Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Guidelines 2026 - 27
Netherhall Mead Academy

This policy has been personalised to TMET based on the LA template.

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, including apprentices.

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5.0	13.10.2016	M Collins	Aligned with most recent updates from LA, including Early Help, Channel and Prevent.
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18.0	September 2026	M Patel	Updated in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.

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1. Glossary

For this document the following terminology should be considered:

Safeguarding is the overarching term for everything we do to support children and young people, keep them safe, and promote their welfare. It encompasses the full spectrum of measures to prevent harm, promote wellbeing, and ensure children are able to achieve their best outcomes.

Keeping Children, Safe in Education 2026 defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge;
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection, as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)', refers to the activity undertaken to protect individual children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes timely assessment, intervention, and referral to statutory services where necessary.

Safeguarding extends beyond child protection and includes:

- promoting children's health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- preventing harm from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or radicalisation;
- ensuring online safety and protection from digital risks;
- early identification and support for children with additional needs (early help);
- addressing risks in the wider environment (contextual safeguarding); and
- listening to children's voices and involving them in decisions affecting their welfare.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part-time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This includes trainee teachers.

DSL refers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the School.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example, stepparents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Extra-familial Harm - Extra-familial harm refers to abuse or exploitation occurring outside the family environment. Contextual safeguarding refers to the approach used to understand and respond to the wider relationships, environments and circumstances in which such harm occurs.

Family Help refers to support provided to children and families as soon as problems emerge. It includes Targeted Early Help and, where appropriate, statutory support provided to children in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

2. Introduction

The Mead Educational Trust (TMET) recognises its vital role in protecting children and supporting pupils. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare is everyone's responsibility**, and all professionals including staff, trustees, academy councillors, trainee teachers, volunteers, apprentices, contractors and visitors must adopt a **child-centred approach**, always acting in the best interests of the child. At TMET we are committed to identifying concerns early, providing timely help, considering each child's lived experience, and preventing concerns from escalating.

This policy sets out how TMET schools and the Trust Board discharge their **statutory safeguarding duties**. Our aim is to promote pupils' welfare, safety, and health within an open, caring, and supportive environment.

Effective safeguarding requires professionals to understand the impact of social, economic, and cultural factors on children's lives, and to work together, since no single professional can hold the full picture.

TMET believes that:

- All children have the right to protection from harm and to feel safe in school.
- Support must reflect individual needs, including for those who have experienced abuse.
- Children should be heard, respected, and encouraged to value one another.
- Emotional, social, and educational needs must be met, recognising that wellbeing underpins achievement.
- Schools play a central role in preventing abuse, exploitation, bullying, discrimination, and risk-taking behaviours.
- All staff and visitors share responsibility for safeguarding children.

All TMET staff will:

- Place the child's voice at the centre of decision making
- Work restoratively and collaboratively with families
- Provide Family Help at the earliest opportunities
- Apply Leicester City and Leicestershire Thresholds to access to Services
- Work in partnership with multi-agency partners
- Maintain professional curiosity
- Ensure children receive the right help at the right time

2.1 School context

Netherhall Mead Academy caters for 138 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.

All staff working in or on behalf of TMET, including those who do not work directly with children, are expected to read and understand at least Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. TMET will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support staff to understand and discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

TMET will fulfil local and national responsibilities and accepted best practice as laid out in the following legislation and documents:

- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Education Act 2002;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation;
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025;
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026;
- Crime and Policing Act 2026;
- Prevent Duty (guidance updated in 2023);
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015;
- Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021;
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 & Amended Regulations 2015;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED);
- 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
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003/Updated regulations July 2020
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE Sept 2026)
- What To Do If You Are Worried a Child Is Being Abused (March 2015)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2022 (Safer Recruitment consortium)
- Information sharing Duty (September 2026)

- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- Leicester Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (LSCPB)
- Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes (updated March 2024) – UK Council for Internet Safety
- Searching, screening and confiscation July 2022 (updated July 2023)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024
- Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges (March 2025)

The Trust Board fulfils its duty under **section 175 of the Education Act 2002** to safeguard and promote children's welfare, working with other agencies to ensure effective arrangements for identifying, assessing, and supporting those at risk of harm. We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of **all staff, trustees, academy councillors, and apprentices**, and that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Our schools are committed to providing a **safe, caring, and positive environment** that promotes pupils' social, physical, moral, and educational development.

In line with **KCSIE 2026 (Part 2)**, the Trust Board also provides active oversight of:

- Online safety, including AI, filtering and monitoring arrangements;
- Safer recruitment and the Single Central Record; and
- The management of allegations and low-level concerns.

The Policy applies to:

- All TMET schools and their staff,
- Central trust staff
- Wraparound care
- Educational visits
- Online provision
- Extracurricular activities

3. Overall aims

Our safeguarding aims are to:

- Provide help and support when concerns first emerge, protecting children from maltreatment at home, in the community, or online.
- Support children's development to build security, confidence, resilience, and positive relationships.
- Ensure all pupils feel safe, valued, respected, and know how to seek adult help.
- Raise awareness of statutory safeguarding duties for all staff, ensuring they identify, report concerns promptly and take appropriate action to promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.
- Ensure staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.

- Monitor children at risk, including those persistently absent or missing from education, and contribute to assessments and support plans.
- Promote clear, effective and appropriate communication and a structured procedure for responding to suspected abuse.
- Work effectively with safeguarding partners and other agencies, including through Early Help and curriculum

opportunities.

- Actively participate in the work of local safeguarding partners, implement learning from safeguarding practice reviews and child safeguarding reviews, and contribute information where requested as part of local safeguarding arrangements.
- Promote safeguarding wellbeing and resilience through the curriculum, equipping pupils with the knowledge and skills to identify risk, make informed choices, seek support when needed and stay safe in school, in their community and online.
- Ensure robust safer recruitment and suitability checks for all adults working with or having access to children, including community users of school facilities.

4. 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.

5. Expectations

All staff (including apprentices and trainee teachers), and visitors (including regular contractors) will be familiar with this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy:

- Staff will read, understand, and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which forms part of induction
- Staff are recruited through Safer Recruitment processes with all required statutory checks
- Visitors, contractors (e.g. cleaners, caterers), agency staff and trainee teachers are made aware of safeguarding procedures, including identity of the DSL and how to report concerns.
- Staff remain alert to the signs of abuse and neglect, recognising that *harm* also includes witnessing harm to others, such as domestic abuse and failing to report harm
- Any disclosure of abuse is managed in line with school procedures, reported immediately to the DSL, and recorded in writing without delay

All parents will be familiar with this safeguarding policy:

- Parents and carers can access the policy on the school website.
- Parents and carers are asked to inform the school if their child is a young carer. We recognise the stigma some may feel and will provide inclusive support to both 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 cannot investigate concerns but have a legal duty to refer them. In most instances, the school will be able to inform the parents and 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 and carers cannot be informed whilst they investigate the matter. We understand the anxiety parents and 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.*

6. Use of school premises for non-school activities

When the Trust hires or rents out premises, we ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place. If activities are delivered by school staff, our safeguarding procedures apply. If delivered by an external body, the Trust seeks written assurance of suitable safeguarding policies and procedures and checks these as needed. This applies whether or not the children are on the school roll (KCSIE 2026, Part 2). Where lettings are managed by a third party, TMET quality-assures safeguarding policies and documentation.

7. Procedures

The Mead Educational Trust will ensure that:
The Trust Board understands and fulfils its safeguarding duties, and all members undergo the vetting checks required in KCSIE 2026 Part 3.

Each TMET school will ensure that:

- The Academy Council fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities.
- A DSL and at least one Deputy DSL are appointed, trained to the required standard, and training is refreshed every two years including regular updates to maintain their knowledge and skills.
- All staff receive annual safeguarding training, including signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, risks that can take place outside the child's family, online safety and know how to respond to disclosures and concerns promptly
- Parents and carers are informed of the school's safeguarding duties via the published policy.
- Safer recruitment practices (KCSIE 2026 Part 3) are followed, including appropriate checks (with online searches considered), recorded on the Single Central Record (audited annually by the Trust and termly by the school DSL) and at least one safer-recruitment-trained member will be on each panel.
- Concerns about staff suitability are referred to the DBS or relevant agency, with LADO advice.
- At least one SLT member has attended LADO training; procedures for managing allegations and low-level concerns follow KCSIE 2026 (Appendix 2).
- Procedures are reviewed annually.
- The names of the DSL and Deputies are clearly displayed, with procedures for reporting concerns.

Induction includes:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy (to include roles and identity of DSLs, child-on-child abuse, the process and procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff).
- Requirement to read KCSIE 2026 Part 1 and Annex A
- Behaviour policy
- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing
- Attendance policies (including response to children missing education)
- Safeguarding training, including online safety and staff responsibilities for filtering and monitoring.

8. Responsibilities

Staff recognise that children may be unable or unwilling to disclose abuse due to fear, embarrassment, vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, or language barriers. Staff therefore act as the **'eyes and ears'**, maintaining professional curiosity, recognising signs of harm, and building trusted relationships to support communication (KCSIE 2026, Part 1). Staff must share concerns **immediately** with the DSL or Deputy DSL and record their concerns according to the school's recording procedure. If a staff member is implicated, concerns are reported to the Principal; if the Principal is involved, to

the CEO or another member of the TMET Executive Team.

Staff must escalate safeguarding concerns if they feel progress is stalled or unresolved. Concerns must not be dismissed due to feeling stuck or unsure. Staff should discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), senior leaders, TMET Head of safeguarding or a member of the Executive team if necessary. All concerns must be addressed, assessed, and resolved appropriately to ensure the safety and welfare of children.

Where staff feel unable to raise concerns through normal routes, they must use the **whistleblowing procedure** (see TMET Whistleblowing Policy).

All staff are trained and alert to the risks of **persistent absence or missing education** as potential indicators of abuse or neglect. Procedures are outlined in the school's **Attendance Policy**.

9. Leadership of Safeguarding – Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Role and Responsibilities:

As required by KCSIE 2026, Annex B, the DSL, a member of the senior leadership team, has the status and authority required to carry out the duties of the role, including committing resources and supporting and directing staff; has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard and ensure there is cover at all times.

Educational outcomes

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) works in partnership with the Principal and strategic leads to promote positive educational outcomes for vulnerable pupils. This includes maintaining oversight of children with a social worker, past or present, tracking their progress, and ensuring high aspirations are upheld. The DSL supports teaching staff to implement reasonable adjustments and targeted academic support, recognising that safeguarding concerns can have a lasting impact on attendance, engagement, and achievement, even after statutory intervention ends.

Managing referrals

- ✓ Refer suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation to children's social care or the police.
- ✓ Support staff making referrals, including to the Channel programme.
- ✓ Report staff allegations to the Principal and LADO, and to the DBS where required.
- ✓ Notify the police where a crime may have been committed.

Working with Others:

- Provide support, advice, and expertise to staff.
- Act as the key contact for safeguarding partners, the Principal, case managers, and the LADO.
- Liaise with the Principal on section 47 enquiries, police investigations, and Appropriate Adult requirements.
- Work collaboratively with relevant staff and agencies to ensure safeguarding, welfare and online safety concerns are identified, assessed and responded to holistically, taking account of each child's needs and circumstances.
- Use LLR safeguarding partnership escalation procedures where disagreement exists regarding safeguarding decisions.
- Work with the mental health lead and Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding links to mental health.
- Understands the circumstances in which a child is entitled to an Appropriate Adult under Code C of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act;
- Works with attendance staff and relevant agencies to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns associated with repeated or prolonged absence from education, making referrals where appropriate;
- Engage with parents and carers supportively, especially where families face challenges.

- Promote educational outcomes by:
    - ✓ Tracking progress and maintaining high aspirations for children with a social worker.
    - ✓ Supporting staff to provide targeted academic support and reasonable adjustments.

Training, Knowledge and Skills

- Safeguarding processes: Understand community-based Early Help, Targeted Early Help, statutory interventions, social care referral pathways, and child protection conferences.
- Partnership working: share accurate, timely information with social care, safeguarding partners, and other agencies.
- Impact of adversity: recognise how trauma and adverse experiences affect learning, behaviour, and wellbeing.
- Vulnerable groups**:** remain alert to the needs of children in need, those with SEND, health conditions, or caring responsibilities.
- Prevent and online safety: support compliance with the Prevent duty, address online risks including AI, and ensure extra protection and support for children with SEND, relevant health conditions and young carers
- Child-centred practice**:** promote a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in safeguarding decisions.

DSLs' knowledge and skills are refreshed regularly to ensure they remain up to date with developments relevant to their role.

Raising Awareness:

- Ensure the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is understood and applied by all staff.
- Review the policy annually, publish it on the school website, and make parents aware that referrals may be made for suspected abuse or neglect.
- Maintain links with local safeguarding partners to ensure staff are informed about training opportunities and current local safeguarding arrangements.
- Promote positive educational outcomes by ensuring staff understand and respond to the safeguarding, welfare and child protection needs of children who have, or have previously had a social worker.

Providing support to staff

Ensure staff are supported when making referrals and that they consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked.

Information holding, sharing and child protection files:

DSL(s) are responsible for maintaining up-to-date child protection files, stored securely and confidentially. Records must include:

- A clear, detailed summary of the concern.
- How the concern was followed up and resolved.
- Actions taken, decisions made with rationale, and outcomes. This includes whether referrals were made to other agencies (e.g. social care, Prevent).

Files are accessible only to those with a need to know and sharing both within and with other schools follows government information-sharing guidance. Files transfer securely to a new school/college within five school days for in-year moves or at the start of a new term, with receipt confirmed.

DSL(s) understand and apply data protection law, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Information sharing guidance (September 2026)

Understanding the views of children:

DSL(s) will be supported to:

Promote a culture where staff listen to children and take account of their wishes and feelings in safeguarding decisions

and protective measures.
Recognise barriers that may prevent children from speaking to staff and foster trusted relationships that encourage open communication.

Availability:
During term time, the DSL (or deputy) will always be available on site. The school will implement robust cover arrangements if either are unavailable.
Shared systems will be in place so that safeguarding concerns are monitored and acted upon without delay.
For out-of-hours or out-of-term activities and trips, the school will arrange appropriate cover. In exceptional circumstances, availability may be provided via phone or video call.

The Principal – Roles and Responsibilities:

- Each Principal will work with the DSL to ensure Trust Board policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff. They must ensure that:
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and related policies, are reviewed and updated regularly, ratified by the Trust Board, published on the school website and shared with all staff as part of induction and whenever updates are made
- All staff receive annual safeguarding training, appropriate online safety training, and regular safeguarding updates.
- All staff, including those who do not directly work with children, read and understand Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and receive appropriate support to understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- DSLs and Deputy DSL(s) have sufficient time, funding, training, support and resources including robust cover arrangements, to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, including inter-agency meetings, strategy meetings and child assessments
- Appropriate and confidential DSL cover arrangements are maintained during illness, leave, other absence and activities taking place outside normal school hours.
- They understand LADO processes for staff allegations (harms and low-level concerns) and complete LADO training at least every three years.
- Safer recruitment training is up to date and applied in practice and refreshed every 3 years
- Staff and volunteers can raise concerns about unsafe practice, which are addressed sensitively and promptly in accordance with the Trust's whistleblowing procedures supporting a whole-school, child-centred culture of vigilance
- All staff know their responsibility to refer child protection concerns promptly through correct channels.
- All staff have an understanding of early help and Family Help and are able to identify children who would benefit from intervention.
- DSLs undertake enhanced safeguarding and child protection training.
- All staff are informed of their right to whistle blow and the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

The Trust Board (Governing Body) – Roles and Responsibilities:
The Mead Educational Trust (TMET) Board holds strategic responsibility for safeguarding across all schools and must comply with legal duties at all times. The Trust Board ensures each school's safeguarding policies, procedures and training are effective and compliant and that they operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. The Safeguarding Trustee, Dave Riddick, champions safeguarding across the Trust and reports to the Trust Board.

All Trustees and Academy Councillors receive safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction, updated regularly, to equip them to provide strategic challenge and assurance.

The Trust Board will ensure that:

- Every TMET school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, published on the school website (paper copies

to be made available on request).

- All staff prioritise the best interests of children and maintain an attitude of *"it could happen here."*
- Clear, accessible systems enable children to report abuse and be confident their concerns will be taken seriously.
- A senior leader is appointed as Lead DSL, with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and the oversight of filtering and monitoring systems supported by at least one trained deputy. This is explicit in their job description.
- The DSL and Deputy DSLs receive appropriate safeguarding training, including refresher training at least every two years, and undertake regular updates to maintain their knowledge and skills
- Each Academy Council appoints a Safeguarding Councillor to champion safeguarding, liaise with the DSL, provide strategic challenge and support and report to the Council, with appropriate training provided.
- Clear systems and processes are in place for identifying and responding to potential mental health problems to a child including routes to escalate, referrals and accountability systems.
- Effective procedures are in place for managing allegations, concerns and low-level concerns relating to staff and volunteers, and all staff understand the relevant reporting thresholds and process.
- The TMET Code of Conduct is regularly reviewed, communicated and consistently applied across all schools.
- Allegations against the Principal or central Trust staff are managed by the CEO (or another Executive member) in liaison with the LADO.
- Robust safeguarding assurance arrangements are in place across the Trust, including academy-level safeguarding reports, safeguarding audits, Single Central Record (SCR) scrutiny, safeguarding trustee visits and ongoing monitoring of safeguarding practice.
- Any safeguarding weaknesses or compliance concerns identified through monitoring, audit or review processes are addressed promptly and effectively.
- Recruitment and vetting procedures comply with safer recruitment requirements as outlined in KCSIE Part 3 and are designed to deter, identify and prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children.
- The annual safeguarding return and any other statutory safeguarding requirements are completed and submitted in accordance with Local Authority and national expectations.

10. Supporting Children

Some children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs, often linked to trauma or abuse, which can increase vulnerability and impact education. When notified by the Local Authority that a child has a social worker, the DSL(s) will use this information to guide decisions in the child's best interests and share it with relevant agencies where appropriate, to safeguard and promote physical and mental wellbeing.

In addition, we recognise that:
Children who are abused, witness violence, or live in violent homes may feel helpless or humiliated, blame themselves, and struggle with self-worth. School may provide the only stability for children experiencing abuse or at risk of harm. A child's behaviour in these circumstances may appear typical, aggressive, or withdrawn. Children may need additional mental health support, which the school will provide, resource, or refer as appropriate.

<u>Each TMET School will support all children by:</u>

- Maintaining clear, well promoted, accessible systems for children to report abuse, ensuring concerns are taken seriously and their views, wishes and lived experience considered when decisions are made.
- Promoting self-esteem and resilience across school life, including through the curriculum.
- Identifying children needing extra mental health support and working with external agencies where required.
- Identifying and supporting Young Carers, with signposting to specialist services.
- Creating a caring, safe, and positive school environment.
- Teaching children to recognise risks physically, mentally and online and how to seek help.
- Liaising with support services and safeguarding agencies (including Social Care and Early Help).

- Notifying Children's Social Care immediately when significant concerns arise.
- Appointing a named teacher for Looked After Children and maintaining an up-to-date list of vulnerable children, regularly reviewed.
- Ensuring concerns and medical records for children with safeguarding issues transfer securely and promptly when they move schools.
- Working with partners to safeguard children across Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection, and Looked After Children.
- Teaching safeguarding, including online safety, within a broad, balanced, and tailored curriculum. This will reflect the needs of vulnerable children (e.g. those with SEND, disabilities, or who are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation). Topics will include:

✓ **Respect and equality:** Understanding fairness, diversity, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination including awareness of protected characteristics, gender questioning, and the importance of treating others equally and with dignity and respect.

✓ **Relationships, boundaries and consent:** Understanding healthy and respectful relationships, friendships, family, trusted adults, personal boundaries, and consent and recognising teenage relationship abuse.

✓ **Confidence, wellbeing and self-esteem:** Developing body confidence, self-esteem, emotional wellbeing and positive mental health including understanding risks associated with eating disorders, self-harm and unhealthy influences.

✓ **Recognising risk and seeking support:** Identifying unsafe, abusive or exploitative situations including bullying, peer pressure, coercion, misogyny, controlling behaviour and harmful influences and knowing how or where to seek help.

✓ **Safeguarding law and protection:** Developing an age-appropriate understanding of the law and risk relating to consent, exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, and honour and faith-based abuse including forced marriage, faith-based abuse and FGM, and where and how to access support.

✓ **Respectful behaviour:** Understand what constitutes sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour, why such behaviours are always unacceptable and how to report concerns safely.

11. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

All matters relating to child protection are confidential, and the welfare and best interests of the child will always be the primary consideration. TMET recognises that effective safeguarding relies on timely, necessary and proportionate information sharing. Protecting children from abuse, neglect and exploitation takes precedence over concerns about confidentiality where there is a safeguarding risk. Information will be shared by the Principal or DSL with staff on a need-to-know basis in accordance with data protection legislation and statutory guidance. Information sharing will be lawful, fair, necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, secure and undertaken in the best interests of the child.
Child protection information will be stored, processed and shared in accordance with data protection laws, including:

- the Data Protection Act 2018;
- the UK General Data Protection Regulation; and
- the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

All Staff have a responsibility to share safeguarding concerns with the DSL or Deputy DSL(s) without delay. Staff must never promise confidentiality to a child, as information may need to be shared with appropriate professionals in order to keep them safe. Any member of staff may make a referral to Children's Social Care, the police or another appropriate agency if they believe a child is at immediate risk of harm or that appropriate action is not being taken to protect a child. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes. Concerns about data protection, confidentiality or consent must never stand in the way of protecting a child from harm. TMET recognises that obtaining consent is not usually the most appropriate legal basis for sharing information where safeguarding concerns exist. Where appropriate, possible and safe to do so, parents and carers will be informed before a

referral is made.

Information, however, may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis to do so, including

- where it is not possible to or reasonable to obtain consent,
- where seeking consent may place a child or another person at increased risk of harm
- where seeking consent could prejudice the prevention, detection, or investigation of a crime
- when a child may be suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm
- when sharing information is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of children.

If in doubt, the priority will always be the safety and welfare of the child. The DSL will consult and seek advice from Children's Advice, Support and Prevention (CASP) in Leicester City or the First Response Duty Team in Leicestershire, depending on the child's residence. All information sharing decisions will be carefully considered and recorded. Where a referral to another agency was considered but not made, the rationale for that decision will be clearly recorded. All safeguarding records will provide a clear chronology of concerns, rationale for decisions, actions taken and outcomes. The school will contribute to effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by sharing relevant information with Children's Social Care, health services, police and other multi-agency partners where appropriate. Information held by the school may form part of a wider picture of risk and may be critical in identifying, assessing, responding to safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Child protection records will be held securely within CPOMS or Bromcom and separately from the main pupil file. Access will be restricted to those who require the information to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Where a pupil transfers to another school or college, safeguarding records will be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file. The DSL will ensure that relevant safeguarding information is shared with the receiving setting without delay. Safeguarding information may also be shared in advance where this is necessary to enable the receiving setting to assess risk and put appropriate safety and support arrangements in place. Safeguarding records will be transferred in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements and procedures.

12. Supporting Staff

We recognise that working with children at risk of harm can be stressful and upsetting. Staff including DSLs and deputies in this situation will be supported through support from the Principal, supervision arrangements for DSL and deputies, Vivup, Occupational Health, external services, or a teacher/union representative.

All staff will have access to advice on appropriate professional behaviour. *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings* (Safer Recruitment Consortium, February 2022) provides advice on safe conduct and situations to avoid, helping to prevent allegations of abuse or abuse of trust.

DSLs will have access to support and to relevant workshops, courses, and networks provided by the Local Authority, TMET and other safeguarding partners.

13. Allegations Against Staff

All staff, including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors and visitors must maintain professional boundaries at all times and must take care not to place themselves in vulnerable situations with children and must follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct and *Guidance for Safer Working Practice*.

TMET recognises two categories of concerns and allegations:

- Concerns or allegations that may meet the harms threshold
- Concerns or allegations that do not meet the harms threshold referred to as low-level concerns.

All concerns and allegations against staff regardless of how minor they may appear should be reported immediately to the Principal (or member of the senior leadership team). Concerns and allegations against the Principal must be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO, Sarah Ridley) or another Trust Executive Team member. Concerns about central Trust staff should be reported to the CEO or Trust Executive Team member. Concerns about the CEO must be reported to the Chair of Trustees, Anthony Glover (chairoftrustees@tmet.uk).

All concerns and allegations will be managed promptly in line with Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures (see Appendix 3) and statutory guidance. This applies equally to supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors, visitors, individuals or organisations delivering activities on behalf of the school or Trust and incidents arising from individuals or organisations using school premises for children's activities.

Where a concern relates to an individual employed or provided by a third-party organisation, the school will take lead in safeguarding children and managing the immediate safeguarding response, whilst the employer, agency, training provider will normally lead any employment or disciplinary process.

A concern may meet the harms threshold where an adult has:

- harmed a child or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child; and/or
- behaved in a way that indicates they 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 behaviour outside school).

Where the harms threshold may have been met the local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be consulted without delay.

TMET promotes an open and transparent culture in which low-level concerns are recognised, reported, recorded and addressed promptly and appropriately. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult's behaviour may be inconsistent with the Trust Code of Conduct, including conduct outside of work, but does not meet the harms threshold. Examples include, over familiarity, inappropriate language, favouritism, failure to maintain professional boundaries, inappropriate use of technology or one-to-one situations that do not follow expected safeguarding practice.

All low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed and managed appropriately. Records will be monitored to identify patterns of behaviour and determine whether further action, consultation with the LADO, additional training, management action, or disciplinary procedures may be required.

Staff and pupils may provide accounts of events, which will be securely stored in line with reporting procedures. These accounts may be used in the event of an allegation but must not be treated as formal statements, and the reporting person must not be questioned at the disclosure stage.

As part of annual safeguarding training, all staff will receive regular updates on professional conduct, safer working practice, online safety, and acceptable and appropriate use of IT systems, including digital communication. Any communication with pupils, parents, and carers must take place through official school systems
and in accordance with Trust policies

14. Safer Recruitment

TMET is committed to safer recruitment and follows the requirements as set out in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 to help deter, identify and prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children.

All necessary pre-employment checks will be completed before an individual begins work. These include verification of identity, right to work, qualifications, employment history, references, appropriate level of DBS check including a barred list check, mental and physical fitness, Section 128 check, prohibition check and for relevant staff disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2018 including an obligation to disclose relevant information. The Trust maintains a Single Central Record of required recruitment and vetting checks.

TMET will ensure that:

- at least one member of every recruitment panel has completed safer recruitment training and that training is refreshed every 3 years;
- appropriate checks and written assurances are obtained for agency staff, contractors, volunteers and trainee teachers;
- no individual who is barred from working with children is permitted to engage in regulated activity;
- all recruitment and vetting processes comply with statutory requirements and Trust procedures; and
- staff understand and comply with any relevant childcare disqualification requirements

The Principal is responsible for ensuring safer recruitment checks and requirements are implemented effectively and that appropriate records are maintained. Further details are outlined in the Trust's Safer Recruitment policy.

All volunteers are subject to an appropriate risk assessment before undertaking duties within a TMET school. The school will determine whether the role constitutes regulated activity and will ensure that in line with new statutory guidance all necessary safeguarding checks including obtaining a DBS check with children's barred-list information where required.

All volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding information, understand how to report concerns, and be expected to follow the TMET Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.
Concerns about a volunteer's suitability to work with children are managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures and referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where required.

15. Our Role in the Prevention of Abuse

Our schools play a key role in preventing harm and abuse both online and in person by fostering an ethos and culture where children feel safe, respected, valued and listened to. Our schools maintain an ethos of vigilance and child-centred practice, underpinned by the principle that 'it could happen here', ensuring pupils know there is always a trusted adult they can approach if they are worried or need support.

Children are taught about safeguarding (including PSHE, online safety, health, relationships, racism, discrimination, extra-familial harm and wider subjects) through a broad and balanced curriculum. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Our school's approach is further strengthened through aligned policies, practices and values that promote respect, dignity inclusion and positive behaviour, ensuring every child has a voice and knows their concerns will be taken seriously.

16. Extra-Familial Harm (Contextual Safeguarding)

Extra-Familial Harm refers to abuse or exploitation that occurs outside the child's family environment. Contextual safeguarding is the approach used to understand and respond to the wider relationships, environment and circumstances in which harm may occur.

The DSL and school leaders will assess the risks and issues within the school and wider community including online when considering the safety and wellbeing of pupils. The school will also identify and respond to its local context, including particular locations, peer groups, times of day, transport, routes, and online environments. These identified risks will inform safeguarding practice, staff training, the curriculum and partnership work with parents, carers, the police, children's social care and other relevant agencies and partners.

17. Recognising Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. It can involve inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm, and may occur in family, institutional, community, or online contexts. Abuse can be perpetrated by adults or by other children (*child-on-child abuse*).

The four main categories of abuse are:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse** (including child-on-child sexual violence and harassment)
- **Neglect**

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are rarely isolated issues and may overlap. Children may be harmed by adults or by other children. Children may also cause harm to parents, carers or other family members, sometimes referred to as child-to-parent or caregiver abuse.

Other safeguarding concerns such as exploitation (e.g. criminal or sexual exploitation), domestic abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, and risks linked to SEND and vulnerability are also covered in *KCSIE 2026*.

Indicators of abuse and neglect:
The detailed definitions and signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation are set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026** (Part One).

All TMET staff are expected to be familiar with these, and the Trust provides induction and regular training to ensure staff can recognise and respond appropriately.

Staff must report any concerns about a child immediately to the DSL, in line with this policy.

18. Safeguarding Children Susceptible to Radicalisation and Extremism

The Prevent Duty requires schools to safeguard children who may be susceptible to radicalisation or extremist influences. Extremist groups may attempt to exploit children, encouraging intolerance, discrimination, or violence. Such exploitation and radicalisation are safeguarding concerns.

TMET schools value freedom of speech as a fundamental right but recognise it carries responsibilities. Free speech must never be used to justify violence, harm, or discrimination and is subject to laws on equality, human rights, and community safety.

Schools will protect children from extremist influences, whether linked to religious, political, far-right, nationalist, or other ideologies. DSLs remain alert to local and national risks, informed through Police Counter Terrorism Local Profile briefings. Current priorities in Leicestershire include AQ/IS-inspired terrorism, far right and extreme right-wing terrorism, fascination with committing violence and mass casualty attacks (FCVAMCA), online extremism, and self-initiated terrorists.

Risk reduction: Principals and DSLs will assess and manage risk through the Prevent Risk Assessment, considering the curriculum (including RE and PSHE), SEND provision, assemblies, use of premises by external groups, integration, anti-bullying measures, and community context.
Staff awareness: All staff are trained to recognise potential indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation, such as identity or personal crises, isolation, grievances, or contact with extremist materials or recruiters. Staff must remain alert to these risks and act in line with Prevent training and LLR SCP guidance.

Staff responsibilities: All staff receive regular Prevent training and follow the Notice–Check–Share procedure. Concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation must be raised with the DSL, who will consider referral to the Channel programme if appropriate.

19. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is a form of child abuse where an individual or group exploits an imbalance of power to coerce, control or manipulate a child into criminal activity (KCSIE 2026). This may include drug running, theft, serious violence, or online activity including cybercrime.

Our approach:
Staff: Stay alert to indicators (e.g. going missing, unexplained money/items, changes in wellbeing, association with older peers, carrying a weapon) and report concerns immediately to the DSL.
DSL: Follows local safeguarding partnership procedures and, where appropriate, refers to Children's Social Care and the Police.
Education: Curriculum and pastoral programmes build awareness of exploitation, refusal skills, and how to access safe exit routes and trusted support.
Parents and carers: Offered signposting to resources to help them recognise risks and support children at home.

20. County Lines & Child Financial Abuse

County Lines and Child Financial Abuse (CFB) are forms of criminal exploitation. County Lines involves gangs or networks using children to move or sell drugs across areas, often through coercion or violence. CFB involves grooming children, often online, to open bank accounts or move money illegally ("money muling").
Our approach:
Staff: Stay alert to indicators and report all concerns to the DSL.
DSL: Follows local safeguarding and law enforcement protocols, including intelligence-sharing with the Police.
Education: Online safety, PSHE and assemblies cover grooming, financial scams, and criminal exploitation.
Parents and carers: Provided with trusted advice and guidance on recognising risks and preventing exploitation.

21. Knife Crime, Gangs and Serious Violence

Knife crime is any crime that involves a knife that 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

TMET recognises that serious violence is a safeguarding concern and may be linked to bullying, peer conflict, criminal and sexual exploitation, gangs, county lines activity or the carrying of weapons. Staff will remain vigilant to indicators of risk, including changes in behaviour, unexplained absences, concerning peer associations, declining educational engagement, unexplained injuries, possession of money and gifts, or involvement in criminal or violent activity.

Any concern that a child may be at risk of serious violence including knife crime or posing a risk to themselves or others on or off site (including online), must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately. The DSL will assess risk, implement appropriate safeguarding arrangements and support plans, work with relevant agencies and consider referrals to CASP/ First Response, or Family Help where additional support is required. Where a crime may have been committed or there is immediate risk of harm, the police will be contacted without delay. TMET schools provide targeted support and interventions including pastoral support and monitor attendance, and exclusions patterns and any other potential indicators of risk; as trigger points. TMET schools will work with the **Violence Reduction Network** to access advice, resources, and interventions.

22. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Sextortion

CSE is a form of **child sexual abuse** (*KCSIE 2026*).
Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. This may be in exchange for something the child needs or wants, for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator, or through violence or the threat of violence.

Sextortion is a type of online blackmail when perpetrators threaten to share sexual images, videos, or information about a child unless they pay money or share more images or do something they don't want to. A child can be a victim of sextortion even if they have never shared a sexual image. Perpetrators may use edited photographs, stolen images or AI-generated deepfake images and videos that falsely appear to show the child.

Children cannot consent to their own exploitation. A child may not recognise that they are being exploited, may believe they are in a genuine relationship, or may be criminalised for actions undertaken under coercion.
Our approach:

- Staff: Trained to recognise indicators and report all concerns to the DSL.
- DSL: Follows local safeguarding partnership procedures; considers referrals to Children's Social Care, Police and health services; ensures provision of care and support for the victim; records actions and decisions with rationale.
- Education: Curriculum teaches healthy relationships, consent, coercion, online safety and help-seeking, adapted for age and need (including SEND).

23. Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking

Modern slavery and human trafficking are forms of child abuse and exploitation (KCSIE 2026). They may involve forced labour, servitude, slavery, exploitation, or human trafficking - the movement of children for the purpose of abuse.

<u>Our approach:</u>

- **Staff**: Remain vigilant to potential indicators and report concerns immediately to the DSL.
- **DSL:** Follows local safeguarding partnership procedures, uses the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) where appropriate, and liaises with Children's Social Care and/or the Police.
- **Record-keeping**: All concerns, actions and decisions are recorded and stored securely in line with TMET policy.

24. Child on Child Abuse & Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Child-on-child abuse can include but is not limited to:

- bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children;
- physical abuse, including serious physical assault and threats involving weapons;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- misogynistic or misandrist abuse and harassment;
- causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent;
- making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including digitally altered or AI-generated images, deepfakes and "deep nudes";
- upskirting; and
- initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.

Sexual behaviour exists on a continuum, ranging from developmentally expected behaviour through inappropriate and problematic behaviour to abusive and violent behaviour. The school will consider the child's age, developmental stage, understanding, vulnerability, the nature and frequency of the behaviour, any difference in age or power and the wider context.

TMET has a zero-tolerance approach; incidents are never dismissed as "banter," "part of growing up," or "just having a laugh." The school will maintain a whole-school approach to preventing and responding to child-on-child abuse by providing an age-appropriate preventative curriculum covering healthy relationships, respectful behaviour, online safety, and how to seek help and providing children with clear, accessible and trusted routes for reporting concerns.

Our approach:

- **Staff:** Remain vigilant, have a zero-tolerance approach do not downplay behaviours, and report all concerns to the DSL.
- **DSL:** Follows school procedures for HSB/sexual violence and harassment (see Appendix 3); ensures timely referrals to Children's Social Care/Police where required; records all actions and decisions.
- **Support & response:** Parents and carers are informed as appropriate, victims and perpetrators are supported, and proportionate sanctions applied, including risk assessments where necessary. Preventive education is delivered through curriculum and pastoral programmes.

25. Consensual and non-consensual Making or Sharing of Nudes and Semi Nudes

Incidents of sharing nudes or semi-nudes (sometimes called "sexting") are managed as safeguarding matters.

Our approach:

- **Staff:** Do not view or forward images; follow the DSL pathway in line with UKCIS "Sharing nudes and semi-nudes" guidance.
- **DSL:** Assesses the risk, records decisions, and involves the Police and/or Children's Social Care where required. Devices and evidence are managed lawfully and proportionately.
- **Education:** Pupils are taught about consent, the law, digital safety, and the risks of image sharing.
- **Parents and carers:** Provided with information and signposting to help them support their children.

26. Children and the court system

Children may be required to give evidence in criminal courts – either as victims or as witnesses to crimes. This is a significant source of stress and anxiety, and staff should be aware that a child who is involved in court proceedings may be distracted, withdrawn, or emotionally dysregulated in ways that are not immediately explained. Age-appropriate guides exist to help children aged 5–11 and 12–17 understand the process. Family court proceedings following parental separation can also cause significant distress – children in these situations may need additional pastoral support even when there is no direct safeguarding concern. Staff **inform the DSL**. The school signposts families to official age-appropriate guides and provides pastoral support as needed.

27. Children with family members in prison

Staff remain non-judgemental and supportive towards the child and family, **informing the DSL** to coordinate support and external signposting. Attendance and wellbeing are monitored; curriculum/pastoral adjustments made as needed.

28. Homelessness

DSLs know local housing referral routes and escalate concerns as early as possible. Homelessness risk does not replace referrals to Children's Social Care where harm/risk of harm is present. Early Help is offered and recorded. Children experiencing homelessness will be highlighted and supported via the TMET Vulnerability Index. However, some 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians and will require a different level of intervention and support. In these cases, Children's Social Care will be the lead agency for these children, and the DSL (or a deputy) will ensure appropriate referrals and support are in place.

DSLs are aware of the new duty placed on local housing authorities by The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act to notify schools, health visiting services and GPs, when a child is placed in temporary accommodation.

29. Young Carers

Staff are trained to notice signs that a child may be a young carer, such as persistent tiredness, lateness, or difficulty completing homework. Where concerns are identified, staff notify the DSL, who will coordinate support within school, ensure reasonable adjustments are made (e.g. flexibility with homework, deadlines, or uniform expectations), and make referrals to specialist services when appropriate. The DSL will also liaise with external agencies, such as health or social care, to make sure the child's wider needs are met.

Parents and carers are encouraged to inform the school if a child has caring responsibilities so that help can be provided at the earliest opportunity. Early identification enables schools to provide timely support, reduce barriers to learning, and promote the child's wellbeing.

30. Domestic Violence and Abuse & Violence between young people (Teen relationships)

TMET schools use **Operation Encompass** and follow local safeguarding procedures. Staff must report any concerns to the DSL immediately. The DSL will assess risk, liaise with **CASP/First Response** and/or the **Police** as appropriate, and ensure information is shared securely with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

We recognise that domestic abuse can significantly impact children's safety, wellbeing, and learning. Abuse may occur within the home or in young people's own intimate relationships. Staff are alert to warning signs such as controlling behaviour, isolation, or unexplained absences.

Education across all phases promotes **healthy, respectful relationships, equality, and consent**, while targeted interventions and pastoral support are provided for affected pupils. Schools also work with parents and carers, where

safe to do so, and make use of the **Early Help Offer** to reduce risk and provide ongoing support.

31. Children Missing Education (CME) Attendance & Safeguarding

TMET recognises that attendance is a safeguarding issue and that children missing education, persistent absence, severe absence, repeated lateness, bespoke timetables and unexplained absences may be indicators of wider safeguarding concerns.

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. This includes children not being home educated appropriately and children who are not on any school roll.

Our staff understand the differences between CME, persistent absence and severe absence and are aware that poor attendance can be a vital warning sign of abuse, neglect, exploitation or unmet needs.

Attendance concerns indicate:

- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Mental health
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- County lines activity
- Serious violence
- Family breakdown
- Homelessness
- Other safeguarding vulnerabilities

In line with working together to improve school attendance (2026) attendance information forms an important part of safeguarding assessment and decision making. Attendance data is regularly reviewed alongside wider vulnerability information to identify children who may require additional support, Family Help intervention or referrals to Children's Social Care.

Children with Social Workers, Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plan, Family Help Plans SEND, medical needs, mental health difficulties or other identified vulnerabilities will receive enhanced monitoring and support.

Where pupils go missing from school during the day, the DSL and/or a senior leader will be informed immediately. Appropriate action will be taken without delay to locate the child, reduce the risk of harm and assess any safeguarding concerns including risk relating to abuse, neglect, exploitation and serious violence.
Our approach is informed by the local Educational Welfare Policies, local safeguarding procedures for children missing education, and our Attendance Policy, which sets out day-to-day processes for pupil absence.
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If a child is removed from our school roll for elective home education, relocation, extended absence or any other lawful reason, we will notify the Local Authority without delay, in line with statutory requirements. Where a child is identified as missing in education, LA guidance will be followed by completing a Child Missing Education referral. Accurate records will be maintained of all actions taken, including communication with relevant partner agencies. Child files will be securely transferred to the appropriate person or new school as soon as this information is available.
Through effective attendance monitoring, professional curiosity and multi-agency working, TMET aims to identify concerns early, promote children's welfare, prevent risks from escalating and ensure that every child remains visible, safe and engaged in education.

32. Honour or Faith Based Abuse

TMET schools recognise that honour or faith-based abuse include Honour Based Abuse (HBA) abused linked to faith, belief, or culture (for example spirit possession, witchcraft, or ritual abuse), **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, and **forced marriage**. These practices are never acceptable in any community.

- **FGM:** Staff receive training to recognise risks and signs. It is a **mandatory duty** for teachers to report directly to the Police any known case of FGM involving a girl under 18. All suspicions or concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- **Forced Marriage:** Since 2023, it is a crime to cause a child to marry before 18, even without threats or coercion. Concerns must be reported to the DSL, who may refer to Children's Social Care, the Police, and the Forced Marriage Unit.
- **Other abuse linked to faith or belief:** Includes harmful practices such as spirit possession, witchcraft, breast ironing, or ritual abuse. Staff must treat these as seriously as any other form of abuse and report to the DSL without delay.

All concerns relating to harmful practices must be reported immediately to the DSL, who will follow local safeguarding procedures and involve statutory agencies as appropriate.

33. Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement occurs when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) lives with someone other than a parent or close relative for 28 days or more, without Local Authority involvement. Close relatives are defined as parents, stepparents (if married or in a civil partnership), siblings, and grandparents. All other arrangements, including living with family friends, more distant relatives, or host families, may constitute private fostering.

It is a **legal duty under the Children Act 1989** for parents or private foster carers to notify the Local Authority at least six weeks before such an arrangement begins, or immediately if it is unplanned or already in place. This allows the Local Authority to assess the arrangement and provide support to keep the child safe.

Staff in TMET schools are aware of what constitutes private fostering and of their duty to notify the DSL if they become aware of such an arrangement. The DSL will then inform Children's Social Care in line with statutory requirements. We recognise the apprehension some carers may feel and will support both the carer and child to ensure the child's wellbeing is prioritised.

34. Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children & Children in Kinship Care

TMET recognises that children who are looked after, previously looked after, living in kinship care arrangements, with connected persons carers, or within family network arrangements may have experienced abuse, neglect, trauma, loss or instability and may require additional support to achieve positive educational and safeguarding outcomes.

The school will work closely with carers, social workers, Virtual School Head, and other professionals to promote attendance, wellbeing, educational achievements and safeguarding. Appropriate staff will understand the child's legal status, care arrangements and any delegated authority.

The Designated Teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority's Virtual School Head and will maintain effective communication with relevant professionals and will support the role of the Virtual School in promoting educational outcomes for children in care and

those living in kinship arrangements.

Where appropriate, the school will contribute to care planning, Family Help, multi-agency meetings and targeted support, ensuring that children's individual needs, vulnerabilities, and lived experiences remain central to decision-making. Staff will remain alert to barriers that may affect attendance, engagement, progress, wellbeing and emotional development and will work proactively to provide the right support.

35. Work Experience

TMET recognises that work experience placements provide valuable opportunities for young people but also require appropriate safeguarding arrangements. The school will ensure that all employers have suitable, health and safety, safeguarding procedures in place.

Where a placement involves frequent or overnight supervision, care, training, or instruction of a child, the school will seek assurance that the provider has completed all necessary safeguarding checks and that adults working with the child are suitable to do so.

Work experience arrangements will be planned and monitored in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 with safety, welfare and best interests of the child always remaining paramount.

36. Mental Health

TMET recognises that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has experienced, or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or other adverse experiences. Experiences of trauma can have significant and lasting impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, behaviour, attendance, relationships and educational outcomes.

All staff should be alert to signs that may indicate a child is struggling with their mental health, including significant changes in behaviour, persistent difficulties with sleep, withdrawal from friends or activities, self-neglect, self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts or other indicators of emotional distress. Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions; however, they are well placed to identify concerns, record observations and take appropriate action.

Where a member of staff has a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they must act immediately and report it to the DSL, or Deputy DSL. The DSL will consider the appropriate response, including whether there are concerns relating to abuse, neglect, exploitation or other vulnerabilities and whether support from external agencies is required. Where appropriate, the DSL will work with parents and carers and consider the need for additional pastoral, Family Help, health or specialist services.

TMET schools provide support through pastoral systems, Family Help, attendance and wellbeing interventions, mental health support services and the school's graduated response. Staff, pupils and families will be supported to access specialist services where required, ensuring children receive the right help at the right time.

37. Medical Conditions and Allergy Safety

TMET recognises that children with medical conditions, including severe allergies and anaphylaxis, may be particularly vulnerable
Each school will:

- Appoint an allergy lead
- Maintain a register of all children with medical conditions and allergies and their medication

- Maintain accurate Individual Healthcare Plans
- Identify children with medical conditions and allergies on safeguarding systems and MIS systems
- Ensure all staff have had allergy training
- Ensure emergency medication is readily available
- Ensure educational visits and residential visits consider medical conditions and allergies
- Ensure medical condition and allergy information is communicated appropriately

The school allergy lead will work with the DSL where concerns indicate possible neglect, fabricated illness, medical neglect or a failure to meet a child's healthcare need.

Repeated failure to provide essential medication, equipment or treatment may constitute neglect and will be considered under the school's safeguarding arrangements.

38. Bullying and Safeguarding

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally harms another person physically or emotionally. It can be carried out by children or adults and may take many forms, including cyberbullying. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice linked to protected characteristics (e.g. race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability) or other differences, real or perceived.

Some forms of bullying are criminal offences (e.g. violence, theft, harassment, hate crime) and may require Police involvement.

All TMET schools have a legal duty to maintain an Anti-Bullying Policy, accessible on the school website, setting out clear procedures for managing incidents. Staff and pupils are made aware of this policy, and anti-bullying education is delivered through assemblies, lessons, and pastoral programmes.

Where bullying presents a safeguarding concern, the DSL and Principal will assess the risk of significant harm and, where appropriate, seek advice from Children's Social Care or the Police.

39. Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from harmful and inappropriate online material. TMET schools take a **whole-school approach to online safety**, which protects and educates pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology, and establishes clear processes to identify, intervene, and escalate concerns where appropriate.

Online risks are categorised into four areas (KCSIE 2026):
Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content. This includes material such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremist ideology, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; 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, including those generated using AI and online bullying. **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. Concerns should be reported to the **Anti-Phishing Working Group** (https://apwg.org/).

Filtering and monitoring:

- Filtering and monitoring systems are essential to safeguarding children. TMET will take all reasonable steps to minimise children's exposure to harmful and inappropriate content through the school's IT systems and internet connected devices. TMET uses **Lightspeed** to provide filtering and monitoring across all schools.
- The **Lead DSL** is responsible for ensuring that systems are understood, reviewed, and used effectively, and that staff receive appropriate training on their roles and responsibilities.
- In line with *KCSIE 2026* and the **DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards**, our schools will:
- ✓ Identify and assign clear roles and responsibilities for filtering and monitoring.
- ✓ 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 safeguarding needs.
- The **Trust Board**, via the Safeguarding Trustee, reviews provision and works with IT staff, the Trust Safeguarding Lead, and service providers to ensure standards are met.

Mobile Technology

TMET supports a mobile free learning environment. Schools will have clear procedures regarding:

- Possession of mobile phones
- Storage arrangements
- Authorised use
- Emergency use
- Confiscation procedures.

Staff are not permitted to use personal mobile phones or other personal devices whilst pupils are present, including making or receiving calls, sending text messages, accessing applications or contacting children, young people or their families. Personal devices must only be used during non-contact time and in areas where pupils are not present, such as the staff room. Mobile phones and personal devices must be switched off or set to silent mode, with Bluetooth disabled or hidden. They must not be used during teaching time unless express permission has been granted by the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. They may be used in exceptional circumstances, such as an emergency or for an approved work-related purpose, including two-factor authentication for CPOMS.

Where a member of staff requires access to a personal mobile device during contact time, for example because of an urgent family, child or dependent-related matter, permission must be obtained from the Principal in advance. In other circumstances the school office should be used as the designated emergency contact point.

Staff must not use personal devices, including mobile phones or cameras, to take photographs, videos or recordings of pupils, their work, or any information that could identify a pupil. Where photographs, videos or recordings are required for educational, safeguarding or operational purposes, school-provided equipment must be used. Similarly, where communication with pupils or families is required, including during educational visits and off-site activities, staff will be provided with a school device.

In an emergency, where a school-owned device is unavailable, staff may use a personal mobile phone but must withhold their telephone number by dialling 141 to maintain confidentiality.

Staff may use personal mobile phones during their lunch break for emails, text messages and internet access. However, any mobile calls, either made or received, must be conducted outside of the school building or in a private space and not in the staffroom.

Any breach regarding the use of personal devices in school, without prior arrangement with the Principal or Senior Leader, may result in disciplinary action.

Staff remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns involving:

- Image sharing
- Bullying
- Sexual harassment
- Exploitation
- Online grooming
- AI-generated images
- Deepfake content

Any safeguarding concern identified through mobile phone / technology use must be reported to the DSL immediately.

Staff training and responsibilities:

- All staff receive safeguarding training, including online safety, at induction and through at least annual updates.
- This includes awareness of the school's filtering and monitoring systems, how to report concerns, and their role in supporting children's safe and responsible use of technology.
- Staff are expected to model safe online behaviours and to embed online safety within teaching, learning, and pastoral care.

Cybercrime:

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers or the internet. It may be:

- **Cyber-enabled** – crimes that also occur offline but are amplified online (e.g. fraud).
- **Cyber-dependent** – crimes that can only be committed using computers, such as unauthorised access to systems (hacking), denial of service (DoS/DDoS) attacks, or creating and distributing malware.

Children with advanced computing skills may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. Where concerns arise, the DSL may refer into the **Cyber Choices programme** (a national police initiative supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency) to divert children into more positive use of their skills.
Cyber Choices does not cover cyber-enabled crimes such as online fraud, drug purchasing, child sexual abuse or exploitation, or online bullying. Where such cases arise and a crime may have been committed, schools will follow safeguarding procedures and involve the Police and other relevant agencies.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The rapid growth of AI technologies presents new online safety risks for children and young people. These include exposure to harmful or misleading AI-generated content (such as deepfakes, altered images, or disinformation), inappropriate or unsafe contact through AI-driven chatbots, and risks associated with children misusing generative tools (e.g. creating harmful content, breaching copyright, or sharing personal data). AI systems may also amplify discriminatory or biased material, or be exploited by offenders to groom, exploit, or deceive children. TMET schools recognise these emerging risks and ensure that filtering and monitoring systems remain responsive to developments in AI.

Staff training includes raising awareness of AI-related risks, equipping staff to identify and respond to concerns, and supporting pupils to develop critical digital literacy skills to navigate and question content safely. Schools provide parents and carers with guidance to reinforce safe, and responsible use of technology.

Education and parental engagement:

Online safety is embedded across the curriculum (Computing, RSE/PSHE, assemblies) and adapted for vulnerable children, including those with SEND.

Parents and carers are supported with guidance on online safety, including the use of parental controls, monitoring activity, and encouraging open conversations about online risks.

40. Reasonable Force & Restrictive Intervention

There may be occasions where staff need to use reasonable force to prevent a child from harming themselves or others, causing damage to property or committing a criminal offence. Any intervention must be lawful, reasonable, proportionate and used only for the minimum time necessary.

TMET promotes positive behaviour support and early intervention to reduce the need for restrictive practices. Where appropriate, individual risk assessments, support plans and reasonable adjustments will be implemented.

Additional care will be taken where an incident involves a child with special educational needs or disabilities, a mental health need or a medical condition. Staff will consider the child's additional vulnerability, any reasonable adjustments required and the School's Public Sector Equality Duty

Any use of reasonable force or restrictive intervention will be recorded and reviewed in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Trust's Restrictive Intervention Policy. Where an incident raises a concern about possible abuse, inappropriate practice or harm to a child, it will also be managed under this safeguarding and child protection policy and disciplinary policy.

41. Suspension, Exclusion & Safeguarding

TMET recognises that suspension and permanent exclusion can be both an outcome of safeguarding concerns and a factor that increases a child's vulnerability to harm. Children who are suspended or excluded may be at greater risk of harm, exploitation, disengagement from education, poor mental health, serious violence, child criminal exploitation or child sexual exploitation and involvement in unsafe peer groups.

In line with statutory guidance on Suspension and Permanent exclusion (2026) decisions will be lawful, reasonable, proportionate and taken only after careful consideration of the individual circumstances of the child. Schools will balance the needs and safety of the individual child with those of the wider school community.

Before a suspension or permanent exclusion is considered, the school will take account of:

- any safeguarding concerns or child protection history
- unmet educational, welfare or family needs
- SEND or any reasonable adjustments that may be required mental health or emotional wellbeing needs
- indicators of child criminal exploitation or child sexual exploitation
- experience of trauma, abuse, neglect or adverse childhood experiences
- attendance concerns, including persistent or severe absence
- whether additional support, Family Help or multi-agency intervention is required

Where safeguarding concerns are known or suspected, the DSL will be consulted as part of the decision-making process and any relevant information will be considered before a decision is reached.

The school recognises that suspension and exclusions may indicate that a child requires additional support. Where appropriate, the school will work with families and partner agencies to identify and address underlying needs and reduce the risk of further exclusion

Following a suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will:

- Maintain appropriate welfare contact with the child and family in line with statutory guidance
- Complete and review vulnerability and safeguarding assessments
- Review any existing Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan, Family Help Plan, or other support arrangements

- Assess risk relating to exploitation, serious violence, missing episodes and community harm
- Work with external agencies where additional intervention is required
- Ensure relevant safeguarding information is shared appropriately with receiving provisions
- Support continuity of education, safeguarding and welfare arrangements
- Monitor attendance, engagement and wellbeing during periods away from school

Where a child is placed in an Alternative Provision following a suspension the school remains responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of that child. Appropriate information sharing, monitoring arrangements and regular safeguarding reviews will be maintained throughout the placement

The school and the Trust will use information relating to suspensions, exclusions and attendance as part of its wider safeguarding oversight to identify emerging risks, patterns and vulnerabilities, ensuring that children receive the right help at the right time.

42. Temporary Separation for Safeguarding Purposes

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to temporarily prevent a pupil from attending school to safeguard another child or children. This may be considered where there is an identified safeguarding risk, including where an allegation of serious harm has been made by a pupil(s) against another.

This is a safeguarding measure and is not a suspension, permanent exclusion or disciplinary action.
Any decision will be made on a case-by-case basis and only where:

- There is a clear safeguarding risk
- Separation is necessary to protect one or more children
- The risk cannot be managed safely through alternative arrangements within school

The DSL or Deputy DSL in consultation with the Principal will lead the decision-making process and complete or update an appropriate risk assessment. Advice will be sought from Children's Social Care, the Police, the Trust or other relevant agencies.

In reaching the decision the school will consider:

- the safety, welfare and best interests of all children involved
- the wishes and views of children, where appropriate
- equality, human rights and any reasonable adjustment that may be required
- whether alternative arrangements could safely manage risks
- the educational, pastoral and wellbeing needs of the child involved
- the proportionality of the arrangements and duration

Parents and carers will be informed of the reasons for the temporary separation and kept updated through the process. The Trust will also be informed where appropriate.

Any arrangements will be reviewed regularly and will remain in place as long as necessary to manage identified risks. The school will ensure appropriate education, safeguarding support and pastoral provision continue throughout the period. A planned and supported reintegration process will be implemented when it is safe and appropriate for the child to return to school.

43. Remote Education

TMET recognises that the same safeguarding principles apply during remote education as in face-to-face teaching. All staff delivering online or remote learning must follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct, the school's Online Safety Policy,

and safeguarding procedures.

When organising live or recorded lessons, staff must ensure:

- neutral or plain backgrounds are used where possible;
- appropriate privacy settings and controls are applied (e.g. managing microphones, cameras, and chat functions);
- lessons are password-protected and access details kept secure;
- expectations for behaviour and participation are clearly shared with pupils, parents, and carers.

Where online tuition or remote learning is used, staff remain vigilant to signs of abuse or neglect and must report concerns to the DSL in line with safeguarding procedures.

44. Local Priorities

In Leicester and Leicestershire, the Local Authority and Safeguarding Children Partnership set priorities that reflect local risks. These include issues such as knife crime, gang involvement, radicalisation, county lines, criminal exploitation, antisocial behaviour, FGM, and wider contextual safeguarding concerns.

At Netherhall Mead, pupils live across Leicester and Leicestershire and therefore, it is difficult to reflect local risks. We have identified the following priorities, in line with the school context:

Local Priority	**Why**	**What we do**
Pupils' communication difficulties	We know that pupils with SEND are more vulnerable and are therefore, at greater risk of being harmed	Maintain a strong culture of vigilance, remain professionally curious, provide pupils with the means to be heard, CPD for staff, work closely with and provide support for families
Pupils' high dependence on others		
Pupils' cognitive difficulties		
Online Safety		Teach online safety and support families in the safe use of technology in the home

Senior Leaders, DSLs and staff are kept aware of these priorities through training and knowledge of pupils and the community. Curriculum provision is tailored to ensure children are well-informed and learn how to keep themselves safe. Schools work closely with the Police, Social Care, and community partners to address these issues effectively.

45. Early Years

Safeguarding is integral to all aspects of Early Years provision. TMET schools will ensure that EYFS practice promotes children's safety, welfare, health and wellbeing in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework. This includes providing safe and well-supervised learning environments, maintaining appropriate staff-to-child ratios, ensuring that only suitable adults work with children, and implementing effective risk assessments for indoor, outdoor and off-site activities.

Early Years staff recognise that young children may communicate distress, unmet need, abuse or neglect through changes in behaviour, attendance, development, communication, emotional regulation, presentation or relationships. Through strong relationships, careful observation, the key person approach and effective partnership working with parents, carers and other professionals, concerns will be identified early and appropriate support provided.

EYFS provision will follow TMET and school procedures relating to intimate care, medical needs, allergy management, hygiene, safer eating practices, risk assessment and first aid. Appropriate paediatric first aid cover will be always maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.

All staff working within EYFS will follow safeguarding, online safety and data protection procedures, including the safe use of devices, images and recordings. Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record children, and all images, recordings and information relating to children will be managed securely and in line with TMET and school procedures and data protection legislation.

46. Alternative Provision

Alternative Provision (AP) refers to education arranged outside mainstream or special schools for pupils who, for a range of reasons, cannot attend mainstream settings. Pupils in AP often have complex needs and may be at increased risk of harm. Governing bodies, proprietors, and school leaders must therefore be aware of the additional safeguarding risks (*KCSIE 2026*).

When our school places a pupil in AP, we:

- ✓ always remain responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of that pupil;
- ✓ ensure the placement is suitable, lawful, and meets the pupil's educational and welfare needs;
- ✓ satisfy ourselves that the provider has appropriate safeguarding policies and practices in place, including safer recruitment, staff training, and clear reporting procedures;
- ✓ maintain regular contact with both the provider and the pupil, reviewing the placement to ensure it continues to meet the child's needs.

We recognise that some AP providers may be unregistered. Where unregistered provision is used, we:

- ✓ check that the provider is not operating illegally and is compliant with the law on registration;
- ✓ use the TMET AP Toolkit to support decision-making, risk assessment, and ongoing monitoring;
- ✓ follow the latest DfE statutory guidance on Alternative Provision (2025) and our Local Authority arrangements, ensuring placements are safe and appropriate.

47. Community-Based Early Help, Targeted Early Help and Supporting Children and their Families

TMET is committed to identifying concerns early and providing the right support at the right time. In line with the Local Authority's implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme, TMET schools work collaboratively with families and partner agencies to provide early intervention, reduce escalation of need and improve outcomes for children. Family Help is based on a coordinated, multi-agency approach that brings services together around the needs of the child and family.

Early Help involves agencies working together to support children and families as soon as concerns emerge, from early years to adolescence. Trained staff and DSLs identify children and families who may benefit from additional coordinate support and work with relevant professionals to coordinate appropriate intervention. This may include an Early Help assessment and a Family Support Plan, ensuring needs are identified and support is provided in a timely and coordinated way.

TMET schools support children and families through **Community-based Early Help, which** is universal, open access support available to all families.

- ➢ **Who it is for:** All families within the local area, typically available without formal assessment.
- ➢ **What it involves:** Universal services like GP visits, health visiting, support via school (Uniform/trips/form filling/school app)
- ➢ **Goal:** To prevent minor issues from escalating and help families build resilience through self-serve or community resources.
- ➢ **Accessing it:** Parents can usually self-refer or simply walk into local community hubs school can also help and support

Targeted Early Help through **Family Help which** provides co-ordinated multi-agency intervention for families with complex emerging needs who require a more personalised pathway and lead professional.

- **Who it is for:** Families with multiple concerns (Parental MH, DV/DA or school non-attendance)
- **What it involves:** Coordinated, multi-agency support; formal assessment, a tailored family plan, and a designated lead worker.
- **Goal:** To actively address complex risk factors before they deteriorate to the point of requiring statutory social care (e.g., child protection).
- **Accessing it:** Requires a professional referral and a formal Early Help Assessment (EHA).

If families decline support and concerns continue or escalate, the DSL will consider whether additional intervention or a referral to the Children's Social Care is required. Where needs become more complex or progress is limited, a step-up to Children's Social Care may be necessary. Equally, where progress has been made and risks have reduced, support may be stepped down to universal or targeted services. Throughout this process, the child's welfare, lived experience and best interests will remain central to all decision making.

48. Reporting Concerns – Taking Action

All staff must maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and recognise that any child, in any family, can be vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation, at home, school, outside the home and online.

Any member of staff may make a referral directly to Children's Social Care, the Police or another appropriate agency if they believe a child is at immediate risk of harm or that a referral is necessary to protect a child. Staff should inform the DSL of any action taken wherever possible.

School Safeguarding reporting Process: we use the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) for recording safeguarding concerns.

School staff are in a unique position to identify and support children at risk of harm. Concerns may arise through:
a direct disclosure;

- information from a third party;
- changes in behaviour, or;
- visible signs of injury.

When a child makes a disclosure or staff have a concern, they must:

- ✓ **Listen** carefully and take the child seriously.
- ✓ **Reassure** the child they are right to share but never promise confidentiality.
- ✓ **Avoid** leading questions, investigation, or physical examination. Clarification should only use open prompts (e.g. *Tell me, Explain, Describe*).
- ✓ **Record** factually what was seen/heard, using the child's own words, with time/date/signature. Do not take photographs.
- ✓ **Report** immediately to the DSL (or deputy), following the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff must remember that it is **not their role to investigate**; only to observe, listen, record and report. Confidentiality must be maintained, and only those who need to know should be informed. Support is available for staff who find disclosures distressing.

Where staff become aware of changes in a child's presentation, behaviour, attendance, emotional wellbeing, relationships, circumstances that may raise concerns they should report and record these concerns without delay.

The DSL or Deputy DSL will consider the information available, assess the risk and determine whether support can be

provided through school-based intervention, Family Help or referral to Children's Social Care, the police or another appropriate agency. Parents and carers will usually be informed of concerns and referrals unless doing so may place a child or another person at risk or compromise an investigation.

TMET expects all staff to maintain professional curiosity and to escalate concerns where they believe a child remains at risk, where action has not been taken or where they disagree with a safeguarding decision. No safeguarding concern should ever be closed without appropriate assessment, intervention and resolution. Staff who require guidance should seek support from the DSL, a senior leader, the TMET Head of Safeguarding, a member of the Central Executive Team or relevant safeguarding agency.

49. Whistleblowing

Children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff do not feel able to do so. All staff have a duty to raise concerns about the conduct or attitude of colleagues. Concerns may be reported to the Chief Executive Officer or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if appropriate.

Staff must follow the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy and are reminded they can also access the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline.

50. Policy review

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

51. Other Relevant Policies

- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- TMET Staff Code of Conduct
- Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct
- IT Acceptable use agreements
- Physical Intervention
- SEND
- Supporting Pupils with medical conditions
- Health and safety
- Online safety
- Recruitment and Selection
- Whistleblowing
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- Allergy Policy
- Supporting children and young people with medical conditions and allergy

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 interests of our children and any implications for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare

APPENDIX 1 – GUIDANCE ON MANAGING ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ADULTS, INCLUDING LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

Scope
Applies to all adults working in or on behalf of the school (employees, supply/agency staff, trainee teachers, contractors, volunteers, governors, visitors, and organisations using school premises for activities with children).

Principles
We follow KCSIE 2026 Part 4 and Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LLR SCP) procedures. All concerns are acted on immediately. Staff must avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations and follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct and *Guidance for Safer Working Practice*.

A. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
An allegation meets the threshold where it is alleged a person has:

- harmed a child or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child; and/or
- behaved in a way that indicates they 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 behaviour outside school).

<u>Reporting routes</u>

- Concerns about staff/volunteers/contractors/supply staff → Principal (or Vice Principal in their absence).
- Concerns about the Principal → CEO (Sarah Ridley) or another Trust Executive Team member.
- Concerns about central Trust staff → CEO.
- Concerns about the CEO → Chair of Trustees (Anthony Glover) at chairoftrustees@tmet.uk.
- Whistleblowing routes remain available (see Whistleblowing Policy).

<u>Immediate actions (case manager = Principal/CEO as applicable)</u>

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm or a crime may have been committed → contact Police/Children's Social Care urgently.
- Take basic fact-finding only (do not investigate): was the person on site; potential contact with child; any witnesses/CCTV.
- Consult the LADO within one working day and follow advice on next steps (strategy discussion, risk assessment, information to the individual, etc.). Suspension is not automatic.
- Do not inform the individual until advised by the LADO
- If the allegation involves supply/contracted staff, also inform the employer/agency.

B. Concerns that do not meet the harms threshold (Low-Level Concerns)

A low-level concern is any concern about an adult's behaviour towards a child that does not meet the threshold above but is inconsistent with the Trust's Code of Conduct or causes unease ("nagging doubt").

<u>Examples include:</u>

- Over-familiarity/favouritism.
- Using personal devices/social media with pupils.
- One-to-one behind closed doors without safeguards.
- Inappropriate or sexualised language.

<u>Expectations</u>

- Report promptly to the Principal (or another member of the SLT)
- Where the concern relates to the Principal, report to the CEO or another Trust Executive Team member; if about

central Trust staff, report to the CEO or another Trust Executive Team; if about the CEO, report to the Chair of Trustees.

- Self-reporting is encouraged. Good-faith reporters are supported. Anonymity is respected as far as reasonably possible.
- Leaders will review the concern (and any pattern) and decide proportionate actions (guidance, supervision, training, management action). Concerns that escalate or constitute a pattern may result in consulting the LADO.

C. Recording, confidentiality and references

- Keep a central, secure log of all allegations and low-level concerns.
- Record: a clear, comprehensive summary of the concern; how it was followed up and resolved; actions/decisions and outcome; who reported (anonymity noted where requested/reasonable).
- Store separately from personnel files unless:
- the concern meets the harms threshold (then keep in personnel file), or
- there are multiple low-level concerns indicating a pattern.
- Handle all information confidentially and in line with Data Protection.
- References: include substantiated safeguarding allegations as required by KCSIE. Do not include low-level concerns unless they evidence a pattern that has met the harms threshold.

D. Staff conduct & training

- All staff, including supply staff, trainees and apprentices, must follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct and safer working practice guidance;
- As part of annual safeguarding training, all staff will receive regular updates on professional conduct, safer working practice, online safety, and acceptable and appropriate use of IT systems, including digital communication. Any communication with pupils, parents, and carers must take place through official school systems and in accordance with Trust policies

APPENDIX 2 - GUIDELINES FOR AVOIDING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE: FOR ALL STAFF MEMBERS

All staff, including supply, volunteers and contractors, must always maintain professional boundaries and follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct and *Guidance for Safer Working Practice (2022)*. This protects both children and adults from risk of harm or false allegations.

Key principles

- Physical contact: May be appropriate in some contexts (e.g. comforting young or distressed children, supporting SEND pupils, providing first aid). Any contact must be necessary, proportionate, and age appropriate. Staff should avoid initiating unnecessary physical contact.

- First aid/medication: Only trained/authorised staff administer first aid or medication, in line with school policy. Records are kept of all interventions.

- Use of reasonable force: Where required to prevent injury to a child or others, staff must use the minimum reasonable force and report immediately to the Principal/DSL. Written records should be made, and witnesses involved wherever possible.

- One-to-one situations: Avoid being alone with a child where possible. Use rooms with visibility (windows/doors open) and ensure another adult knows the meeting is taking place. Peripatetic/1:1 staff must take extra care to follow these principles.

- Conversations and support: Staff should listen and provide reassurance but avoid over-involvement in personal issues. Concerns should be referred promptly to the DSL or appropriate professional.

- Professional behaviour: Staff must be alert to how their words, actions and use of technology may be perceived, and act in ways that uphold trust and confidence in the school.

Reminder
All staff receive annual safeguarding and safer working practice training, including guidance on avoiding situations which could give rise to allegations. Concerns about conduct must be reported in line with Appendix 3 (Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns).

APPENDIX 3 –CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT & HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR (HSB)

Principles

TMET believes that every child has the right to learn in a safe, respectful and supportive environment. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue and can occur both inside and outside school, including online. We recognise that abuse can take place within friendships, peer groups and intimate relationships, and that both the child who has experienced harm and the child displaying harmful behaviour may require safeguarding support.

TMET maintains a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. Staff must never dismiss harmful behaviour as "banter", "part of growing up", "boys being boys", harmless behaviour and must maintain an attitude of 'it can happen here'.

All concerns, disclosures and reports will be taken seriously, acted upon promptly and managed in accordance with Part Five of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.

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

- bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- physical abuse, including serious assault and threats involving weapons;
- abuse within intimate personal relationships;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- harmful sexual behaviour (HSB);
- misogynistic or misandrist behaviour;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent;
- sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated images, deepfakes and digitally altered content;
- upskirting; and
- initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.

Vulnerable groups

TMET recognises that any child can be affected by child-on-child abuse. However, girls are statistically more likely to experience sexual violence and sexual harassment, and children with SEND and disabilities may face increased vulnerability. Staff must remain vigilant and recognise that abuse may be occurring even where no report has been made. Children may communicate concerns through changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation, wellbeing or relationships rather than through direct disclosure.

Sexual behaviour exists on a continuum ranging from developmentally appropriate behaviour through to inappropriate, problematic, harmful, abusive and violent behaviour. When assessing concerns, the school will consider the child's age, developmental stage, understanding, vulnerability, the nature and frequency of the behaviour, any imbalance of power, and the wider context**.**

Preventive Approach

TMET adopts a whole-school approach to prevention through:

- a curriculum that promotes healthy and respectful relationships, consent, equality, online safety and safeguarding awareness;
- clear and trusted reporting systems for pupils;
- staff training to identify, challenge and respond to inappropriate behaviour;
- effective pastoral support and early intervention;
- pupil voice and safeguarding education; and

- the ongoing review of safeguarding trends, incidents and local contextual risks.

Responding to Reports
Response will always be informed by KCSIE 2026 (Part five).

Staff must:
- Listen and reassure, never promise confidentiality.
- Record factually and report immediately to the DSL.
- Avoid viewing/sharing explicit material.

The DSL will:
- Balance the wishes of the victim with safeguarding duties.
- Consider risk assessments, safety planning, and support for both victim and alleged perpetrator.
- Refer to Children's Social Care and/or Police where thresholds are met. Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes and will be reported.
- Implement appropriate safeguarding measures, including temporary separation, increased supervision, amended timetables or other protective arrangements where required to manage risk and safeguard the wellbeing of children.
- Ensure ongoing review, pastoral support, and education continuity.

Recording & Confidentiality:
- All concerns, decisions, and actions will be recorded securely and in accordance with TMET record keeping guidance.
- Anonymity will be protected as far as possible, particularly where Police investigations are ongoing.
- Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only.

Working with Parents and Carers
- Both victim's and alleged perpetrator's parents and carers will normally be engaged unless doing so would place a child at further risk.
- Support arrangements will be explained clearly and consistently.