Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Guidelines 2024-25
NETHERHALL MEAD

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy is effective for all schools within The Mead Educational Trust, the Teaching School, the SCITT and all other activities under the control of the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board.

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Revision History:

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes:
1.0	25.02.2016	Ali Rutherford/Jo Freer	Updated to reflect conversion to academy status.
2.0	15.03.2016	CJO	Removed Whistleblowing Policy from appendices.
3.0	15.06.2016	ARU	Annual update of policy Insertion of NSPCC telephone number. Addition of 'Peer to Peer Abuse' text. Additional detail regarding additional barriers that exist when recognising the abuse of pupils with SEND.
4.0	04.10.2016	ARU	Addition of 'Sexting' or youth produced sexual imagery guidance.
5.0	13.10.2016	M Collins	Aligned with most recent updates from LA, including Early Help, Channel and Prevent.
6.0	September 2017	A Rutherford and M Collins	Addition of information relating to sexting, domestic violence (teen relationships), honour-based violence, abuse linked to faith, bullying and safeguarding and private fostering.
7.0	September 2018	M Collins	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 3rd September 2018
8.0	September 2019	M Collins	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 2nd September 2019
9.0	March 2020	M Oldman	Additional Appendix added to address the COVID 19 pandemic and revised guidance from the government.
10.0	September 2020	M Collins	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 1st September 2020
11.0	October 2020	M Collins	Additional Appendix added to address heightened risk of radicalisation during COVID 19 pandemic.
12.0	January 2021	M Oldman A Curran	Updated Appendix 6 to address new National Lockdown in place from 4th January 2021 Amendments made following EU exit – update KCSIE January 2021
13.0	September 2021	M Collins	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 1st September 2021 Removed appendix 6 relating to national lockdown procedures and replaced with appendix 6- Guidance on child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment and enhanced appendix 3 to include low level concerns
14.0	September 2022	A Curran	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 1st September 2022 Appendix 6 rewritten based on the Sexual Harassment Between Young People example policy created by the LA (Lesley Booth, Service Manager) Appendix 3 rewritten based on the Low-Level Concern policy created by the LA (Mohammed Patel and Julie Chapaneri)
15.0	September 2023	A Curran	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 1st September 2023
16.0	September 2024	A Curran	Amendments made in line with KCSIE 2024

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1. Introduction

Netherhall Academy caters for approximately 130 children and young people aged 4-19 with learning difficulties ranging from severe to profound and multiple. Along with their learning difficulties, many of our pupils have additional needs relating to; speech and language, communication, social interaction and mobility.

Extensive research by the NSPCC indicates that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are at significantly greater risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect than non-SEND children. Children at greatest risk of abuse are those with behaviour/conduct disorders. Other high-risk groups include children with learning difficulties/disabilities, children with speech and language difficulties, children with health-related conditions and deaf children. Disabled children in residential care face particular risks.

It is vital that all stakeholders are fully aware of the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND. The following are key factors for us to consider:

- Because of the difficulties our pupils have with their learning, the ways in which we support pupils to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help if they need it, requires very careful thought and planning.
- A significant number of our pupils require support with personal care that require staff to employ moving and handling techniques, for which they have been trained. These techniques will often involve very close physical contact with pupils, including dressing/undressing. Staff are trained to ensure they communicate clearly with pupils at these times and to keep dignity and respect for the pupil at the forefront of their practice. This is vital to safeguard both the pupil and staff.
- For 60% of our pupils, English is their second language. In addition to English, there are a further 18 'first' languages spoken by our pupils and their families. This can create additional barriers to understanding.
- Pupils and their families have a wide range of cultural and religious values and beliefs that require understanding and sensitivity.
- Ensuring all staff working with pupils understand that the vast majority are working at cognitive levels significantly below their chronological age and because of this may exhibit behaviours that appear inappropriate for a young person of that age.

We recognise this combination of factors requires us to consider our approach to safeguarding in a way that may differ from colleagues in some other types of educational setting. Having said this, of course, we are entirely committed to creating a culture of vigilance and a school environment that keeps children safe.

The rest of this policy is based on the template recommended for use by the local authority, adapted where appropriate, to meet the specific requirements of pupils, staff and other stakeholders at Netherhall Academy.

The Mead Educational Trust (TMET) fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility.

To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the best interests of the child and young person**.**

We endeavour to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare, take into consideration the child's lived experience and prevent concerns from escalating.

The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. This policy sets out how the school, the Trust and the Trust Board discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare of children is defined as:
- 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 are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined in Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk) as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. TMET is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. We believe that:
- All children/young people have the right to be protected from harm;
- Children/young people need to be safe and to feel safe in school;
- Children/young people need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse;
- All children/young people have the right to speak freely and voice their values and beliefs;
- All children/young people must be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other;
- All children/young people have the right to be supported to meet their emotional, and social needs as well as their educational needs – a happy healthy sociable child/young person will achieve better educationally;
- Schools contribute to the prevention of abuse, victimisation, bullying, exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and risk-taking behaviours;
- All staff and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding children and protecting them from abuse.

TMET will fulfil local and national responsibilities and accepted best practice as laid out in the following documents:
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE Sept 2024)
- What To Do If You Are Worried a Child Is Being Abused (March 2015)
- Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 & Amended Regulations 2015
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2022 (Safer Recruitment consortium)
- Prevent Duty (guidance updated in 2023)
- Information sharing: Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people parents and carers (March 2015)
- Leicester Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (LSCPB)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Education Act 2002 s175/s157
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Position of Trust offence)
- Voyeurism (Offences Act) 2019
- Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement)

(Amendment) Regulations 2018
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Female Genital mutilation Act 2003/Updated regulations July 2020
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Safeguarding and Vulnerable Group Act 2006
- Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes (updated March 2024) – UK Council for Internet Safety
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school Revised July 2022

The Trust Board takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our schools to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

We recognise that all staff (including apprentices), trustees and academy councillors have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

All staff believe that our schools should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

2. Overall aims
To contribute to safeguarding our pupils and promoting their welfare by:
- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge and protect them from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online;
- Supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and resilience;
- Providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties;
- Raising the awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse;
- Ensuring staff identify concerns early, providing help for children to try and prevent concerns from escalating;
- Providing a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we contribute to assessments of need and support plans, including for children persistently absent or missing from education;
- Acknowledging the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils;
- Developing a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse;
- Developing effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children including Early Help and intervention;
- Developing effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children, including appropriate work within the curriculum;
- Ensuring that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability. This includes other community users of our facilities.

3. Key Processes
Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. Our procedures for safeguarding children are in line with the Leicester City Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (LSCPB), Multi Agency Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedures (Procedures (proceduresonline.com)) in addition to the documents listed in section 1 of this policy.

4. **Expectations**

All staff (including apprentices) and visitors will be familiar with this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy:

- Staff will have read and understood our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; which will also form part of their induction;
- Staff working in our schools will be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks;
- Visitors and providers such as cleaners and caterers will be made aware of the school's procedures for reporting concerns about a child;
- Staff will be alert to the definitions and indicators of possible abuse (See Appendix 1);
- Staff understand that 'harm' can include 'witnessing harm to others,' for example, cases of domestic abuse;
- Staff and visitors will deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child in line with the individual school procedures, informing the DSL immediately and providing a written account as soon as possible.

All parents will be familiar with this safeguarding policy:

Parents/Carers will have access to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy through the school website. Parents and carers have a responsibility to inform the school if a child in their care is a young carer. We understand the stigma for some parents/carers in raising this, however we are an inclusive Trust and every effort will be made to support the child and family.

The following statement is highlighted to parents on the school websites so that they are aware of the school's responsibilities:

Our school ensures children learn in a safe, caring and enriching environment. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, on and offline, to develop positive and healthy relationships and how to avoid situations where they might be at risk, including by being exploited.

Our school has a statutory responsibility *to share any concerns it might have about a child in need of protection with other agencies and in particular police, health and children's services. Schools are not able to investigate concerns but have a legal duty to refer them. In most instances, the school will be able to inform the parents/carers of its need to make a referral. However, sometimes the school is advised by Children's Social Care or the police that the parents/carers cannot be informed whilst they investigate the matter. We understand the anxiety parents/carers understandably feel when they are not told about any concerns from the outset. The school follows legislation that aims to act in the best interests of the child.*

5. **Use of school premises for non-school activities**

Where the Trust hires or rents out school premises to organisations or individuals, e.g. community groups or Sports providers, we will always undertake due diligence to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

When services or activities are provided under the direct supervision or management of their school staff, their arrangements for child protection will apply. However, where services or activities are provided separately by another body this is not necessarily the case. The Trust will therefore seek assurance in writing that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the school or college on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll.

At TMET, where school lettings are managed by a 3rd party, the Trust undertakes quality assurance sampling of safeguarding policies and documentation.

6. **Procedures**

The Mead Educational Trust will ensure that:
- The governing body (Trust Board) understands and fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities.
- The governing body (Trust Board) will all undergo the vetting checks as outlined in part three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

Each School within TMET will ensure that:
- The Academy Council understands and fulfils its designated safeguarding responsibilities.
- We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead and a least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection and safeguarding, who have undertaken approved DSL training, which will be refreshed every two years.
- All members of staff receive safeguarding training at least annually to develop their understanding of child protection and safeguarding, in particular the signs and indicators of abuse.
- All members of staff, volunteers, and academy councillors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse, and the procedure to be followed in appropriately sharing a concern of possible abuse or a disclosure of abuse.
- All parents/carers are made aware of the school's responsibilities regarding child protection procedures through publication of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy on the school website.
- We adhere to the Safer Recruitment practices outlined in part three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. The school will ensure all appropriate checks are carried out for all staff, volunteers and will consider including online searches as part of due diligence. Appropriate checks will be recorded on the Single Central Record which will be audited annually by the Trust and then termly by the school DSL. The school will ensure at least one person who is safer recruitment trained will be part of the recruitment process. *See also the TMET Recruitment and Selection Policy.*
- The name of any member of staff considered not suitable to work with children will be notified to either the Disclosure and Barring Service or the relevant Government Department/Agency (where appropriate), depending on the nature of the concern, with the advice and support of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- A member of our SLT has attended LADO training (Managing allegations against staff members). Our school understands the harms threshold and procedure for managing allegations and low-level concerns as set out in KCSIE 2024 (see Appendix 3).
- Our procedures will be reviewed and updated at least annually.
- The name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will be clearly shown in the school with procedures for reporting concerns
- At induction there is an explanation of our safeguarding systems, including:
    - ✓ Our safeguarding and child protection policy, which includes the role and identity of our DSL and any deputies; procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse and procedures for managing allegations against staff.
    - ✓ The expectation to read KCSIE 2024 part 1 and Annex B
    - ✓ Our behaviour policy
    - ✓ Our staff Code of Conduct and whistleblowing policies
    - ✓ The attendance policy, which includes the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education or who are regularly absent.
    - ✓ Child protection training, including online safety, which includes an understanding of their role in relation to filtering and monitoring.

7. Responsibilities

All our staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, neglected, exploited and/or they may not even recognise their experiences as harmful. Our staff act as the 'eyes and ears' for our children and young people, meaning it is their responsibility to recognise signs and indicators of abuse and respond accordingly, rather than waiting for the child to disclose. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability sexual orientation or language barriers. This will not deter our staff from maintaining professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL(s) if they have concerns about a child. Our staff will also determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

We understand that our responsibility to safeguard children requires that we all appropriately share any concerns as soon as a staff member or volunteer suspects/knows of a concern that we may have about children. The first point of contact is the school's DSL or deputy DSL. If any staff member is involved the report is made to the Principal, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the Principal is involved, then the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or another member of the TMET Executive team, should be informed.

If a staff member feels they cannot disclose information to their DSL, Principal, the CEO or a member of the TMET Executive team, they must then follow the whistleblowing procedures to report their concerns. See TMET Whistleblowing Policy for further clarification.

All staff will be well versed in the school's procedures for children missing or persistently absent from education and know and understand that any child that is regularly absent or missing can be a cause for concern and a possible indicator that the child is at risk of abuse or in need of help and support. *See also the school's Attendance Policy for details of our Child absence / missing from education procedures.*

8. Leadership of Safeguarding – Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Role and Responsibilities:
Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024, Annex C, outlines specific responsibilities of the DSL (a member of the school's Leadership Team) and their responsibilities within this role. Our lead DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). We also have a number of Deputy Designated Leads who are trained to the same standard and can provide the same level of support. Their key areas of responsibilities include:

Managing referrals:
- Cases of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation are referred to children's social care/police.
- Staff who make referrals to the local authority are supported.
- The Channel programme is used where there is a radicalisation concern, and staff are supported with this.
- Cases in relation to allegations against staff members are referred to the LADO, including disclosure and barring (please note that allegations are reported to the Principal in the first instance.)
- Cases where any crime may have been committed are reported to the Police

Working with Others:
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.
- Act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners.
- Liaise with the Principal to inform them of issues - especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult.

- As required, liaise with the 'case manager' (as per KCSIE part four) and the Local Authority Designated Officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member.
- Liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.
- Promote supportive engagement with parents/carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff and liaise with them on matters of safety and safeguarding.
- Work with the Principal and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college. This includes:
  - Ensuring that the school knows who its cohort of children who have (or have had) a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; and,
  - Supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

Training, Knowledge and Skills
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, and social care referral arrangements.
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference/review conference and attend to these effectively.
- Understand the importance that the DSL(s) has/have in providing information and support to children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes.
- Are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers.
- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
- Understand and support the school or college staff with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
- Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or college.
- Recognise additional risks that children with (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

In addition to the formal training set out above, our DSL(s) knowledge and skills are refreshed at regular intervals to allow them to understand and keep up to date with any developments relevant to their role.

Raising Awareness:
- Ensure the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff members.

- Ensure the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is reviewed annually and is available publicly; and parents know that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made.
- Link with the local safeguarding partners to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.

Information holding / sharing and managing child protection files:
Our DSL(s) are responsible for ensuring that our child protection files are kept up to date. The information is kept confidentially and stored securely. Our records will contain the following information:
- A clear, detailed and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken and decisions reached, including a rationale for those decisions, and the outcome. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such as social care or the Prevent programme.

Our DSL(s) will ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or its contents are shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice outlined government guidance KCSIE 2023. Child protection files will be transferred to a new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. Our DSL(s) will ensure secure transit and confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

Our DSLs are equipped to understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) and how to comply.

Understanding the views of children:
It is important that children feel heard and understood. Therefore, our DSL(s) will be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.
- Understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

Availability:
During term time school hours, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) will always be available on school site. The school will arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities and trips, and in exceptional circumstances, availability will be made via phone and/or video call.

The Principal – Roles and Responsibilities:
Each School's Principal will work with the DSL to ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Trust Board are fully implemented and followed by all staff, ensuring that:
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and other relevant Policies are updated regularly, ratified by the Trust Board and are available publicly via the school website;
- All staff undergo and attend annual whole school safeguarding training;
- All staff undergo appropriate online safety training;
- All staff receive regular updates in relation to safeguarding, child protection and online safety;
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable DSLs and other staff to discharge their responsibilities; including taking part in inter-agency meetings and contributing to the assessment of children;
- They are aware of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) processes regarding allegations about other staff members, specifically the 'harms' and 'low-level concerns' thresholds and have attended training with the last three years;

- Safer recruitment training is up to date and applied to recruitment within their school;
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children and processes, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner (whole school approach, child centred practice and culture of vigilance);
- All staff are made aware that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns, promptly and using the proper channels;
- The DSLs undergo enhanced Safeguarding and Child protection training to equip them for their roles.
- All staff are made aware of their right to whistleblow and are aware of the TMET Whistleblowing policy.

The Trust Board (Governing Body) – Roles and Responsibilities:

The Mead Educational Trust board has a strategic leadership responsibility for our school's safeguarding arrangements and comply with their duties under legislation. Our Trust board ensures policies, procedures and training in each TMET school are effective and comply with the law at all times. The Safeguarding Trustee, Dave Riddick, champions issues to do with safeguarding and child protection across the Trust and provides information and reports to the Trust Board.

The Trust will ensure all our Academy Councillors and Trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. The training will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in our school / colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. This training will be regularly updated.

The Trust Board will ensure that:
- Each TMET school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in place, and the policy is made available to parents via the school website (paper copies available on request);
- All staff members working with children consider the best interests of children and are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned;
- There are clear and easily understood systems for children to confidently report abuse, and they know that their concerns will be taken seriously;
- There is a senior member of the school's leadership team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection (Lead DSL);
- There is at least one appointed deputy for child protection in each school, in the event of the unavailability of the DSL;
- The DSL and the appointed deputy(s) for child protection undertake the necessary training for designated senior persons, including a DSL refresher every two years;
- A Safeguarding Councillor is appointed. This is an individual member of the Academy Council who will champion issues to do with safeguarding children and child protection within the school, liaise with the DSL, and provide information and reports to the Academy Council, and that person is appropriately trained to discharge their responsibilities effectively;
- There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse relating to members of staff and volunteers (LADO) and that the thresholds for allegations against staff and volunteers are understood and reported by all staff members;
- The TMET Code of Conduct is up to date, maintained and adhered to by staff so as not to bring the school into disrepute.
- The Chief Executive Officer (or another member of the Trust Executive team) deals with any allegations of abuse made against the Principal or central TMET staff members, in liaison with the Local Authority Designated Officer (see Appendix 3).
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to the attention of the Trust Board are rectified.
- The school creates a culture of safe recruitment and, as part of that, adopts recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children (Part three: Safer Recruitment, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024).
- The annual Safeguarding Return is returned to the Local Authority.

9. Supporting Children

Some children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help for various reasons and their experiences of trauma and abuse can lead them to becoming more vulnerable or educationally disadvantaged. When receiving information from the Local Authority that a child has a social worker, our DSL(s) will use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interest of a child's safety and welfare. Our DSL(s), where appropriate, will share information accordingly with relevant partner agencies to safeguard and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of any child. In addition to this:

- We recognise that a child who is abused, who witnesses violence or who lives in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame him/herself, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal, too aggressive or being withdrawn.
- We recognise the need to identify children in need of extra mental health support and to provide, resource or refer children to access that support.

Each School within The Mead Educational Trust will support all children by:

- Ensuring that effective systems are in place for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously and they can safely express their views. These systems will be promoted and easy to understand;
- Encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of school life including through the curriculum;
- Identifying children who need extra mental health support, which includes working with external agencies;
- Identifying children who are, or may be, Young Carers, and provide support and signposting;
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school;
- Ensuring children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and know how to get help when they need it;
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children (including Social care and Early Help);
- Notifying Children's Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern;
- Ensuring that a named teacher is designated for Looked After Children and that an up-to-date list of vulnerable children is regularly reviewed and monitored;
- Providing continuing support to a student (about whom there have been concerns) who leaves the school by ensuring that such concerns and school medical records are forwarded confidentially to the Headteacher and Leads DSL at the pupil's new school as a matter of urgency;
- Working with partner agencies to support and safeguard children within Early Help; Children in Need; Child Protection and Looked After Children;
- Ensuring that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. This will be a part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We recognise that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation; children with SEND; and deaf or disabled children and young people. Aspects include:
  - ✓ stereotyping, prejudice and equality
  - ✓ 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 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support
- ✓ what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

10. Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential and the best interest of a child should be always considered. However, The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. Our staff may share information without consent where this is good reason to do so, when the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner. *It would be legitimate to share information without consent where: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; and, if to gain consent would place a child at risk.*

The Principal or DSL will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only. Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the DSL feels their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual student/family. A written record will be made of what information has been shared, with whom, and when.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's own safety or well-being, or that of another child.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with their parents/carers consent unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Children' Advice, Support and Prevention teams (CASP) in Leicester City, or the First Response Children's Duty Team in Leicestershire, depending on where the child resides.

11. Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties and concerns with the DSL and to seek further support where necessary. This could be provided by, for example, the Principal, Vivup, Occupational Health, external services and/or a teacher/trade union representative as appropriate.

We understand that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour.
'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (February 2022) (www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org) provides advice on this and the circumstances which should be avoided, in order to limit complaints against staff of abuse of trust, and/or allegations of physical or sexual abuse.

We recognise that DSLs should have access to support and appropriate workshops, courses or meetings as organised or arranged through the Local Authority / LSCB and TMET.

12. Allegations Against Staff

All school staff (including supply staff) should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. They should be aware of the TMET Staff Code of Conduct as well as the safer working practices guidance referenced above.

All staff will receive online safety training as part of their annual safeguarding training and will be made aware of Acceptable Use of all IT systems, including digital communications with pupils, parents and carers.

Allegations against a school staff member should be reported to the Principal (or Vice Principal in their absence), allegations against the Principal should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (Sarah Ridley) or to a member of the Trust Executive Team. Concerns about Trust central staff should also be reported to the Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Ridley. Concerns about Sarah Ridley should be reported to the Chair of Trustees, Anthony Glover (chairoftrustees@tmet.uk).

When allegations against adults are received (including low level concerns), action will be taken immediately in line with the LSCPB procedures Leicester and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual (proceduresonline.com) and Appendix 3 of this policy. This includes allegations received relating to incidents that may happen when an individual or organisation was using our premises for the purposes of running activities for children.

In line with this policy and other school procedures for incident reporting/recording, staff and pupils may provide accounts of events, which will be stored under our own secure systems and may be produced in the event of any allegation. However, such accounts must not constitute an official statement and the reporting person must not be questioned over their disclosure at this stage.

13. Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should speak to the Chief Executive Officer or Local Authority Designated Officer. All staff are aware of our whistleblowing procedures found in the Whistleblowing Policy. All staff have access to the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline.

14. Our Role in the Prevention of Abuse

We recognise that each school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with effective lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:
- ✓ Establish and maintain an ethos, which is understood by all staff, which enables children to feel secure and encourages them to talk knowing that they will be listened to.
- ✓ Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being.
- ✓ Address relevant issues through the PSHE curriculum, for example self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, sex and relationships education, mental/physical health, online safety and bullying.
- ✓ Address other safeguarding issues through other areas of the curriculum, for example, circle time, English, History, Drama, Art and computing (including online and offline safety).

15. Safeguarding Children who are Vulnerable to Extremism

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy (and Revised Prevent Duty Guidance 2024 Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions both locally and nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Each School within The Mead Educational Trust values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both pupils and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people susceptible to future manipulation and exploitation. The Mead Educational Trust is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern. (see Appendix 5).

Each School within The Mead Educational Trust seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to religious ideologies, or to Far Right/Neo Nazi/White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist extremist and Animal Rights movements.

DSLs in TMET schools keep up to date with local and national radicalisation risks through Police Counter Terrorism Local Profile briefings. The 4 priorities for Leicestershire are AQ/IS (Islamic State) Inspired Terrorism; Extreme Right Wing Terrorism, Online Extremism and Self-Initiated Terrorists (S-Its).

Risk reduction: Working alongside the Local Authority and the Trust, the Principal and DSLs assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk, in accordance with our Prevent Risk Assessment. Risk management includes consideration of the school's RE curriculum, assembly approach, the use of school premises by external agencies, integration of pupils by gender and SEND, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

When any member of staff has concerns that a student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DSL in the first instance. Staff undergo Prevent Awareness Training on a regular basis and understand the Notice-Check-Share procedure. They understand the steps to follow, via discussions with the DSL, if a referral to the Channel Programme is required.

16. **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions

- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's Social Care team and the Police, if appropriate.

17. County Lines & Child Financial Abuse

Criminal exploitation of children is a widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. County Lines is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs.

Common feature in county lines drug supply is the exploitation of young and vulnerable people. The dealers will frequently target children and adults - often with mental health or addiction problems - to act as drug runners or move cash so they can stay under the radar of law enforcement. People exploited in this way will quite often be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some instances will be trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business.

An increasing number of children and young people are finding themselves the victims of financial exploitation, e.g., being groomed online to open bank accounts and launder criminal money. This is known as Child Financial Abuse (CFB). Criminals befriend young people through social media and online games. They offer them gifts, promise money, gaming credits, skins or cryptocurrency. Once they've gained a young person's trust, they force them to carry out fraudulent activities, like opening a bank account for them. This is financial exploitation.

18. Serious Violence, Gang Violence & Youth Crime

Sections 18 & 19 of this policy outline the school's responsibility in supporting children who are involved with gangs and knife crime. The Home Office have produced additional supporting guidance on Preventing and reducing serious violence: Serious Violence Duty - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

A gang is group of individuals that spends time in public and engages in criminal activity and violence. The group may also be territorial or in conflict with other gangs. Young people involved in gangs have an increased risk of experiencing violence and other types of abuse including sexual exploitation. Gang crime and serious youth violence is also often synonymous with knife crime and other serious violence.

Most young people and education establishments will not be affected by serious violence or gangs. However, where these problems do occur there will almost certainly be a significant impact. Gangs specifically target children who have been excluded from school to groom them as drug dealers in towns across the UK. Exclusion from school appears to be a highly significant trigger point for the escalation of County Lines involvement for children who might be on the fringes of such activity or who are easily manipulated.

TMET will ensure that any concern linked to serious violence will be dealt with swiftly and decisively in order to protect the children from future harm. We will ensure that children are taught about the dangers of gang violence in the curriculum and during targeted work where needed. We work alongside the local Violence Reduction Network to provide support and risk mitigation for our children.

19. Knife Crime

Knife crime has been receiving countrywide attention after being recognised as a contemporary national threat in the UK. There have been several high-profile incidents where teenagers have been killed or injured by someone using a knife as a weapon. Knife crime simply put is any crime that involves a knife. This includes:

- carrying a knife or trying to buy one if you're under 18
- threatening someone with a knife
- carrying a knife that is banned
- a murder where the victim was stabbed with a knife
- a robbery or burglary where the thieves carried a knife as a weapon
- Within Leicester, May 2019 saw 237 reported incidents involving a knife or bladed instrument which was an increase of 30 from the previous month

All TMET schools take such incidents very seriously and we will follow our school and government procedures in dealing with such incidents. Furthermore, where a crime is being committed, our duty of care will include contacting the Police. Our response will be supported by the local Violence Reduction Network, and we will incorporate peer mentoring opportunities into our preventative curriculum work.

20. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the   victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

In addition to the CCE indicators, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate. Our staff follow guidance and procedures as outlined in 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland' available on the LSCB website

(Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation (proceduresonline.com).

21. Modern Slavery

Slavery is an umbrella term for activities involved when one person obtains or holds another person in compelled service. The number of British children identified as potential victims of modern slavery has more than doubled in a year, prompting fresh concerns about child exploitation by county lines drugs gangs. Our staff are alert to the signs listed below and will report concerns to the DSL.

Someone is in slavery if they are:
- forced to work through mental or physical threat
- owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse
- dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'
- physically constrained or have restrictions placed on his/her freedom
- 'slavery' is where ownership is exercised over a person
- 'servitude' involves the obligation to provide services imposed by coercion
- 'forced or compulsory labour' involves work or service extracted from any person under the menace of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself voluntarily
- 'human trafficking' concerns arranging or facilitating the travel of another with a view to exploiting them.

22. Human trafficking

This relates to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion; of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability; or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person (where a child is involved, the above means are irrelevant). For the purposes of exploitation, this includes (but is not exhaustive):
- Prostitution
- Other sexual exploitation
- Forced labour
- Slavery (or similar)
- Servitude etc.
- Removal of organs

23. Child on Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online and can occur simultaneously between the two.
Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are there no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

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

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- 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)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow our normal procedures for reporting a safeguarding concern. TMET schools take allegations of child-on-child abuse seriously and will ensure the allocation of appropriate support and consequences.

24. **Child on Child Sexual Violence and Harassment, including children using Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**
Please see Appendix 6 of this policy.

25. **Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes (formally Sexting)**
Sharing nudes or semi/nudes is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video, or use of live stream. Research from Childline suggests that six out of ten teenagers say that they have been asked for sexual images or videos. It is illegal to possess, take or distribute sexual images of someone under 18, even if the young person has taken the image and passed it on themselves. TMET schools will use the 'Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes' guidance to ensure that cases are appropriately dealt with, and will communicate with the police, social care and the parents of children involved.
[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (ineqe.com)](#)

Children in TMET schools are taught how to keep themselves safe online and offline, and our PSHE curriculum ensures that the dangers of grooming and CSE are shared with pupils appropriately.

Staff in our schools are alert to the fact that sharing nudes and semi nudes can also form part of CSE, both online and offline. Section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 (offence of Sexual Communication with a Child) which came into force in April 2017 also applies to sexting, sharing nudes and semi nudes.

26. **Children and the court system**
Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age-appropriate guides to support children 5-11 year olds and 12-17 year olds:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-12-to-17-year-olds
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-5-to-11-year-olds

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/ with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers. If a child or young person from our school is in a situation where they are required to give evidence; school staff members will support the child and family members where appropriate.

27. **Children with family members in prison**
The imprisonment of a household member is one of ten adverse childhood experiences known to have a significant negative impact on children's long-term health and wellbeing, their attainment, and later life experiences. Our staff will support children and their family members if children from our school have family members in prison. In such cases, staff will remain non-judgemental and supportive towards the child and family so that they can achieve the best whilst in our environment. Furthermore, if a parent of carer finds themselves in this situation, we encourage them to speak with our DSL so that support can be given as necessary.

28. **Homelessness**
Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Our DSLs are aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest

opportunity if our children and family are experiencing homelessness. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

Whilst referrals and or discussion with the Local Housing Authority will be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

All TMET schools promote Early Help and support so that children and families can be identified and supported at an early stage. If a parent or carer and/or their children find themselves in this situation, we strongly urge them to speak to our DSL or member of school staff so that support can be provided.

29. Young Carers
Definition: "You're a young carer if you're under 18 and help to look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. If you're a young carer, you probably look after one of your parents or care for a brother or sister. You may do extra jobs in and around the home, such as cooking, cleaning, or helping someone get dressed and move around. You may also give a lot of physical help to a brother or sister who's disabled or ill. Along with doing things to help your brother or sister, you may be giving them and your parents emotional support, too."

Our school understands the difficulties that young carers face when supporting family members which can range from not completing homework, arriving to school late or not having enough sleep as examples. We are not here to judge, but rather to support the needs and wellbeing of the young person where necessary: our DSLs will support the young person in ensuring relevant support and guidance is given. Where possible, parents and carers should make the schools/college aware if a child they live with is a young carer to ensure relevant support is received as soon as possible.

30. Domestic Violence and Abuse & Violence between young people (Teen relationships)
The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:
- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

There have been several high profiles cases both locally and nationally where domestic violence and abuse has had a significant and direct impact on the child and their wellbeing. If the school is made aware of incidents of domestic violence which are impacting on a child within the school, (suspicions and allegations of abuse, harm and significant risk to a child), the school will follow Local Authority and Leicester Safeguarding Board guidelines in reporting such concerns. Reports will be made to Children's Advice, Support and Prevention teams (CASP) in Leicester City, or the First Response Children's Duty Team in Leicestershire, depending on where the child resides. Referrals to the Police will also be considered where necessary. The school will also utilise Operation Encompass (https://www.operationencompass.org/) as a conduit between school and the police.

Domestic abuse is not limited to adults; there is an increasing awareness of violence from one teenager to another:
- 1 in 5 teenage girls have been assaulted by a boyfriend
- Young women are more likely to experience sexual violence then other age groups
- Young women with older partners are at increased risk of victimisation

- Recent surveys (including NSPCC, Zero Tolerance and End Violence Against Women campaign) reveal that approximately 40% of our young people are already being subjected to relationship abuse in their teenage years

[New report shows scale of abuse against teenagers | NSPCCNew report shows scale of abuse against teenagers | NSPCC](#)

If our school is made aware of children behaving this way with other children within our school, and violence is apparent between the young people's intimate relationship; this includes issues around the use of social media and Sexting, we will view this as a significant child welfare concern and where necessary, the appropriate agencies will be informed. This includes Children's Social Care and the Police.

If such cases are prevalent within our school, whether the incident involves Adult Relationships or Teen Relationships, the school will also work closely with the child and the DSL will endeavour to support the child who has been exposed to this type of violence and abuse with the involvement of (where appropriate) their parents/carers and their boyfriend/girlfriend.

Furthermore, involvement through Operation Encompass and Early Help Offer can also support the child and parents/carers. The school will ensure communications and multiagency working with Social Care and Early Help is maintained to fully support the child and their family (victims). Staff will also work with all the children in our school to ensure information about the importance of healthy relationships is highlighted through assemblies and PSHE lessons.

31. Children Missing / Absent from Education & Unexplainable / Persistent Absence from Education

Children missing in education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. This includes children not being home educated and children who are not on school roll. In addition to CME, some children are persistently absent from education or have unexplainable absences.

Our school staff understand the differences between CME and persistently absent children and know the procedures to follow. Our staff are aware that children being absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. Our response to children's absences from school supports identifying such abuse, neglect and exploitation, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a missing child in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to the local authority.

Our response to absence is informed by LCC Educational Welfare Policy and LSCPB procedures for children who go missing from school / education. *See also our school's Attendance Policy which also outlines procedures for pupil absence.*

Should a pupil go missing from school, the DSL and/or Senior leader will be informed immediately, and contact will then be made with the Educational Welfare Service. The DSL will consider further actions and/or support should it be required and ensure they help identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

If a child is no longer coming to our school where the parent/carer has removed them for the reason of elective home education, we will ensure that we notify the LA in line with the established procedure. We will also follow procedures where a child is taken out of school to go on holiday or where a child is removed from school as the family are moving

away. We will notify all relevant partner agencies/services including Education Welfare, correct forms will be completed, information will be recorded, and child folders/information will be passed on to the appropriate person (where applicable).

32. Honour Based Abuse (HBA)

Honour-based Abuse is a term that embraces a variety of crimes of violence (mainly but not exclusively against women) including domestic abuse, which is perpetrated in the name of so called 'honour'. The honour code which it refers to is set at the discretion of relatives and those who do not abide by the 'rules' are then punished for bringing shame on the family. Infringements may include a woman having a boyfriend; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; interfaith relationships; seeking divorce, FGM, Forced marriage, abuse linked to faith and culture, breast ironing, inappropriate dress or make-up and even kissing in a public place.

HBA can exist in any culture or community where males are in position to establish and enforce women's conduct. However, males can also be victims, sometimes because of a relationship which is deemed to be inappropriate, if they are gay, have a disability or if they have assisted a victim.

33. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation is an illegal operation under the Female Mutilation Act 2003, it is a form of child abuse and as such, is dealt with under the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. Therefore, our staff have been briefed on the importance of FGM and are aware of some of the signs and symptoms.

Our school will ensure that:
- We raise awareness of staff regarding the issues of FGM through regular whole school training
- The Relationships and Sex education (RSE) curriculum supports pupils understanding of their bodies and keeping themselves safe.
- Absences are monitored carefully, keeping this risk in mind

It is a mandatory responsibility of staff members to report any suspicion of FGM to the police if the child is under 18 years of age. If any of our staff are aware of such concerns, staff will, in the first instance, report their concerns to the DSL and/or Headteacher and then take appropriate steps to either directly contact the Police or seek advice from children's social care.

34. Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage that is performed under duress and without the full and informed consent or free will of both parties. Duress cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds. Victims of forced marriage may be the subject of physical violence, rape, abduction, false imprisonment, enslavement, emotional abuse, and murder. It is important not to confuse 'forced' marriage with 'arranged' marriage. In the instance of an 'arranged' marriage both parties freely consent.

Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

Concerns around Forced Marriage / Honour Based Abuse will be reported directly to the DSL, who will make the necessary referrals, which can include the police, children's social care and the Forced Marriage Unit.

35. Abuse linked to faith, beliefs and culture

Child abuse is never acceptable in any community, in any culture, in any religion, under any circumstances. However, some children are subject to certain kinds of child abuse linked to their faith, belief or culture and this includes abuse that might arise through a belief in spirit possession or other spiritual or religious beliefs.

This kind of abuse can also include:
- Belief in concept of witchcraft, magic or voodoo
- Demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray
- The evil eye or djinns and dakini
- Ritual or muti murders
- Breast Ironing
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Honour based violence and Forced Marriage
- Chastisement of a child in a Place of Worship

Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, our school recognises that sadly, such cases are on the increase within the community and as a school, we take such incidents as seriously as any other kind of abuse perpetrated by an adult on a child. If the school has been made aware of such a case, the school will follow LSCPB procedures and where appropriate, report the incident to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

36. Mental Health

Our staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, exploitation or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood,   adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken and be reported to a DSL or deputy.

Netherhall Academy Mental Wellbeing Response

Mental wellbeing is considered to be central to our curriculum as shown in the diagram below:

We have an **Intent Statement for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)** that lays the foundations for our framework to support the Mental Wellbeing of pupils, staff & our wider community (see Appendix 7).

This framework details our Universal Support Level. We also provide a Targeted Support Level and an External Support Level, referral to each level is dependent on the identified needs of pupils.

How do we assess the needs of pupils?
- Progress Meetings: Class teachers discuss each pupil with their Senior Leader at frequent intervals throughout the year. Pupils that are struggling in any way are identified at this time, this can present as:
  - Less progression with targets than expected
  - Changes in behaviours
  - Increase in absence or illness
  - Reduction in engagement
  - Changes in friendship groups or desire to interact with others
  - Reduction in personal hygiene (in more independent pupils)
- Specific individual concerns can be raised at any time. Class staff add incidents to CPOMS to detail their concerns. Concerns are discussed with families to establish if they are seeing the same/similar concern at home. There may be changes at school or home that would help us to understand why we are seeing the concerns. Concerns would also be discussed with the Senior Leader.
- Concerns are discussed during Safeguarding Meetings to decide if there are any associated safeguarding elements that need addressing – this is a continual process.

What are our next steps to support pupil wellbeing?
- Senior Leaders will identify extra support that may be needed to help support the wellbeing of the pupil. This would be an internal referral to our **Targeted Support Level** and may include:
  - Asking our behaviour lead to observe and advise staff
  - Referral to our Play Therapist
  - Referral to our Music Specialist
  - Dedicated time in our Rebound Therapy room
  - Dedicated time in our Hydrotherapy pool
  - Time to co-regulate in our Regulation room
  - Talking therapy where appropriate with trained staff

How do we support pupils who need additional services to be involved?
- At this point our pupils need access to the **External Support Level**.
- A Joint Planning Meeting (JPM) is held termly and is attended by all Senior Leaders, Mental Health Lead, Communication Lead and the following outside agencies:
  - Education Psychology
  - LCI Team
  - SEMH Team
  - HI Team
  - VI Team
- Any pupils of concern are discussed and a referral route is planned to gain more support.
- Senior Leaders refer each pupil to the agreed professional for further support.

How do we evaluate the effectiveness of support?
- We constantly and consistently review the progress of pupils to establish the effectiveness of the support offered.
- Support can be changed, increased, reduced or withdrawn depending on how effective it is.

How will we know the support is working?
- The number of incidents of concern will reduce
- Behaviours that challenge will reduce or be more effectively managed
- Expected progress towards targets will be seen
- Attendance will improve
- Pupil will present more regulated and engaged
- Personal hygiene (for independent pupils) will improve

37. Early Help and Supporting Children and their Families

Early Help and prevention is about how different agencies work together to help children, young people and their families at any point in their lives to prevent or reduce difficulties. This means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. At our school, key staff members and DSLs can identify any children who may benefit from Early Help. Further information about Early Help is on the academy website: https://www.netherhall.leicester.sch.uk/safeguarding/early-help-offer

38. Bullying and Safeguarding

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include:
- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, for example name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of their protected characteristics:
Discrimination: your rights: Types of discrimination ('protected characteristics') - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Bullying is defined as 'behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. Repeated bullying usually has a significant emotional component, where the anticipation and fear of being bullied seriously affects the behaviour of the victim.

It can be inflicted on a child by another child or an adult. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Our schools have a legal duty to ensure we have an Anti-Bullying Policy in place and that all staff, children and parents/carers are made aware of it. This document can be accessed on our school website and sets out clear procedures in managing such incidents within the school. We also deliver work in school about anti-bullying though assemblies and lessons and our staff are trained in appropriately dealing with such incidents.

At times, instances of bullying are also serious safeguarding concerns, especially if the child is at risk of significant harm. In such cases, our Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Principal will assess the situation and seek advice and guidance from Children's Social care or the Police, especially in relation to illegal activity.

39. Local Priorities

Within Leicester, the Local Authority and LSCB has have their own priorities which reflect the area in which our school is based. Some of these include being aware of Knife Crime, Gang Related Issues, Radicalisation, County Lines, Criminal Activity, Antisocial Behaviour, FGM and Contextual Safeguarding.

Priority/Awareness of

- Online Safety

At Netherhall Academy, pupils, just like their peers in other settings, are encouraged to use digital equipment in educational, creative, empowering and fun ways. However, Netherhall Academy pupils may be particularly vulnerable to online-safety risks due to their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). For example:

- Some pupils may not understand terminology used due to their severe or profound learning difficulties or their severe communication difficulties.
- Some pupils with SEND may be vulnerable to being bullied through the use of electronic communication, or not recognise that they are being bullied.
- Some pupils may unwittingly share information, pictures or videos with others thereby putting themselves at risk.
- Some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to grooming through online gaming and other online activities.
- In addition, some pupils may not appreciate how their own online behaviour may be seen by others as a problem, threat or even criminal.

- Contextual Safeguarding

Netherhall Academy staff, especially our designated safeguarding lead and deputies, will take into consideration whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including, but not limited to, sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

This is known as contextual safeguarding and assessment of risk outside the home, which simply means Netherhall Academy staff will take into consideration wider environmental factors that may be present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and or welfare.

Our SLT, DSLs and staff are aware of these priorities through their knowledge of our pupils and staff training. We aim to effectively tailor our curriculum provision to ensure that our children are well informed and learn how to keep themselves safe. We work closely with other agencies, including the police, community groups and social care.

40. Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made without the involvement of the local authority to look after a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, for 28 days or more and can include those living with extended family members. So, this could be a child living with people as stated below:

Private Fostering **includes** a child living with:	Private Fostering **does not include** a child living with:
Godparents	Mother/Father
Great Grandparents	Brothers/Sister
Great Aunts or Uncles	Grandparents
Family Friends	Aunts/Uncles

Stepparents where a couple isn't married or in a civil partnership	Stepparents where a couple is married or in a civil partnership
Cousins	Children and young people who are being looked after by the Authority.
A host family which is caring for a child from overseas while they are in education here	

It's a legal duty (Children Act 1989) for parents or the private foster carer to notify the local authority of whenever a child is not living with a close relative. This should be done six weeks before the arrangement takes place or immediately if it is unplanned or already happening. This is so the local authority can work with private foster carers to keep children safe and support anyone who is privately fostering.

Our staff are aware of what Private Fostering is and staff in our school understand their legal duty under the Children Act 1989 to notify the Local Authority/Children's Social Care, they are made aware of such cases. Our school understands the apprehension some carers may feel is raising such concerns and the difficulty that some carers may have if faced with this situation. As such, our staff will endeavour to support the cares and the child to ensure the wellbeing of the child is maintained and help and advice is made available.

41. Online safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school and college approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate pupils, pupils, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer 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, sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, pupils or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group https://apwg.org/

Our schools take online safety and well-being of staff and children seriously.   All our staff are given safeguarding training, including online safety at induction. This will include details of filtering and monitoring responsibilities.   In addition to this, all staff receive child protection, safeguarding and online safety updates via email, briefings and staff meetings at least annually to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Our school has a separate Online Safety Policy which can be accessed on our website.

We communicate regularly and support parents and carers with their child's education. In such communications, we will highlight the importance of their child's online safety in today's digital age. We will support parents/carers to teach their children about the potential risks of the internet and the importance of privacy; to set clear boundaries and guidelines for internet usage, regularly monitor their online activities and keep any passwords and credentials safe. We will support parents/carers to encourage open communication, so they feel comfortable sharing any concerns. We will highlight to parents the importance of utilising parental controls and safety tools to protect their child from harmful content online.

42. Monitoring and filtering

Monitoring and filtering play crucial roles in the responsible use of the internet. With the vast amount of information available online, these tools help ensure a safe and productive online environment. Monitoring involves tracking internet activities to prevent illegal or harmful content, protecting users from cyber threats, and enforcing compliance with policy and guidance. Filtering, on the other hand, enables the customisation of internet access, allowing schools and colleges to block inappropriate content and prioritise educational resources. Both monitoring and filtering are essential in schools, colleges, and homes to safely foster positive internet experience for all users. At TMET, we use Smoothwall for our monitoring and filtering.

It is the responsibility of our Lead DSL to ensure online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. Our Lead DSL will also ensure that staff receive appropriate training and understand the expectations, roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

In order to meet the duties set out in KCSIE 2024, Paragraph 140, our schools follow the Department for Education's filtering and monitoring standards where we will:

- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet our high safeguarding needs.

Our Trust Board, via our Safeguarding Trustee, will review the standards and discuss with IT staff, the Trust Safeguarding Lead and Service Provider (where required) what more needs to be done (if anything) to support us to meet the standard set out by the DfE.

43. Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded.
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area at our school/college, Our DSLs will consider referring into the 'Cyber Choices' programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Please note that 'Cyber Choices' does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety. Where such cases arise in our schools and a crime is possibly being committed, our school will follow our safeguarding procedures and contact the Police and relevant agencies where appropriate. Additional information can be found at Cyber Choices - National Crime Agency and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.

44. Remote Education

Keeping children and teachers safe during remote education is essential. Our teachers, when delivering remote education online, are aware the same principles set out the TMET Code of Conduct will apply. There are times where remote learning, virtual lessons, live streaming and recorded videos may be applied within our school and where children are asked to complete tasks and assignments independently. Where this is the case we will ensure our online education is safe for both teachers and children. When organising live lessons or recording lessons, we will endeavour to:

- use neutral or plain backgrounds.
- ensure appropriate privacy settings are in place.
- ensure staff understand and know how to set up and apply controls relating to pupil and student interactions, including microphones and cameras.
- set up lessons with password protection and ensure passwords are kept securely and not shared.
- ensure all staff, children, pupils, parents and carers have a clear understanding of expectations around behaviour and participation.

45. Alternative Provisions

Alternative Provision refers to educational settings outside mainstream and special schools for children who, for various reasons, cannot attend mainstream schooling. These reasons can include behavioural issues, exclusion, health problems, or specific educational needs that mainstream schools cannot meet. The pupils in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, it is therefore important that governing bodies and proprietors of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to. Alternative Provision aims to ensure that every child receives an education that meets their individual needs, supporting their personal and academic development and as such, staff in our school and the staff within the Alternative Provisions are aware of the government's statutory guidance in relation to Alternative Provision (2013).

If our school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of that pupil and will be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

46. Policy review

The Trust Board will review the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy annually.

47. Other Relevant Policies

- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- The Mead Educational Trust Staff Code of Conduct
- Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct
- IT Acceptable use agreements
- Physical Intervention
- SEND
- Supporting Pupils with medical conditions and administration of medicine policy
- Health and safety
- Online safety
- Recruitment and Selection
- Whistleblowing
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation

The above list is not exhaustive and when undertaking development or planning of any kind, The Mead Educational Trust and its Trust Board will consider the best interest of our children and any implications for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

APPENDIX 1 - DEFINITION AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

Abuse, as outlined in KCSIE 2024, 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. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

1. 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, e.g., because 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. The following may be indicators of neglect (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Constant hunger;
- Fabricated or Induced Illnesses;
- Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food;
- Frequent tiredness or listlessness;
- Frequently dirty or unkempt;
- Often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather;
- Poor school attendance or often late for school;
- Poor concentration;
- Affection or attention seeking behaviour;
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated;
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight;
- Failure to develop intellectually or socially;
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings;
- The child is regularly not collected or received from school;
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.

Neglect is a priority for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland LSCPB. Neglect has been identified as a feature in national & local Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), local learning reviews and multi-agency audits. Our local LSCB have developed a *Neglect Toolkit* to support practitioners identify neglect earlier in families:
LSCPB | Neglect (lcitylscb.org)

2. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse 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.

The following may be indicators of physical abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape;
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt;
- Bite marks;
- Round burn marks;
- Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks;
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given;
- Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred;
- Bald patches;
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning;
- Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather;
- Fabricated or Induced Illnesses
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted;
- Fear of medical help;
- Fear of changing for PE;
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance;
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- Isolation from peers.

3. SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit act of sexual abuse, as can other children.

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge;
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching;
- Reluctance to go home;
- Inability to concentrate, tiredness;

- Refusal to communicate;
- Thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains;
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia;
- Attention seeking behaviour, self-mutilation, substance abuse;
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation;
- Unusual compliance;
- Regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling;
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately;
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group;
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming; or
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.

4. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Child sexual exploitation occurs when a child or young person, or another person, receives "something" (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) because of the child/young person performing sexual activities, or another person performing sexual activities on the child/young person. Sexual Exploitation can also include Grooming and online activity.

The presence of any significant indicator for sexual exploitation should trigger a referral to children's social care. The significant indicators are: (not an exhaustive list)

- Having a relationship of concern with a controlling adult or young person (this may involve physical and/or emotional abuse and/or gang activity);
- Entering and/or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;
- Possessing unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothes or other items;
- Frequenting areas known for risky activities;
- Being groomed or abused via the Internet and mobile technology; and
- Having unexplained contact with hotels, taxi companies or fast-food outlets.

5. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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

- The child consistently describes him/herself in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly;
- Over-reaction to mistakes;
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development;
- Sudden speech or sensory disorders;
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies;
- Neurotic behaviour: rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches;
- Self-harming, drug or solvent abuse;
- Fear of parents being contacted;
- Running away;
- Compulsive stealing;
- Appetite disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.

N.B. Some situations where children stop communication suddenly (known as "traumatic mutism") can indicate maltreatment

6. SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE

Sexual violence
It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is consent? Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g.to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
- Non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
- Sexualised online bullying;
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

7. RESPONSES FROM PARENTS

The following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all four categories:

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed;
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb);
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development;
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries;
- Frequent presentation of minor injuries;
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child;
- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child;
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse;
- Severe chastisement of a child including withholding food and using food as a form of punishment;
- Parents request removal of the child from home; or
- Violence between adults in the household.

8. CHILDREN with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

Our school is an inclusive school and welcomes all pupils, including those with special needs and disabilities, as well as deaf and disabled children and young people, whenever possible and appropriate. We believe in providing every possible opportunity to enable our pupils to develop their full potential whilst promoting their self-esteem and valuing their individuality.

Some children have barriers to learning that mean they have special needs and require particular action by the school. Our teachers take account of these requirements and make provision, where necessary, to support individuals or groups of children and thus enable them to participate effectively in curriculum and assessment activities.

Key issues for safeguarding children with disabilities include:

- Social isolation
- Reliance on others for personal care
- Impaired capacity to resist or report abusive behaviour
- Reduced access to someone to tell
- Especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation
- More frequently away from home, e.g., in hospital, respite care or residential living

Our teachers have attended appropriate training as part of their continuing professional development and understand the vulnerability of SEND children, understanding they may be at higher risk of abuse or neglect.

Some indicators concerns could include:

- A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on an ambulant child, such as the shin, might be of concern on a non-mobile child.
- Not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment
- Poor toileting arrangements
- Lack of stimulation
- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification e.g., deprivation of liquid, medication, food or clothing
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication.
- Ill-fitting equipment e.g., callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting; misappropriation of a child's finances
- Invasive procedures which are unnecessary or are carried out against the child's will.
- A lack of knowledge about the impact of disability on the child
- A lack of knowledge about the child, e.g., not knowing the child's usual behaviour
- Not being able to understand the child's method of communication.
- Confusing behaviours that may indicate the child is being abused with those associated with the child's disability.
- Denial of the child's sexuality
- Behaviour, including sexually harmful behaviour or self-injury may be indicative of abuse.
- Being aware that certain health/medical complications may influence the way symptoms present or are interpreted.

As a school for children and young people with SEND, we will ensure we:

- Provide starting points for the development of an appropriate curriculum.
- Identify and focus attention on action to support the child within the class.
- Use the assessment processes to identify any learning difficulties.
- Ensure ongoing observation and assessments provide regular feedback about the child's achievements and experiences to form the basis for planning the next steps of the child's learning.

- Help disabled children make their wishes and feelings known in respect of their care and treatment.
- Ensure that disabled children receive appropriate personal, health, and social education (including sex education).
- Ensure that all disabled children know how to raise concerns and give them access to a range of adults with whom they can communicate.
- Ensure that disabled children with communication impairments should always have available to them a means of being heard.
- Maintain close contact with families, and a culture of openness on the part of services;
- Provide guidelines and training for staff on good practice in intimate care; handling difficult behaviour; consent to treatment; anti-bullying strategies; and sexuality and sexual behaviour among young people.
- Use specialist service needs/multi-agency approach if as a school we feel additional, support resources and interventions are required.

APPENDIX 2 - PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IN CASES OF POSSIBLE, ALLEGED OR SUSPECTED ABUSE, OR SERIOUS CAUSE FOR CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

School staff are in a unique position to identify and help children who may be being abused. Child abuse usually comes to the attention of staff in one of four ways:

- a direct allegation from the child being abused;
- a third party (e.g., friend, classmate) report;
- through the child's behaviour;
- or through observation of an injury to the child.

When a child makes a disclosure, or when concerns are received from other sources, do not investigate, ask leading questions, examine children, or promise confidentiality. You may ask questions of a clarifying nature – such as 'who, what, where, when and how?' or use the acronym TED – 'Tell me, 'Explain it to me', Describe it to me.'

Remember, the way in which you talk to the child may influence any subsequent legal proceedings. You need to be open and non-judgemental. Children making disclosures should be reassured and, if possible, at this stage, should be informed what action will be taken next.

As soon as possible write a dated and timed note of what has been disclosed or noticed, said or done and report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). It is important to act swiftly to avoid delays.

As a general guide, it is important to remember the following:

SECRETS - A child's trust can place a heavy responsibility on teachers, particularly if they want the abuse to remain a secret. You should tell the child that if he or she is being hurt you will need to tell other people. The child may need to be reassured that you will only speak to those who need to know and that they will treat the matter confidentially.

LISTEN - Listen carefully to the child. Take what he or she says seriously as it is rare for a child to make entirely false allegations.

REASSURE - Reassure the child that he or she was right to tell and is not to blame for what happened, but do not promise confidentiality.

RECORD - As soon as possible after talking with the child, make a written record of what was said at the time, when and where the conversation took place and who was present. This must be accurate and not interpretation or assumption. Note any colloquial/slang words used by pupils and any language/behaviour inappropriate for the child's age – do not convert them into proper terms. Remember this may be used in any subsequent legal proceedings so note down too, how the child was behaving and the way in which they told you what was happening. This may indicate how the child was feeling.

For injuries in specific areas, record the location accurately – DO NOT take photographs or examine the child yourself.

SUPPORT - Get support for yourself. Listening to abused children can be very upsetting, and giving the child help may be difficult, if you are not given support yourself. Experience of working with children is not preparation for the distress abuse can raise.

REMEMBER - It takes courage and determination for a child to tell an adult that they are being, or have been, abused. When they do tell someone, it is usually a person who they feel they can trust and whom they feel is reliable. For reasons of confidentiality, only those people who need to know about the abuse should be told, and conversations about the child should always be held in private.

If the concern involves the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer, a visitor, a governor, a trainee or another young person or child, the Principal (or vice Principal in their absence) must be informed asap; if the concern is in relation to your Principal, you must speak to the Chair of the Academy Council. If you feel you cannot follow these lines of communication, you must use your whistleblowing procedure and contact Duty & Advice/LADO for advice and support (see Appendix 3).

NB It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

APPENDIX 3 – GUIDANCE ON MANAGING ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ADULTS, INCLUDING LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

As per KCSIE 2024, it is the responsibility of our school to ensure procedures are in place for dealing with concerns and/or allegations against those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges in a paid or unpaid capacity, including, members of staff, supply teachers, volunteers and contractors. Our procedures are consistent with local safeguarding procedures and practice guidance and KCSIE 2024.

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, sexual assault and rape.
- **Neglect**
  For example, failing to act to protect a child or children, failing to seek medical attention or failure to carry out an appropriate risk assessment.

KCSIE 2024 states that LADO procedures are categorised in to 2 main areas:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to as 'low level concerns'.

Section one: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This refers to allegations that might indicate a person will pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position.

We follow the procedure below where it is alleged that anyone working on the school, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:
- · **Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or**
- · **Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or**
- · **Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or**
- · **Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including outside of school)**

Allegations about a member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) should be reported to the Principal, or a member of the Senior Leadership team immediately. The Principal (or a senior leader) will then lead any investigation as the 'case manager.'

Schools may receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purpose of running activities for children. These allegations should be reported to the Principal who will follow the procedures outlined below.

Allegations about the Principal should be reported without delay to Sarah Ridley, the Chief Executive Officer, or another member of the TMET Executive Team (please see page 4 for contact details). They will then consult with Children's Social Care and the LADO as appropriate and follow the advice given.

Allegations concerning members of staff from the central team should also be reported to Sarah Ridley, the Chief Executive Officer, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Allegations concerning Sarah Ridley should be reported directly to Anthony Glover, Chair of the Trust Board (chairoftrustees@tmet.uk).

Allegations against adults can also be reported by following the procedures in our Whistleblowing Policy.

Initial response:

If a child has been harmed, or a child is at immediate risk of harm, or if the situation is an emergency, Children's Social Care and the police will be consulted as a matter of urgency.

There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:

I. **Looking after the welfare of the child**: the DSL (or a deputy) will act to make sure that the child is not at risk and refer cases of suspected abuse to Children's Social Care immediately;

II. **Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation:** the case manager will act quickly to establish basic facts and then discuss the allegation with the LADO and agree a course of action.

The case manager should determine if there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation, e.g.
- ✓ establish if the person was in the school at the time
- ✓ establish if they could have come into contact with the child
- ✓ find out if there are any witnesses or CCTV footage

As soon as these basic facts are established, the case manager will call the LADO. The LADO will be able to support school with when the individual should be informed of the allegation. A course of action will be agreed alongside Children's Social Care and the Police where appropriate, which may include:
- A strategy discussion where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm
- Making a risk assessment of the situation to ensure the safety of children

The Mead Educational Trust will ensure that the guidelines in KCSIE 2024 Part four are followed, including recording keeping and references.

For further information on the LADO process, visit LSCPB | Local Authority Designated Officer (L.A.D.O.) (lcitylscb.org)

Section Two: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (Low Level)

Our school understands the importance of acknowledging, recording and reporting **all** safeguarding concerns, regardless of their perceived severity. We understand that, while a concern may be low-level, that concern can escalate over time to become much more serious.

Our school prides itself on creating a safe and prosperous environment for pupils, and our staff are expected to adhere to high standards of behaviour when it comes to professional conduct regarding pupils. The school has clear professional boundaries which all staff are made aware of and will adhere to. We are committed to ensuring that any safeguarding concerns are dealt with as soon as they arise and before they have had a chance to become more severe, to minimise the risk of harm posed to our pupils and other children.

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children but is however inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Principal (or another member of the Senior Leadership Team) about their concern (see 'Reporting Concern' below).

A **low-level concern** is defined as any concern had about an adult's behaviour towards, or concerning, a child that does not meet the harms threshold outline above in Section one of this appendix or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral at the time of its reporting. Low-level concerns refer to behaviour on the part of a staff member towards pupils that is considered inappropriate in line with statutory safeguarding advice, the Staff Code of Conduct, and the 'Appropriate and Inappropriate' behaviour section below.

While low-level concerns are, by their nature, less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the school understands that many serious safeguarding concerns, e.g., child sexual abuse, often begin with low-level concerns, e.g., being overly friendly with children. The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of recognising concerns before they escalate from low-level to serious, wherever possible.

Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour

The school will ensure all staff members are aware of the standards of appropriate behaviour expected towards pupils (see Staff Code of Conduct). Staff will be aware where there is any doubt regarding whether the behaviour of another adult is appropriate, this should be reported to the Principal (or another member of SLT) immediately.

Inappropriate behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour to behaviour which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Examples of inappropriate behaviour that would constitute a low-level concern that should be reported:

- o **Being overly friendly with children** – this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with pupils, e.g., conversations that are about a staff member's personal life.
- o **Having favourites** – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment or buying pupils gifts.
- o **Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phones or devices**.
- o **Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door**.
- o **Using inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating or offensive language**.

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

Staff will also be made aware that behaviour which raises concerns may not be intentionally inappropriate, and that this does not negate the need to report the behaviour. Staff members who engage in low-level inappropriate behaviour in relation to pupils inadvertently will be made aware and supported to correct this behaviour in line with the Staff Code of Conduct. The Principal will also evaluate whether additional training would be beneficial for any staff members exhibiting concerning behaviour, or the whole staff where low-level concerning behaviour is seen more widely.

Reporting Concerns

Staff will report all safeguarding concerns they have to the Principal (or another member of the Senior Leadership Team)) immediately, in line with the procedures laid out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff members will be aware that concerns are still worth reporting even if they do not seem serious.

Staff members will report their concerns by submitting a Low-level Concern Reporting Form. When submitting concerns, staff will take care to ensure that they observe confidentiality procedures and protect the identity of all individuals to which the concern pertains as far as possible.

Staff members may request anonymity when reporting a concern, and the school will endeavour to respect this as far as possible. The school will not, however, promise anonymity to staff members who report concerns in case the situation arises where they must be named, e.g., where it is necessary for a fair disciplinary hearing. In line with the Whistleblowing Policy, staff will be protected from potential repercussions caused by reporting a genuine concern.

- Where a low-level concern relates to the Principal, it should be reported to Sarah Ridley, the Chief Executive Officer, or another member of the TMET Executive Team.
- Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor to work in the school, staff will also be required to report this to the Principal (or another member of the Senior Leadership Team) who will, in turn, inform the employer of the subject of the concern.
- Concerns about members of staff from the central team should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Ridley, or another member of the TMET Executive Team. Concerns about Sarah Ridley should be reported directly to Anthony Glover, Chair of the Trust Board (chairoftrustees@tmet.uk).
- All concerns will be documented in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

Self-Reporting
On occasion, a member of staff may feel as though they have acted in a way that could be misinterpreted or could appear compromising to others. They may realise, upon reflection, that their conduct falls below the standards set out in the Staff Code of Conduct or could be construed as 'inappropriate behaviour,' as noted above. The school will ensure that an environment is maintained that encourages staff members to self-report if they feel as though they have acted inappropriately or in a way that could be construed as inappropriate. The Principal, SLT and DSL(s) will, to the best of their abilities, maintain a culture of approachability for staff members, and will be understanding and sensitive towards those who self-report.

Staff members who self-report will not be treated more favourably during any resulting investigations than staff members who were reported by someone else; however, their self-awareness and intentions will be taken into consideration.

Evaluating Concerns
Where a leader is notified of a safeguarding concern, they will use their professional judgement to determine if the concern is low-level or if it must be immediately escalated, e.g., where a child is at immediate risk of harm. When deciding if a concern is low-level, the Principal/CEO may discuss the concern confidentially with a member of their Senior Leadership Team or the DSL and will seek advice from the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) where there is any doubt about how seriously to take the concern.

To evaluate a concern, the Leader (CEO/Principal/SLT/DSL) will:

- Speak to the individual who raised the concern to determine the facts and obtain any relevant additional information.
- Review the information and determine whether the behaviour displayed by the individual about whom the concern was reported is consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct and the law.
- Determine whether the concern, when considered alongside any other low-level concerns previously made about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation that may meet the harm threshold. In this case, they will seek advice from the LADO as noted above.
- Speak to the individual about whom the concern has been raised to inform them of the concern and to give them an opportunity to respond to it.
- Ensure that accurate and detailed records are kept of all internal and external conversations regarding evaluating the concern, and any actions or decisions taken.

Acting on Concerns

Where the concern is unfounded: If it is discovered upon evaluation that the low-level concern refers to behaviour that was not considered to be in breach of the Staff Code of Conduct, the Leader will speak to the individual about whom the concern was made to discuss their behaviour, why and how the behaviour may have been misconstrued, and what they can do to avoid such misunderstandings in the future. The Leader will also speak to the individual who shared the concern, outlining why the behaviour reported is consistent with school standards and the law. The Leader will take care to ensure that conversations with individuals who reported concerns that transpired to be unfounded do not deter that individual from reporting concerns in the future.

The Leader will discuss the concern confidentially with a member of the SLT/DSL team to discern whether the behaviour, and the reporting of this behaviour, is indicative of ambiguity in the school's policies or procedures, or the training it offers to staff. Where such ambiguity is found, the SLT/DSL team and Leader will work together to resolve this with input from other staff members, as necessary.

Where the concern is low-level, the following procedure will be followed:

- The Leader holds a meeting with the individual about whom the concern was reported, during which they will:
  - ✓ Talk to the individual in a non-accusatory and sympathetic manner.
  - ✓ Inform them of how their behaviour was perceived by the individual who reported the concern (without naming them, where possible).
  - ✓ Clearly state what about their behaviour was inappropriate and problematic.
  - ✓ Discuss the reasons for the behaviour with the individual.
  - ✓ Inform the individual clearly what about their behaviour needs to change.
  - ✓ Discuss any support that the individual may require to achieve the proper standards of behaviour.
  - ✓ Allow the individual the opportunity to respond to the concern in their own words.
  - ✓ Ask the individual to re-read the Staff Code of Conduct.

- The Principal will consider whether the individual should receive guidance, supervision or further training.
- Where considered appropriate in the circumstances, the Principal will develop an action plan, with input from the individual, which outlines ongoing and transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour and any other support measures implemented to ensure the staff member's behaviour improves.
- Where it is necessary to undergo an investigation into the behaviour, this will be done discreetly, and information will only be disclosed to individuals on a need-to-know basis.
- Where any pupil or other individual has been made to feel uncomfortable by the individual's behaviour, they will be offered pastoral support, where appropriate.

The Leader will ensure that all details of the low-level concern, including any resultant actions taken, are recorded, and securely stored using a secure spreadsheet.

The specific approach to handling low-level concerns will be adapted on a case-by-case basis. It is unlikely that a low-level concern will result in disciplinary procedures; however, the Disciplinary Policy may be applied where necessary. Where behaviour does not improve over a longer period, the concerns will be escalated and dealt with as an allegation.

Where the concern is serious

The Leader may decide upon evaluation that a concern is more serious than the reporter originally thought, e.g., when viewed in conjunction with other evidence or other concerns made about the same individual. Where this decision is

made, the concern will be escalated, and dealt with as an allegation.

Record keeping
The school will retain all records of low-level concerns. The Principal will ensure that all records include the most accurate and up-to-date information and will store them on a secure spreadsheet. 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.
- The name of the individual sharing concerns – if the individual wishes to remain anonymous, this will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Leaders will periodically review the recent low-level concerns made to ensure that they are being appropriately dealt with and to check for any concerning behaviour patterns amongst the staff cohort as a whole.

Records of low-level concerns will not be kept in the personnel file of the individuals to whom the concerns pertain, unless there have been multiple low-level concerns made about the same individual.

Where a concern is thought to be serious and is processed as an allegation, records of this will be kept in staff personnel files. Where multiple low-level concerns have been made about the same individual, these will be kept together, and in chronological order.

Where an allegation is made about an individual who has previously been subject to such allegations, or where a low-level concern is reclassified as a serious concern after meeting the harms threshold, all records of low-level concerns about that individual will be moved to the staff personnel file and kept alongside records of the allegation.

The Leader will ensure that all records are kept in a manner that is consistent with the Data Protection Policy. Records will be kept confidential and securely destroyed after the staff member to whom the concerns pertain has left the school. The school will only refer to concerns about a staff member in employment references where they have amounted to a substantiated safeguarding allegation, e.g., it has met the harms threshold and has been found to have basis through investigation, or where it is not exclusively a safeguarding issue and forms part of an issue that would normally be included in a reference, e.g., misconduct or poor performance. Low-level safeguarding concerns will not be included in a reference, unless they have comprised a pattern of behaviour that has met the harms threshold.

APPENDIX 4 - GUIDELINES FOR AVOIDING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE: FOR ALL STAFF MEMBERS

Whilst they may in common law be regarded as acting in loco parentis, teachers and carers in school should remember that they are not able to take the place of parents in providing physical comfort. This is not to say that all physical contact is inappropriate, rather that the professional context demands circumspection and a sense of fitness for purpose.

Teachers of very young children of nursery and Key stage 1 age will naturally need to engage in more physical contact than teachers of older children. Comforting a distressed child who may just have started school will not be an unusual occurrence. Similarly, in the special school setting, some children may tend towards demanding physical attention. In such circumstances, the contact by the adult will be for re-assurance and may involve physical closeness (e.g., holding the child's hand or placing hands on the child's shoulders).

Administration of medicines and first aid requires careful codes of conduct and procedures. These should be laid down by local authority or health authority or in individual school guidelines and followed meticulously. As a rule of thumb, teachers should not administer medicines. If the child had an adverse reaction to a medicine given by a teacher, the teacher could be held liable and charged with negligence.

Administration of first aid should be undertaken by a qualified first aider. Where none is available, the minimum steps should be taken to ensure the child's safety and the emergency services should be called.

Teachers may sometimes be called upon to intervene physically if a child or children are in danger of injuring themselves or others - as in a fight in the school yard. It is important that in such circumstances the minimum possible reasonable force is used. Where possible another colleague should be called upon to assist, both to minimise the risk of injury to the teacher intervening and to act as witness that reasonable force and no more was used. After such an event a clear record of what took place should be made, including where possible statements from witnesses. The Principal should be informed.

One-to-one situations with pupils need to be carefully and consciously managed. Some teaching, as with peripatetic music staff, may often suggest one-to-one organisation. Where pupils can be paired for such lessons, it is preferable. Where this is not possible and in other situations of individual interviews with pupils, it is advisable to use a room with a window where others can see in or to leave the door open. If confidentiality makes this difficult, then another member of staff should be informed that the interview is taking place.

If a child becomes distressed, support and re-assurance should be offered through calming words rather than through physical contact. Teachers should not become involved with children's personal problems beyond listening and being sensitive to them to refer the child to the most appropriate source of help or counselling.

APPENDIX 5 - INDICATORS OF VULNERABILITY TO RADICALISATION

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:

   Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:

   The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:

   - Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
   - Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
   - Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
   - Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

4. There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

5. Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff can recognise those vulnerabilities.

6. Indicators of susceptibility include:

   - Identity Crisis – the student is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
   - Personal Crisis – the student may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
   - Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
   - Unmet Aspirations – the student may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
   - Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement/reintegration; and
   - Special Educational Need – pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues; and
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis

APPENDIX 6 – GUIDANCE ON CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction

All our staff working with children are aware and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. This will also develop a culture of respect.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. In our school, we are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college, including intimate personal relationships.

Vulnerable groups

We recognise that all children can be at risk however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include experience of abuse within their family; living with domestic violence; young people in care; children who go missing; children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities) or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and lesbian, gay, bisexual and gender questioning children are at greater risk. Some risks can be especially compounded where children lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open with. Our staff therefore understand and endeavour to reduce any additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for our children to speak out or share their concerns.

Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs. We recognise that both boys and girls experience child sexual violence and harassment /peer on peer abuse.

Staff should use their professional curiosity, and be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

It is **essential** that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Our policy will refer to children as victims and perpetrators within this policy however we will be conscious of how we describe children when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which most appropriately matches their individual situation.

Along with providing support to children who are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment, our school will consider the need to provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. Taking disciplinary action and providing

appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult pupils and school staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

Our staff will respect confidentiality and anonymity of a child or young person reporting incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment including situations where the child or young person asks staff not to tell anyone about the incident; making referrals against the wishes of the young person and considering the potential impact of social media breaching confidentiality. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies.

Our lead DSL (or a deputy) will endeavour to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. If the lead DSL (or a deputy) decide to make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, our DSL and staff will handle all incidents extremely carefully. The reasons for referral will be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support will be offered, always taking into consideration the best interest of the child.

Where incidents of sexual violence and harassment have been raised, our staff, where applicable, will take into consideration the impact on siblings and understand the importance of intra familial harms.

Useful definitions

Sexual violence
It is important that schools and colleges are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence in this policy, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual violence.

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 including, Rape, Assault by Penetration, Sexual Assault: (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.) Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Consent
Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.
- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Sexual harassment
For this policy, when referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:
- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;

Online sexual harassment
This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.
It may include:
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. (Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence).
- Sharing of unwanted explicit content.
- Upskirting (the act of taking a photograph of underneath a person's skirt without their consent – this became a criminal offence in 2019)
- Sexualised online bullying.
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media.
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

Our school will challenge and deal with sexual harassment to create a culture that addresses inappropriate behaviours and promotes a healthy and safe environment to minimise potential sexual violence.

Harmful sexual behaviour
Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context. When considering HSB, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Designated Safeguarding Leads in TMET have been trained in using the Brook Traffic Light tool to guide their response to instances of HSB.

Whole school approach to Prevention

We note that the best responses to child sexual violence and harassment are those which take a whole school approach to safeguarding and child protection. This means involving everyone in our school, including the Academy Council, all the staff, children, adult pupils and parents and carers. We actively seek to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of sexual violence and harassment for our pupils.

We have systems in place that are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment. Children know their concerns will be treated seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback.

We implement the following as **prevention** against child sexual violence and harassment:

- Educating all member of the school community on this issue. This includes training for all on the nature, prevalence and effect of child sexual violence and harassment, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it.
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child sexual violence and harassment within the

curriculum. There is a focus on healthy relationships that will help children who are experiencing or witnessing unhealthy relationships know where to seek help and report abuse. Health Education addresses important aspects such as mental wellbeing.

- Informing pupils frequently about what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse. This includes online abuse.
- Informing pupils regularly about the school's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of sexual violence and harassment.
- Ensuring that all child sexual violence and harassment issues are fed back to the school's safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who maybe in need of additional support. These concerns will be recorded and routinely discussed by the DSL team
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom).
- Responding to cases of child sexual violence and harassment promptly and appropriately
- Providing an open forum for children to talk things through. Such discussions may lead to increased safeguarding reports.
- Making children aware of the processes to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This includes processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.
- Supporting out staff to understand how to manage a safeguarding report from a child and support them appropriately through the process.
- In supporting children and families, our staff understand Early Help can be particularly useful to address non-violent Harmful Sexual Behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. Therefore, it is particularly important that our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and their deputies) know what our local early help process is and how and where to access support.

Responding to alleged incident of sexual violence and sexual harassment

All reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be considered and managed on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care or the police as required.

In cases where there are child protection concerns, a concern about possible criminal behaviour or particularly complex scenarios referrals should be made to police and social care as per local processes.

The immediate response to a report
- We take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe. This will be in all cases including if the abuse took place away from school, is not recent and/ or is online.
- All our staff will be trained to manage a report.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care). Staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the interview as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Where the report includes an online element, we will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.
- The DSL will be informed as soon as possible.
- If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children.
- The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will consider the following:

- ✓ parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim 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; and
- ✓ rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police.
- The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. If the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) decide to go ahead and make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this will be handled extremely carefully, the reasons will be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support should be offered.
- We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. At all times, the school or college should be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The risk and needs' assessment should consider:
- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- Whether there may have been other victims
- The alleged perpetrator
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult pupils and staff) at school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments will be recorded on our safeguarding system and be kept under review.
The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure they are engaging with children's social care and any specialist services as required. The school risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform the schools or college's approach to supporting and protecting their pupils and pupils and updating their own risk assessment.

Actions following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Following an incident, we will consider:
- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers
- The ages and vulnerabilities of the children involved.
- The developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature, or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult pupils or school staff, and other related issues and wider context?
- Other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal

exploitation.
- Whilst the school or college establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police: The perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school or college premises and on transport to and from the school. These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

Options to manage the report

Manage internally
In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support. This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored by the DSL on our safeguarding systems.

In line with this, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to social care following locally agreed protocols.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

Reporting to the Police
Any report to the police will generally be made through social care as above. The designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) will follow local processes for referrals.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

Where a report has been made to the police, the school will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

The end of the criminal process
If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant

protections are in place for all children. We will consider any suitable action following our behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in school/academy we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the perpetrator's timetable.

Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or pupils in the school or college.

We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support and offer protection to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary.

A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault

Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of local agencies and national organisations. We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family. If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The DSL will support this move.

Where there is a criminal investigation, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim, and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises or on school transport. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings. We will work closely with the police.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or pupils).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis.

All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

Harmful sexual behaviours (HSB)

The NSPCC definition of HSB is: -
"Sexual behaviours expressed by children…that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child…or adult."

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- We will think carefully about the terminology we use to describe the "alleged perpetrator(s)" or "perpetrator(s)".
- Our responsibilities lie in balancing the need to safeguard the victim (and all other children, adult pupils and staff at the school) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.
- A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. We will work with professionals as required to understand why a child may have abused a peer. It is important to remember that, as a child, any alleged perpetrator(s) is entitled to, deserving of, and should be provided with, a high level of support to help them understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and help protect other children by limiting the likelihood of them abusing again.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s) and nature and frequency of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. HSB in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police.
- It is important that the perpetrator(s) is also given the correct support to try to stop them re-offending and to address any underlying trauma that may be causing this behaviour. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- Advice on behaviour and discipline in schools is clear that teachers can discipline pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them. If the perpetrator(s) is to be excluded the decision must be lawful, reasonable and fair.
- School can be a significant protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, is an important factor to consider before final decisions are made It is important that if an alleged perpetrator(s) does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children, adult pupils and staff. The designated safeguarding lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.

We recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB). Simon Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant, please see:
[Understanding sexualised behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#)
We will use this model to consider the range of sexual behaviours, alongside the Brook Traffic Light materials.

Working with families

We will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of sexual violence (this might not be necessary or proportional in the case of sexual harassment and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

We will carefully consider what information we provide to the respective parents or carers about the other child involved. In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view and it will be important for the school to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

It is good practice for the school to meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

It is also good practice for the school to meet with alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact an alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education. The reason behind any decisions should be explained. Support for the alleged perpetrator should be discussed. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) would generally attend any such meetings. Consideration to the attendance of other agencies should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

APPENDIX 7 - Intent Statement for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

Moral Purpose

We believe every person should feel comfortable, safe and valued. We acknowledge that each individual has differing needs and this is reflected in our actions. We seek to create opportunities, time and space and listen to more than words. We endeavour to understand the feelings of others and promote their feelings of self-worth. We listen and act with kindness and without judgement. We accept our own feelings and are empowered to care for ourselves.
This can be summarised as:

- Nurture
- Individual
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Dignity
- Acceptance
- Yourself

Nurture Individual Curiosity Empathy

Dignity Acceptance Yourself

We hope every individual can have a **NICE DAY**

Mental Health Definition
"**We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. Our mental health is how we're feeling inside, or how we are emotionally. It's a bit like internal weather.**"

Mental Health foundation

Our definition of mental health stems from both the psychological and sociological model.
The psychological model looks at the individual's experiences and history. Therapies that build resilience alongside talking therapies are often used alongside behaviour modification interventions.
The sociological model looks at the broader influences such as family relationships, social stress, early life experiences and self-esteem that can lead to poor mental health.

What supporting Mental Health means to us
- We focus on a culture that values the 'voice' of every individual
- We promote and imbed a total communication approach and use structure to create safety and balance
- We look for opportunities to create a 'Nice Day'
- We manage the most urgent needs whilst creating support for all
- We have a large team of trained staff to support both pupils and staff
- We support families and consider the mental health of the whole school community
-

How we ensure best practice
- We use CPOMS to record specific concerns
- We value open, transparent discussion to enable coordinated actions
- Regular training underpins our understanding of Keeping Children Safe in Education and our safeguarding policy
- Training in specific conditions, relevant to our school community, help us to gain understanding and insight.
- Support is provided by trained staff in a planned programme to meet individual need
- We follow 'Listen, Respond, Reflect' to help us to evaluate
-

Have a 'NICE DAY'
Nurture – How do we support the person to feel comfortable, safe and valued
Individual – How does the Individual communicate – how do we find out how they feel – what works for that individual – what are their needs
Curiosity – Is their behaviour telling us something that we need to hear – have we made time and space – how do we create the opportunity to listen

**Empathy** – How can we help at school – what can we change – what needs to happen
Dignity – Are we respectful of their dignity – are we promoting their own self worth
Acceptance – Are we listening and acting without judgement
Yourself – Are we remembering to manage our own needs

Listen, Respond, Reflect
- How do we need to listen – how is the individual communicating – what are they telling us
- How should we respond – what help can we offer – what do they need us to do
- Has anything changed – What can we do differently – What's next?

```
        Listen

Reflect          Respond
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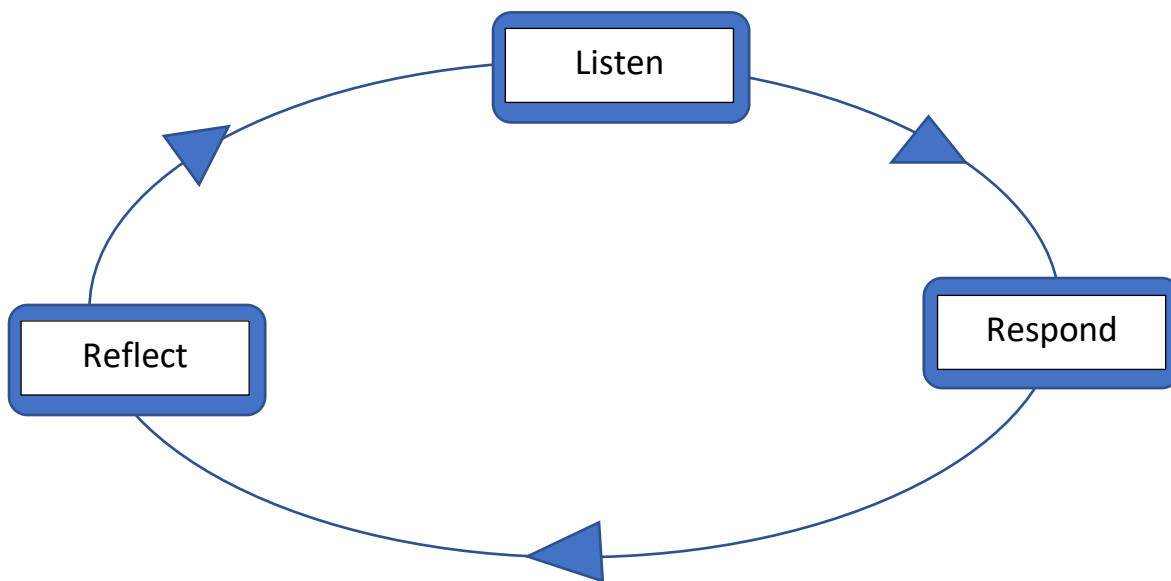
Safeguarding Procedure

What you should do:

The

· Immediately report any concerns about a child to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL.
· Record what has been said on CPOMS or on paper (sign and date it). Give it to the DSL.
· Keep what has happened confidential once you have reported to the DSL.
· It is not your job to investigate concerns about a child or talk to the parents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take responsibility for this.
· Report concerns about the behaviour of a staff member to the Principal (or member of the SLT). Concerns about the Principal should be reported to Sarah Ridley, CEO (sridley@tmet.uk).

If a child makes a disclosure:

· Treat what the child tells you seriously and reassure them they have done the right thing by telling you.
· Do not question the child or give suggestions, ideas or words.
· Do not promise to keep what they have said a secret.
· Tell the child you will have to pass on what they have said.
· Immediately report the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.
· Record what the child has said on CPOMS (in their own words as far as possible), or on paper (sign and date it.) Also make a note of any injuries.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will gather information and decide on next steps, including whether to refer to Children's Social Care.

Safeguarding Information - Staff Leaflet
Every member of staff has a duty of care to safeguard children. Take immediate action if you have any concerns.
Contact the Safeguarding Team

	Sarah Naylor Headteacher & DSL		Jo Bacon Wellbeing Co-ordinator & DDSL
	Harminder Sanghera Deputy Headteacher & DDSL		Victoria Thomas Therapy Manager & DDSL
	Helen Robinson Asst Headteacher & DDSL		Bree Heggs Wellbeing Team
	Jess Norman Asst Headteacher & DDSL		Jane Booth Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding

Indicators of Child Abuse

Physical

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

Emotional

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

·   Conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved inadequate, or valued only in so far 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 and how they communicate.

·   Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

·   Interactions that are beyond limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

·   Serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Neglect

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

·   Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home 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.

Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. May involve:

·   Physical contact, including penetration (e.g., rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching the outside of clothing.

·   Non-contact activities, including children looking at, or in the production of sexual images and watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual Exploitation

When a child receives 'something' (e.g., food, drugs, alcohol, gifts, affection, money, etc.) as a result of them engaging in sexual activities. Can also include grooming. Significant indicators include:

·   Having a relationship of concern with a controlling adult or young person (may involve abuse of gang activity).

·   Possessing unexplained amounts of money, clothing or other items.

·   Frequenting areas known for 'risky' activities.

·   Being groomed or abused online.

·   Having unexplained contact with hotels, taxi companies or fast-food outlets.

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which can occur online and offline. Can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.

Sexual violence

It is important that schools and colleges are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence in this policy, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual violence.

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 including, Rape, Assault by Penetration and Sexual Assault.

Behaviour – Our school has clear behaviour rules for the whole school community that must be followed to keep everyone safe and happy. We understand that children do sometimes fall out and this will be dealt with by an adult who will listen to the children involved and help resolve the situation.

Child-on-Child Abuse - The school takes all cases of child-on-child abuse very seriously and will work with children and families to try and resolve any problems. The school has an anti-bullying policy that you should read and understand.

Health and Safety - Everyone at our school has a responsibility to keep adults and children safe within the school environment. The school has a clear health and safety policy which everyone must follow. The school has fully trained first aiders to deal with any accidents in school.

Online safety - The school recognises that technology plays an important role in the education of our children and is committed to safeguarding children online. Parents/carers should be vigilant and ensure that their children are accessing age-appropriate social media platforms, content and gaming, on tablets, smart phones and computers.

Complaints - If you have any complaints about how the school is working with you or your child, please feel confident to speak to us. The Principal will always be happy to speak to you to resolve any difficulties. It is better to speak to us as soon as you have a concern so that it does not become a bigger issue. If you do not feel the matter has been resolved, you can raise your concerns with the Academy Council.

Useful Contacts

Principal	Sarah Naylor
Designated Safeguarding Lead (s)	Sarah Naylor
Chair of Academy Council	Jane Booth

Keyham Lane West, Leicester,
LE5 1RT
0116 2417258
https://www.netherhall.leicester.sch.uk
safeguarding@netherhall.leicester.sch.uk

Our school is committed to creating a happy and safe environment for our children to learn. This leaflet will help you understand how we keep your children safe by telling you:

- How children can be harmed
- What we must do to keep you child safe from harm
- What you must do as a parent/carer to help your child be safe and enjoy school

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

Child Protection is an important subject in which all staff receive regular training. Our priority is to work with you but there may be times when we must involve other people. Everybody has a responsibility to keep all children under the age of 18 safe. Our school **has a statutory responsibility** to share any concerns it may have about a child in need of protection with other agencies and in particular police, health and children's social care. Schools are not able to investigate concerns but have a legal duty to refer them. In most instances, the school will be able to inform the parents/carer of its need to make a referral. However, sometimes the school is advised by children's social care or police that the parent/carer cannot be informed whilst they investigate the matter. We understand the anxiety parents/carers understandably feel when they are not told about any concerns from the outset. The school follows legislation that aims to act in the interests of the child.

Definitions of Abuse

Physical abuse: when a child is deliberately hurt or injured
Sexual abuse, including sexual exploitation: when a child is influenced or forced to take part in a sexual activity. This can be a physical activity or non-contact, e.g., being made to look at an inappropriate image.
Emotional: maltreatment of a child, making them feel inadequate, worthless or unloved.
Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs.
Sexual Harassment: unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which can occur online and offline.
Sexual violence: Rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault (intentional sexual touching without consent)

It is advised that **ALL** parents/carers are familiar with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is available through our website and on request.

TMET

Keeping Children Safe in Education: Information for Parents & Carers

==Insert Academy Logo in Here==

We ensure children learn in a safe, caring and enriching environment.
Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, to develop positive and healthy relationships, and how to avoid situations where they might be at risk including by being exploited.

A child should be able to go to school and feel safe so that they can achieve their very best. We will ensure that:

- Anybody who works or volunteers at our school will have had the appropriate checks carried out to ensure that they are safe to work with children and then provided training to identify child abuse and what to do if they are concerned
- The school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Sarah Naylor** who has had extra training to know what to do when a concern is brought to them
- We listen to you and work closely with you if we are concerned about your child but, sometimes, we may not be able to discuss our concern. The school has a safeguarding policy which tells you more about this and when we must speak to the police or children's services.
- Our IT filtering and monitoring services protect your children from viewing unsuitable content online as far as possible.
- Your child will learn about keeping themselves safe. Lessons include healthy eating, anti-bullying, online safety, road safety, healthy relationships, drug and alcohol awareness. As part of these lessons, your child will be told what to do if they are worried or concerned about their safety

What parents/carers must do

Parents and carers are the most important people to keep their children safe. You should:

Feel confident to raise concerns about your child, or about the conduct of a staff member/teacher

- Talk to the school if you need help or support
- Read the school policies about safety issues available on request and on the school website
- Let the school know if your child has a medical condition
- Let the school know if you have any court orders relating to the safety of your child
- Let the school know if your child has caring responsibilities at home
- Let the school know if there is a change in your circumstances such as a house move, a new contact number, a change of name, a change of parental responsibility
- Who will be dropping off or collecting your child and two other emergency contacts. You must inform the school of any changes to agreed arrangements
- Let the school know if your child is going to be absent and the reasons why

Attendance

Your child's attendance is monitored daily, and absences are always followed up by the attendance officer. It is important that your child attends school as regularly as possible. There may be times when you are asked for evidence relating to absences, e.g., for medical appointments. Please note holidays must not be taken during term-time, and any planned absence from school must be requested in advance.