child to leadership and management. This includes reporting adults who are providing out of school activities/leasing facilities at one or more of WMAT schools.

What happens next

The relevant person (Chair of Trustees/ CEO/ Head Teacher) may undertake initial inquiries to gather key information. They will assess whether the allegation meets the LADO threshold, if it does they will make a referral to LADO giving consideration to our staff code of conduct, managing allegations procedure (see appendix D) and BSCP Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers procedures. If necessary, they will complete a LADO referral within one working day.

If the allegation does not meet the harm threshold for LADO, the matter will follow the Trust's Low Level Concerns policy.

Role of LADO

- **Case management** - oversee the process and ensure it is working, not to investigate.
- **Consultation** - provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations.
- **Monitoring** - the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.
- **Liaison** -with the Police, Children's Services and other partner agencies (managers of the subject of allegation).

Role of The Trust/ school's Case Manager, includes:

- clarify facts of the concerns/allegation (not investigate) before contacting the LADO
- take part in Strategy Meetings to liaise with other partner agencies
- undertake internal planned inquiries/fact finding
- take part to review the progress of the case in which there is a Police officer investigation
- operate a thorough disciplinary process when appropriate
- ensure a properly managed conclusion and outcome to process.

LADO Principles and Response

Timeliness - any allegation of abuse must be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently in accordance with the safeguarding and child protection procedures, this is best practice to provide immediate safety for child/ren and make safe arrangements for the person who is the subject of the allegation. It is crucial that employers **make a referral to LADO within one working day**.

Objectivity - it is not permissible for a member of staff to conduct (though their involvement may still be required) an enquiry about suspicion or allegation of abuse with respect to a:

- relative
- friend
- colleague, supervisor/supervisee or someone who has worked with her/him previously in any of these capacities.

The person conducting the enquiry should not have a directly link to the day to day work of the employee against whom the allegation has been made.

If, following the conclusion of child protection processes, further enquiries are pursued for the purpose of disciplinary, regulatory or complaint investigation, they should be arranged in a way that avoids the repeated interviewing of children or other vulnerable witnesses.

Confidentiality - information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- protect children
- facilitate enquiries
- avoid victimisation
- safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected
- manage disciplinary/complaints aspects.
- A media strategy should be developed with no improper or inadvertent releases of information to the media, in accordance with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance (now known as The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC))

Concerns that DO NOT meet the harm threshold - Low-Level Concerns (LLC)

Kings Norton Girls' School has a policy in place (see Appendix C) which outlines the relevant processes and procedures for dealing with concerns raised to them that do not meet the LADO threshold, these concerns are referred to as low-level concerns. The term low-level does not seek to minimise the seriousness of any concerns, the term low-level indicates that it is a concern that is lower than the LADO threshold, but they are still practice concerns that need to be considered with a safeguarding lens and require suitable action through internal procedures. It is important these are managed robustly as a repeated low-level concern or a pattern of concerns which may not meet the LADO threshold individually may together indicate a concern about the person's suitability and potential risk to children in the capacity of their role.

At WMAT, the CEO (for WMAT staff) or the Head Teacher (for school staff) manage LLCs using the LLC policy and internal due process. If it is considered a member of staff has breached the relevant code of conduct, depending on the seriousness and impact on a child, the Trust's HR lead and external advice service will be involved. The Head Teacher in each school will provide the necessary information to staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors to ensure all:

- are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- are empowered to share any low-level safeguarding concerns
- can contribute to addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- relevant leaders can provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- help identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system.

Our low-level concerns policy is a reflection and extension of the staff code of conduct.

Concerns may arise from a range of scenarios, e.g. suspicion; complaint or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

All staff should know that in line with our culture we encourage staff to have the confidence and trust to confide in leadership if they have concerns about adults working or volunteering with children, or those visiting/ contracted to work on one or more of our school sites.

We share information responsibly and understand this is on a need-to-know basis

We apply our protocols for recording and storing information confidentially.

We encourage an open and transparent culture, to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early so that we are able to minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

The role of our school's case manager and the principles for managing a LLC is the same as set out above reporting process parallel to what is set out within the section where concerns meet harm threshold, for example the principles and practice.

If we are uncertain of threshold criteria for either LADO referral or LLC we consult with school's HR and the LADO. We have clear codes of conduct and processes in place to deal with any concerns or allegations which do not meet the LADO threshold. Such concerns may arise from suspicion, complaint, safeguarding concerns, or allegation from another member of staff, disclosure made by a child, parent or another outside of the school or pre-employment vetting checks.

After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers

Kings Norton Girls' School have a legal duty of care to ensure we maintain a safe environment for children. If we receive an allegation or concern relating to an incident that has happened when an outside individual or organisation are using our premises, we will ensure that we follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures, which includes reporting allegations to the LADO, Children's Social Care and Police if a crime may have been committed. This could result in termination of the agreement with the provider.

It is the role of the Board of Trustees to ensure any organisation that hires the school premises is compliant with the guidance set out in After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) In particular we have embedded within our hire/ lettings agreement (and associated TOCA) with external organisations the standards and expectations for them to provide evidence and assurance of their safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Safer Recruitment and Ongoing Suitability

Kings Norton Girls' School is committed to safer recruitment and to maintaining a culture of vigilance throughout each person's employment or engagement. The Trust will ensure that recruitment and selection arrangements comply with Part Three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and any requirements applying to the type of setting.

The school will ensure that:

- job descriptions, person specifications, advertisements and application information clearly set out the safeguarding responsibilities of the role and the school's commitment to safeguarding;
- at least one person conducting an interview has completed appropriate safer recruitment training where this is a statutory requirement, and those involved in recruitment have the knowledge needed to apply safer recruitment practice;
- application forms, employment history, reasons for leaving, gaps or inconsistencies, references and self-declarations from shortlisted candidates are scrutinised and any concerns are explored and resolved before appointment;
- online searches are considered for shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence; candidates are informed that such searches may be undertaken, and only information relevant to suitability to work with children is considered;
- all offers remain conditional until the school is satisfied that the required identity, right to work, DBS and barred list, prohibition, qualification, overseas and any other role-specific checks have been completed;
- required checks and dates are recorded accurately on the Single Central Record, and written assurance is obtained for agency, third-party and fee-funded trainee teacher checks where applicable;
- volunteer, governor, contractor, visitor and third-party arrangements are risk assessed and the correct level of checking and supervision is determined before the person begins the activity;

- no unchecked person is permitted to work unsupervised or undertake regulated activity where the required checks have not been completed;
- induction, probation, supervision, training, appraisal, professional conduct arrangements and the management of low-level concerns support ongoing suitability after appointment; and
- statutory referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service and, where applicable, the Teaching Regulation Agency are made when the relevant criteria are met.

The school's Safer Recruitment Policy and procedures should be read alongside this policy.

Other complaints

If any of our stakeholders are not satisfied with any aspects of how we implement and comply with safeguarding policies and procedures, our Complaints Procedures can be found on our website at: <https://wmatrust.co.uk/policies/>

Whistleblowing

At Kings Norton Girls' School and in all of our schools we strive to create a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share any concerns they have about poor or unsafe practice, concerns or allegations against staff or the any one of the schools' safeguarding practice and arrangements so they can be addressed appropriately.

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Trust's or the schools' safeguarding procedures and arrangements.

The Trust's whistleblowing policy can be found here: <https://wmatrust.co.uk/policies/>

If, for any reason, there are difficulties with following the above procedure, you can whistle blow directly to the Department for Education, Ofsted, Children's Services and/or the Police on 999, or to the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline 0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk

12. Record Keeping

Each school will hold records confidentially, safely, securely and in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached, and the outcome.

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child (either paper recorded or electronically).

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to know/access them.

Safeguarding records relating to an individual child will be retained for the student until they reach their 25th birthday or 31st birthday if there is an EHCP in place (Information Records Management Society 2022).

Safeguarding records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse were being retained for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). This has now concluded and the Home Office sent a letter to schools advising that files no longer needed to be kept indefinitely. However, the recommendations from the inquiry have stated:

Recommendation 17 from **Tackling child sexual abuse**: Access to records. The UK government should direct the Information Commissioner's Office in Autumn 2025 to introduce a code of practice on keeping and accessing records which relate to child sexual abuse. The code should require records about child sexual abuse and allegations of child sexual abuse to be kept for 75 years, with appropriate review periods.

Kings Norton Girls' School will follow the Recommendation 17.

Receiving in and transferring pupil records to other education provision

If a child attending Kings Norton Girls' School for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their safeguarding information file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or
- **the first 5 days** of the start of a new term.

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the child.

Retention, archiving and destruction of records

For records that are not transferred to another school, for example the child leaves the country or is going to be home educated, we have:

- a clear retention policy
- secure and appropriate system to archive with restricted access
- we have a written assurance from our providers of our electronic recording systems that all records are maintained securely which includes any archived records.

Storage, retention, and destruction of our child protection files is also made clear in our data management policy.

Appendix A: Links to useful information

Local:

[Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

[Birmingham Children's Trust](#)

[Birmingham City Council - Children, Young People & Families](#)

[BCC Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#)

[BCC No Platform Policy | Birmingham City Council](#)

[BCC School Safety Plan re children who pose a risk to others](#)



CPR2C Form v2.docx

When to call the police:

[NPSCC – When to call the police guidance for schools](#)

Use of Artificial Intelligence in education

[Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education \(DfE\)](#)

[Using AI in education: support for school and college leaders \(DfE\)](#)

Online safety:

[NSPCC online-safety-for-schools](#)

[National Child Exploitation & Online Safety Centre](#)

[Bristol online-safety-and-cyber-crime resources](#)

[Hampshire online safety resources](#)

Safer Recruitment:

Following the removal of the supervision exemption, volunteers who teach, train, instruct or supervise children regularly are now engaged in regulated activity and require an Enhanced DBS check with Barred List information. The SCR will reflect these updated requirements.

[Staffing and employment: advice for schools \(DfE\)](#)

To be added when published:

- Guidance document for educational establishments in Birmingham in the event of a suspected suicide in a school community
- Critical Incident Guidance for Schools

Appendix B: Our Safeguarding Pledge to Children

At Kings Norton Girls' School we cultivate a culture of openness and transparency and want to make it clear to you that we are available at any time to listen and will always take their concerns seriously, however small you may consider them to be.

Our pledge is:

- we will ensure we provide you with the space away from public areas for you to talk
- we will listen without judgement and endeavour to respect your wishes and feelings
- we want you to feel safe and we will be honest about our duty to prioritise your wellbeing and longer term safety, this means, depending on the circumstances, we cannot offer total confidentiality. We understand that this may create uncertainty, but we are confident that often when matters are dealt with as they emerge the longer-term prospects can be much improved for you and their family
- we will respect your voice but if we consider that you have suffered harm or are at risk of harm, we will need to share this information so that you and your family can be offered the right support. We will be clear on what information needs to be shared, with whom and how it might be used
- when the concerns suggest you may benefit from early help support this may include considering the support to your parents and carers may need to help improve the situation
- we will provide a named mentor for you so that you can have the confidence and trust to know that you have someone to go to at school if you are feeling vulnerable and experiencing difficulties
- your education and welfare is important to us and we want to reassure you that your experience at school remains positive and they feel safe.
- to use a range of methods to communicate each school's systems for you to report concerns. This will include but is not limited to posters around school, desktop backgrounds on computers, assemblies and/ or tutor time.

What you can do to report concerns:

- you can speak to any member of staff of your choice. Those staff will listen and support but we have a team of safeguarding leaders in each of our schools who have a specific role to support you and therefore it is likely that the staff members will talk to them or arrange this.
- you can use the school's reporting system – or email to submit your concern electronically to Imerrell@kngs.co.uk

If you are in immediate danger and/or think a crime has/is being committed, you can call the Police on **999**.

You can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Appendix C: Low Level Concerns Policy

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 11 above.

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns using the published procedure in each school
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

Responding to low-level concerns

A low level concern will be assessed within one working day with next steps determined and noted in the relevant section of the report form. The steps and decisions will be noted chronologically as the Head Teacher or nominated senior leader who is looking into the concern, progresses the matter.

The person raising the concern will be notified by email within one working day that their concern has been received and is being processed.

If the concern is raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the Trust's staff code of conduct and relevant policies. The headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL and HR.

The guiding principles of managing Low Level Concerns will adhere to recommended practice guidance, a copy of which all Head Teachers, DSLs and HR managers will be required to read and confirm they have done so, annually.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing on the agreed form for the school. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harm threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school
- Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues that would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance

LOW-LEVEL CONCERN FORM 26-27

Please use this form to share any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegation threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

You should provide a concise record – including brief context in which the low-level concern arose, and details which are chronological, and as precise and accurate as possible – of any such concern and relevant incident(s) (and please use a separate sheet if necessary).

The record should be signed, timed and dated. Once complete, this form must be sent to the Head Teacher and the Head Teacher should also be informed verbally of the concern.

Details of concern

Name of Member of Staff:

Department and Role:

Signed:

Date:

Received by

Date:

Action taken (include dates/ times and reasons for actions/ decisions)

Signed:

Date:

This record will be held securely in accordance with WMAT's Low Level Concern Policy (see Appendix C of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

Please note that low-level concerns will be treated in confidence as far as possible, but WMAT may in certain circumstances be subject to legal reporting requirements or other legal obligations to share information with appropriate persons, including legal claims and formal investigations.

Appendix D: Procedure for Managing Allegations

Inappropriate behaviour by staff/volunteers could take the following forms:

- **Physical**

For example, the intentional use of force as a punishment, slapping, use of objects to hit with, throwing objects, or rough physical handling.

- **Emotional**

For example, intimidation, belittling, scapegoating, sarcasm, lack of respect for children's rights, and attitudes that discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, disability or sexuality.

- **Sexual**

For example, sexualised behaviour towards pupils, sexual harassment, inappropriate phone calls and texts, images via social media, sexual assault and rape.

- **Neglect**

For example, failing to act to protect children/young people, failing to seek medical attention or failure to carry out an appropriate risk assessment.

- **Spiritual Abuse**

For example, using undue influence or pressure to control individuals or ensure obedience, follow religious practices that are harmful such as beatings or starvation.

If a child makes an allegation about a member of staff, Trustee, school board member, visitor or volunteer, the Head Teacher must be informed immediately. The Head Teacher must carry out an urgent initial consideration in order to establish whether there is substance to the allegation. The Head Teacher should not carry out the investigation him/herself or interview pupils. However, they should ensure that all investigations including for supply/agency staff are completed appropriately.

The Head Teacher should exercise and be accountable for their professional judgement on the action to be taken as follows:

- If the actions of the member of staff, and the consequences of the actions, raise credible child protection concerns the Head Teacher will notify Birmingham Children's Trust Designated Officer (LADO) Team1 (Tel: 0121 675 1669). The LADO Team will liaise with the Head Teacher and advise about action to be taken and may initiate internal referrals within Birmingham Children's Trust to address the needs of children likely to have been affected.
- If the actions of the member of staff, and the consequences of the actions, do not raise credible child protection concerns, but do raise other issues in relation to the conduct of the member of staff or the pupil. These should be addressed through the relevant internal procedures under the disciplinary policy.
- If the Head Teacher decides that the allegation is without foundation and no further formal action is necessary, all those involved should be informed of this conclusion, and the reasons for the decision should be recorded on the child's safeguarding file. The allegation should be removed from personnel records.

Where an allegation has been made against the Head Teacher, then the CEO takes on the role of liaising with the LADO Team in determining the appropriate way forward. For details of this specific procedure see the Section on Allegations against Staff and Volunteers in the West Midlands Child protection procedures.

Where an allegation has been made a School Board member, then the Chair of Trustees takes on the role of liaising with the LADO Team in determining the appropriate way forward.

Where the allegation is against a Trustee, the referral should be made to the LADO Team directly.

For details of this specific procedure see the Section on Allegations against Staff and Volunteers in the West Midlands Child protection procedures.