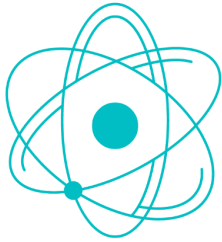


# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY with LOW LEVEL CONCERNS POLICY



## HARDWICK HOUSE SCHOOL

Date of issue: 1st September 2024  
Review Cycle: Annual  
Next Review Date: September 2025

Hardwick House School is part of Newcome Education, which is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Hardwick House School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

The school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- LRB (Health and Safety)
- SchoolPro (data protection)
- Marsh Commercial (insurance)

Hardwick House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Hardwick House School.

The policy documents of Hardwick House School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

## **1 Statement of Intent**

This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, therapists, and anyone working on behalf of Hardwick House School, pupils, parents/carers, external agencies and members of the public.

## **2 Purpose**

Hardwick House School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education, the Proprietary Body, also known as the Governing Body. Any reference to governors means any director of Cavendish Education. Hardwick House School recognises its responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding of children and this policy aims to outline the role that Hardwick House School has in fulfilling these responsibilities in relation to child protection and the procedures that employees should apply. It provides general guidance in relation to child protection but is not exhaustive.

Therefore, employees should use this policy as a good reference point but the needs and safety of the children in their care should be considered on a case by case basis putting each child at the centre of any decisions made.

The Policy applies to all employees of Hardwick House School:

- The policy outlines the expected standards of employees regarding the safeguarding of children and is also expected to be adhered to by any sub-contracted / agency workers.
- It provides guidance on procedures and practices that should be applied in relation to Safeguarding Children i.e. identifying and reporting cases of abuse, **neglect or exploitation**.
- There is an inherent expected standard of conduct that all employees are expected to apply whilst at work, which encompasses the protection of children.

Hardwick House School aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote learner's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.

Children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. Our learners have the right to expect us to provide them with a safe and secure environment. We acknowledge that staff in our school are in a unique position to identify and to help abused and vulnerable children. We also recognise that the protection of our pupils is a shared community responsibility. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

### 3 Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). Hardwick House School complies with this guidance and the procedures set out by the local Safeguarding Children Partnership, Leicestershire County Council.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on independent schools, academies and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils;
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one

person on a school interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques;

- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school;
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18;
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM;
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children;
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children;
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism;
- The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 (and 2018 amendment) and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children;
- The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 is an Act which amends the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to make upskirting a specific offence of voyeurism;

#### 4 Relevant Definitions

In the context of this document:

**Safeguarding Children:** Safeguarding is a term, which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action the school takes to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. With regards to the specific term Safeguarding of Children this involves:

- Protecting children from maltreatment **whether that is within or outside the home, including online;**
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental health and development, as well as physical health and development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and;
- Taking action **as soon as problems emerge** to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect the children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Child/learner/pupil** is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday for those learners with disabilities.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of Hardwick House School, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Parents** refer to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example adoptive parents, step parents and foster parents.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** means the person within the School with responsibility for the day-to-day application of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. At Hardwick House School, this is Chris Sinclair, Deputy Headteacher.

**Safeguarding Governor** means the school Governor nominated to oversee relevant School safeguarding matters. At Hardwick House School, this is **Gary Balcombe, Group Safeguarding, Quality and Compliance Director at Cavendish Education. He can be contacted via email at [g.balcombe@cavendisheducation.com](mailto:g.balcombe@cavendisheducation.com).**

**Children's Social Care** means the team within the Local Authority, which has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

**Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP)** means the local authority statutory organisation responsible for the coordination of the various agencies responsible for the welfare and well-being of children for example colleges, social services, police, voluntary organisations etc.

**Child Abuse** is a form of maltreatment where a person often in a position of power inflicts harm upon a child. **Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.**

Under the Children's Act there are 4 areas that are identified as abuse.

- 1. Physical** – a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Giving a child alcohol, illicit drugs or poison is also regarded as physical abuse
- 2. Sexual** – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbations, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children to look at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education and **all** staff should be aware of it and of the procedures set out in this policy for dealing with it.
- 3. Emotional** – the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectation being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- 4. Neglect** – the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to; provide adequate food,

clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):** occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation. Child Criminal exploitation is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms, to commit theft, shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** is a type of sexual abuse. It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection.

## 5 Safeguarding and Child Protection Statement

Hardwick House School recognises the moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all learners and endeavours to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. The school is alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and will follow the set procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. Hardwick House School encourages children to talk about their worries and to report their concerns to us in any way that is comfortable to them. The welfare of learners is of paramount importance.

In upholding this statement, Hardwick House School expects that all staff will adhere to good practice in relation to safeguarding / child protection, as outlined below:

- i. Establishing and maintaining an ethos where all learners (including those having protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010) feel secure and are encouraged to report concerns, talk, and are listened to.
- ii. Meeting the legal duties under the Equality Act, Hardwick House School will not unlawfully discriminate against learners with protected characteristics; the School will carefully consider how to best support learners regarding



particular protected characteristics; the School will take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting learners.

- iii. Treating all learners with respect.
- iv. Setting a good example by conducting themselves appropriately.
- iii. Involving learners in decisions that affect them.
- iv. Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among learners.
- v. Being a good listener.
- vi. Being alert to changes in learners' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- vii. Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- viii. Reading and understanding the school's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures, Staff Code of Conduct and "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those who work with children in education settings" (February 2022) documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, and information-sharing.
- ix. Asking the learner's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, personal care, physical support during PE or administering first aid, unless the learner's behaviour is in danger of causing harm to themselves or others.
- x. Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between learners and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- xi. Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some learners lead to an increased risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- xii. Applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort and in compliance with school procedures.
- xiii. Following the School's rules with regard to communication with learners and use of social media and online networking.
- xiv. Referring all concerns about a learner's safety and welfare to the DSL or, if necessary, directly to the Police or Children's Social Care (also known as Early Help in Leicestershire).

All Governors, staff and volunteers are to be aware that the school regards that inappropriate behaviour towards learners as unacceptable and that their conduct towards learners must be beyond reproach.

Governors, Staff and volunteers should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the School staff and a learner under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that learner is over the age of consent.



## 6 Children Who May be Particularly Vulnerable and Contextual Safeguarding

Hardwick House School recognises that some children are more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability such as societal attitudes and assumptions including prejudice and discrimination; child protection procedures that are inadequately responsive to children's diverse circumstances; isolation, including being absent from education; social exclusion; communication issues; a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur; as well as an individual child's personality, behaviour, disability, mental health and family circumstances.

Children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) share the right of all children to protection from abuse. Children with a diagnosis of ASD are potentially more vulnerable, because they may find it difficult to communicate with others, struggle with social interaction or have difficulties understanding people's motives. They may be less able to report abuse and thus be more vulnerable to it. This necessitates greater vigilance among professionals in recognising, reporting and investigating potential signs of abuse as well as ensuring that safeguarding issues remain on the agenda when working with autistic children and young people.

Identifying safeguarding issues for children with ASD and knowing what should be investigated can be complex as many traits of autism can be confused with signs of abuse and neglect.

To ensure that all of learners receive equal protection, the school will give special consideration to children who are:

- i. disabled or have additional special educational needs;
- ii. struggling with mental or physical health issues. **The School acknowledges that learners can become temporarily vulnerable due to mental health;**
- iii. young carers;
- iv. living in a domestic abuse situation, **including teenage relationship abuse. Domestic Abuse includes where they see, hear or experience its effects;**
- v. affected by parental substance misuse;
- vi. asylum seekers;
- vii. looked after by the Local Authority;
- viii. absent from education, **particularly unexplainable and/or persistent absences;**
- ix. Have **or have** needed an allocated social worker. **Children with a social worker have a potentially greater risk of harm;**
- x. otherwise living away from home;
- xi. vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying behaviours;
- xii. living in temporary accommodation;

- xiii. living transient lifestyles;
- xiv. living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations;
- xv. vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality;
- xvi. involved directly or indirectly in child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- xvii. do not have English as a first language;
- xviii. at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage or honour based abuse;
- xix. at risk of becoming radicalised, involved in gangs and/or violent extremism;

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

*Hardwick House School is acutely aware of the heightened vulnerability of our learners and as such recognises the increased level of risk associated with learners being victims of sexual abuse from other children, as well as unknowingly committing sexual abuse against other children. Legally, we are not required to report abuse by, or to a child, by a child to the Police, however, we as a school will assess each instance reported and follow the same course of action as with any other safeguarding concern.*

**Contextual safeguarding** seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside of their home, either from adults or other young people. Hardwick House School assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of our learners. The School recognises the link between mental health, school attendance and children “absent from education” and the impact on learning, progress, and educational attainment. The School will endeavour to work in partnership with agencies that reach into extra-familial contexts (transport providers, schools, retailers, resident associations, parks & recreational services etc).

## 7 Attendance

It is recognised by the school that full attendance at school is important to the well-being of all learners and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely and the school works closely with the relevant Education Social Work Service when the patterns of absence are of concern.

The school is aware that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and will follow the Department for Education’s legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination.

The School Attendance Procedure is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and Governors.

**To support attendance and safeguarding of learners as a whole, the school requires there to be two emergency contacts for each child.**

## **8 Helping Learners to Keep Themselves Safe**

Hardwick House School is committed to ensuring that learners are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All learners are aware of who the senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection are and there are posters around the school. Learners know that they can report their concerns in alternative ways and can talk to any member of staff regarding being at risk of harm or abuse. Learners are informed as to who they might talk to, both in and out of the School, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. The School's arrangements for consulting with and listening to learners are through Tutors, Support Staff, Therapists, and other external agencies contracted by the School. The school understands that autism means that communication can be difficult, and learners can report concerns via the Worry Box or via the school email system if they prefer.

*All staff should understand that children may not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected. This should not stop staff from having a "professional curiosity" and speaking to the DSL.*

Learners are taught about safeguarding and to understand and manage risk through the Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic (PSHCE) education lessons, including Relationships and Sex Education, and through all aspects of School life. The following areas are among those addressed:

- Bullying (including Cyberbullying)
- Drugs, alcohol and substance misuse (including awareness of County Lines and the Criminal Exploitation of children where appropriate)
- Online safety
- The danger of meeting up with strangers
- Fire and water safety
- Road safety
- Domestic Abuse
- Healthy Relationships / Consent
- (so called) Honour Based Abuse issues e.g. forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Sexual exploitation of children (CSE), including online

- Child criminal exploitation (including cybercrime)
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation

## **9 Partnership with Parents**

Hardwick House School is committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. The School will ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. Parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality are respected and the School will not share sensitive information unless it has permission or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child. The School will share with parents any concerns it may have about their child, unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. The School will encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with the DSL. The School will make parents aware of this policy through the School website & prospectus.

## **10 Support for Learners, Families and Staff Involved in a Child Protection Issue**

It is recognised that a learner's welfare is paramount, however good child protection practice and outcome relies on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents. Whilst the School may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, every effort will be made to maintain a positive working relationship with parents whilst fulfilling the School's duties to protect the learner. Hardwick House School recognises that staff dealing with disclosures of information may need support themselves and in such circumstances the School will provide appropriate in- house support or access to external services.

The School will support learners, their families and staff by:

- i. taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously;
- ii. nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact;
- iii. where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a learner, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest;
- iv. providing proper explanations (appropriate to age and understanding), as to what action is being taken on their behalf and why;
- v. responding sympathetically to any request from learners or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety;
- vi. maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies;
- vii. storing records securely;

- viii. offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support;
- ix. when appropriate, following the procedures laid down in the school's whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures;
- x. cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.
- xi. having a nominated member of staff for learners who have had or have a social worker. This is Chris Sinclair, Deputy Headteacher.**
- xii. having a nominated member of staff for learners who are or have been a Looked After Child (LAC). This is Chris Sinclair, Deputy Headteacher.**

## 11 Record Keeping

In relation to maintaining child protection records, the School will:

- i. keep clear detailed written records of concerns, **decisions and referrals** about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Children's Social Care immediately;
- ii. Record any concerns, decisions or referrals within 24 hours. All records will provide a factual and evidence-based account and there will be accurate recording of any actions. Records will be signed, dated and, where appropriate, witnessed. Where an opinion or professional judgement is recorded this should be clearly stated as such. As well as keeping records of concerns, discussions and decisions, designated safeguarding leads should keep record of the rationale for any decisions made.**
- iii. keep records in a meticulous chronological order, using the MyConcern software;
- iv. ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations;
- v. when a learner moves, ensure all relevant child protection records are sent separate from the general learner files and directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the receiving school, college or other education establishment.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act principles and the GDPR 2018. The Data Protection Act and GDPR 2018 does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

## 12 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All staff will ensure that child protection issues retain a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the learner and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence. Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from a senior leader or outside agency, as required. Leicestershire's guidance can be accessed at [www.lrsb.org.uk](http://www.lrsb.org.uk).

Staff should not guarantee confidentiality to a learner nor should they agree with a learner to keep a secret, as any child protection concern must be reported to the DSL, or one of the Deputy DSL's, and may require further investigation by the appropriate authorities.

It is reasonable for staff to discuss day-to-day concerns about learners with colleagues in order to ensure that children's general needs are met in school. However, staff should only refer child protection concerns to the DSL or the Headteacher, or in the case of concerns about the Headteacher to **Gary Balcombe** – Safeguarding Governor. The person receiving the referral will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis. However, the statutory guidance '*Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*' emphasises that any member of staff can contact Children's Social Care if they are concerned about the safety of a child.

Staff have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. Staff, parents and Governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation of abuse is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. The School publishes further information about information sharing through its Privacy Policy; available on the website or from school reception.

**The School must inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the School. The School must also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations made.**

### 13 Learner / Parental Access to Child Protection Information

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that learners and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. Any learner or parent wanting to see child protection records will need to make the request to the school Governors, who will advise them to submit a Freedom of Information request for consideration.

#### **14 Complaints Procedure**

Hardwick House School's complaints procedure will be followed where a learner or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a learner that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a learner or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a learner or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the Headteacher and Governors.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the School's Complaints and Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

Procedures are in place for dealing with safeguarding concerns (including lower level concerns) and allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers.

#### **15 Safer Recruitment**

The School will have regard for '*Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), Part three: Safer recruitment*' and ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the school, who is likely to be perceived by a learner as a safe and trustworthy adult including temporary staff, volunteers, Governors and staff employed by contractors.

The School's safer recruitment procedures are designed to:

- i. attract the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- ii. deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
- iii. identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people.

**Inviting applications:**

- i. Advertisements for posts will include the statement: "The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all members of staff to share this commitment.'



- ii. Full employment checks and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check are required for all posts.
- iii. A copy of the School's safeguarding policy will be included in online external advertisements and on the School's recruitment page of the website.

**Prospective applicants will be supplied, as a minimum, with the following:**

- i. job description and person specification containing the School's commitment to safeguarding;
- ii. information about the School;
- iii. the School's Safeguarding Children Policy;
- iv. the selection procedure for the post;
- v. an application form which will include a safeguarding statement.
- vi. a safer recruitment interview checklist outlining documents needed for interview.

**To comply with safer recruitment practice all applicants will follow our safer recruitment procedures and successful candidates are subject to pre-employment checks and DBS checks procedures. As part of the shortlisting process, the school routinely considers carrying out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates, to help identify any incidents or issues that the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview. The school will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks.**

**The School will ensure that:**

- i. at least one member of staff of each recruitment panel (or volunteer appointment process) will have attended safer recruitment training;
- ii. at least one member of the panel is a school leader;
- iii. all new members of staff and volunteers will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the School's Safeguarding Children Policy, Staff Code of Conduct (including "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those who work with children in education settings, February 2022), and identification of their child protection training needs;
- iv. written confirmation is obtained from supply agencies, stating that they have satisfactorily undertaken all appropriate checks that the school would have undertaken if they were employing the individual directly;
- v. a single central record of completed recruitment checks is maintained.

Volunteers will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with learners. All staff and Governors will undertake DBS checks.

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safer recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the school's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

The School will check the identity of all contractors working on site and request DBS checks where appropriate. Copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications should be kept in their personnel file.

## 16 Staff Training

The DSL and Deputy DSL's will attend training for newly appointed DSLs and refresher training every two years delivered by Leicestershire County Council's Education Safeguarding and Performance Service. The DSL will also be supported to access inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development.

The Headteacher, DSL, and at least one other member of the senior leadership team will attend Safer Recruitment Training and Allegations training.

All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers, who will have direct contact with learners) will receive an explanation during their induction which will include:

- i. the Safeguarding Children Policy;
- ii. **Keeping Children Safe in Education - Part 1**
- iii. signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect **and exploitation**;
- iv. responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child;
- v. reporting and recording arrangements;
- vi. the staff Code of Conduct;
- vii. details of the DSL and Deputy DSL's.
- viii. The Leicestershire induction leaflet "Safeguarding in education Induction - Child protection Information, Safer Working Practice."

The induction will commence **before** a new member of staff or volunteer has direct contact with learners in the School. The School's Safeguarding Children Policy and Staff Code of Conduct will be given during the first Induction session along with the Leicestershire induction leaflet "Safeguarding in education Induction - Child protection Information, Safer Working Practice". The individual will be given an opportunity to clarify any issues and then asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood both policies and undertake to comply with them.

All staff, including the Headteacher and Governors will receive training that is regularly updated. For staff this will consist of a 2-hour training event every year as

a minimum. All staff will also receive regular safeguarding updates, as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. In addition, Hardwick House School has a weekly morning staff briefing dedicated to Safeguarding, and Leicestershire County Council produces a Safeguarding Termly Update that is also circulated to all staff through the weekly CPD training session and via email.

## **17 Site Security**

Visitors to the School, including contractors, are to sign in at reception and are given an identity badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in, but will be required to remain in the reception area. All visitors are expected to observe the School's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure learners are kept safe.

The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## **18 Extended School and Off-Site Arrangements**

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the School, the School's Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on the School site, the School will check and seek assurance in writing that those organisations have appropriate procedures and policies in place to safeguard and protect children, inspecting these where needed, including safer recruitment procedures. The School will ensure that there are arrangements for the organisation to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate. Safeguarding requirements will be included in any leases or hire agreement as a condition of use and any failure to comply will lead to termination of this agreement. If Hardwick House School receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when other organisations are using the site, it will follow the school safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO where appropriate.

When School learners attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, the school will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## 19 Work Experience

The School has detailed procedures to safeguard learners undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervising learners on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in '*Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*'.

## 20 Photography, Mobile Phones, Cameras and Images

In order to protect learners, the School will:

- i. seek their consent and parental consent for photographs to be taken/published and names of learners to be published alongside an image (for example, on websites or in newspapers or publications);
- ii. ensure learners are appropriately dressed; and
- iii. encourage learners to tell a member of staff if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.
- iv. The use of mobile phones and cameras in the School by staff is prohibited unless they are using a school registered device for educational purposes.
- v. Ensure that staff are fully aware that the act of "upskirting" is an illegal act. (Further information can be found in section 23.

## 21 E-Safety

The E-safety Policy explains how learners are kept safe in school when using technology.

Cyber bullying and sexting by learners, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through the School's Counter-Bullying, including Cyber Bullying Policy.

## 22 Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

### **The Safeguarding Team:**

The safeguarding team at Hardwick House School is stated below. The appointed Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is Chris Sinclair (Deputy Headteacher) and the

appointed Deputy Designated Safeguarding leads are Sarah Unwin (Headteacher), Karen Reyes (Assistant Headteacher) and Lois Morris (Assistant Headteacher). If a member of staff has any safeguarding concerns, or allegations, they must speak to a member of the safeguarding team without delay and ideally within 15 minutes.



Sarah Unwin



Chris Sinclair



Karen Reyes



Lois Morris

**Your Designated Safeguarding Leads**

### **All Staff:**

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*, and review this guidance at least annually.

### **All staff will:**

- i. know the names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and members of the safeguarding team and understand the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the team;
- ii. understand and comply with the school's Safeguarding Children Policy including the procedures for dealing with a safeguarding concern (including lower level concerns – see Appendix 4) and allegation of abuse against members of staff and volunteers.
- iii. deal with any bullying incidents that may occur. Bullying will never be tolerated;
- iv. refer e-safety concerns to a member of the safeguarding team;
- v. behave in accordance with our Staff Conduct Policy including (which is given to all staff annually and is in the Staff Handbook);
- vi. be aware of everyone's obligation to pay "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team;
- vii. be aware of our statutory duty to personally inform the police of any reported incident of FGM along with the Designated Safeguarding Lead;

- viii. be aware of our 'Position of Trust' and how this can be abused (Sexual Offences Act 2003);
- ix. address risks and prevent issues escalating.
- x. be aware that children absent from education or missing/absconding during the school day can also be a sign of a range of safeguarding concerns including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.
- xi. be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. They are aware that the Data Protection Act 1998 should not be a barrier to sharing of information where failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. *Staff should refer to the DfE Data Protection guidance for schools (DfE, 2024b)*
- xii. Understand early help and be prepared to identify and support children who may benefit from early help, to include children who are frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care, has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit, has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending.

'Early help', research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Good practice includes:

- i. early referral to the safeguarding team (including lower level concerns - see Appendix 4), action on and referral of the early signs of abuse, neglect **and exploitation**, good record keeping, always listening to the views of the child, re-assessing concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information swiftly and challenge to those who appear not to be taking action;
- ii. ensure appropriate use of social media, which includes no contact with learners or parents/carers
- iii. monitor all learners within tutor groups and in lessons, reporting emerging concerns swiftly to a member of the safeguarding team to enable early identification and assessment;
- iv. understand the difference between an early-help concern and an immediate danger/risk of harm;
- v. can contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the Safeguarding Children Policy at any time by discussing with the safeguarding lead or a member of the safeguarding team;
- vi. have read the behaviour and staff conduct policies;
- vii. ensure personal mobile devices are not used in school.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

The DSL is Chris Sinclair , Deputy Headteacher. The DSL is a senior member of staff on the senior leadership team and the role is explicit in their job description. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) will always be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The responsibilities of the DSL are found in Annex C of “Keeping children safe in education”. The DSL can be contacted out of hours at: [c.sinclair@hardwickhouseschool.co.uk](mailto:c.sinclair@hardwickhouseschool.co.uk) . When the DSL is absent, the Deputy DSL’s will act as cover.

All DSLs will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- i. Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- ii. Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so;
- iii. Contribute to the assessment of children;
- iv. Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children’s social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.
- v. The DSL will also keep the Senior Leadership Team and Governors informed of any issues, and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- i. the provision of leadership and vision in respect of child protection;
- ii. **Managing referrals** – to the local authority children’s social care, to the Channel programme, to the Disclosure and Barring Service for staff dismissed for safeguarding concerns (as required), to the Police where a crime may have been committed;
- iii. **Working with others** – to act as a source of support and advice, to act as a point of contact for the safeguarding partners, to liaise with the headteacher or principal about issues especially to do with ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations, to liaise with staff when deciding to make a referral to relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically, to liaise with the senior mental health lead, to promote supportive engagement with parents and carers, to take the lead in promoting educational outcomes for children in need and those with a social worker, to liaise with the Governing Body and the Local Authority on any deficiencies brought to the attention of the Governing Body and how these should be rectified without delay;



- iv. **Information sharing and managing safeguarding files** – keeping files confidential, secure and up to date, in a separate file for each child, including a clear and comprehensive summary, detailing how the concern was followed up and resolved, with a note of actions, decisions and the outcome, sharing information as required to safeguard children and transferring records and other relevant information to the new school within 5 days or in advance if necessary;
- v. **Raising Awareness** – ensuring all staff, Governors and volunteers understand the child protection policy which is reviewed at least annually, making it available publicly, ensuring staff, Governors and volunteers have access to relevant training and induction, promoting educational outcomes by sharing relevant information about vulnerable children;
- vi. **Training, knowledge and skills** – to undergo DSL training every two years (updating at least annually via bulletins etc) and to attend Prevent awareness training, in order to understand assessment and referral processes, to contribute effectively to child protection conferences including the importance of sharing information, to understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have on children and how to respond to this, to be alert to children with specific needs eg SEND, those with health conditions and young carers, to understand the unique risks associated with online safety;
- vii. **Providing support to staff** – to help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, to provide support in the referral process if required and to help them to understand that safeguarding and educational outcomes are linked;
- viii. **Understanding the views of children** – encouraging a culture of listening to children (including those who are known to be disproportionately impacted by different forms of harm and abuse eg LGBT pupils, disabled children or girls) and taking account of their wishes and feelings in measures taken to protect them and understanding the difficulties children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances;
- ix. **Holding and sharing information** – sharing with safeguarding partners, other agencies and professionals and transferring records between schools and colleges in accordance with data protection legislation, keeping detailed, accurate and secure written records and understanding the purpose of this.
- x. Ensuring that an **appropriate adult is present** in the context of Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (that is LA enquiries into safeguarding issues) and of police investigations.
- xi. **Online safety, filtering and monitoring** – the DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems which are in place). Refer to D f E Guidance: [Meeting digital and technology standards in](#)

[schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- xii. **Alternative Provision:** If Hardwick House School was to place a learner with an alternative provision provider, the School continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that learner and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the learner. (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 Part Three: Alternative Provision).

### **The Governors**

The Governors will approve this policy at each review, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. A Governor will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher, where appropriate. The Governor with this responsibility will be **Gary Balcombe, Group Safeguarding, Quality & Compliance Director**, Cavendish Education.

ALL Governors and Trustees should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at their induction, which is regularly updated, to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to the DSL and Headteacher.

The Governors are responsible for ensuring that:

- i. the school complies with legislation related to child protection;
- ii. the school has a Safeguarding Policy which will include the Child Protection Policy and that procedures are in place that safeguard and promote the wellbeing of learners in the school. At Hardwick House these are combined into the Safeguarding Children Policy;
- iii. this policy is reviewed at least annually;
- iv. the school is using safe recruitment procedures and that appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers;
- v. the school is aware of its duties regarding PREVENT/Channel referrals in conjunction with the police/LA, in particular that the school community has "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". All staff understand that they have a statutory duty to notify a member of the safeguarding team should they have a concern;
- vi. all staff are aware of their statutory duty to report FGM to a member of their safeguarding team and the Police;
- vii. ensure every member of staff along with volunteers read and understand part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- viii. safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures of the Local Authority as set up by the Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- ix. ensure learners are taught, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, the importance of safeguarding, including on-line safety;

- x. all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety training providing an understanding of the expectations and applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring;
- xi. the school has robust IT filtering and monitoring systems in place and should be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty in order to limit children's exposure to online risks. The governing body should consider the number and age range of children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system;

**The Headteacher:**

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- i. Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of this policy as part of their induction;
- ii. Ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285);
- iii. Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website;
- iv. Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent;
- v. Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly;
- vi. Ensuring that allegations of abuse or concerns that a member of staff or adult working at school may pose a risk of harm to children or young people are notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer, where the threshold is met.
- vii. Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate;
- viii. Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable.

**23 Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures**

Staff, volunteers and Governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

**If a child is in immediate danger**

The DSL will make a referral to Leicestershire First Response Children's Duty and/or the police immediately if a child is in immediate danger, left alone or missing or at

risk of harm. However, the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023' emphasises that any member of staff can make a referral.

If a member of staff does contact First Response Children's Duty directly they must inform the DSL as soon as possible.

The telephone number for Leicestershire First Response Children's Duty is 0116 305 0005. Following a telephone referral, you will also be asked to complete the online referral form. Further information along with details for other local authorities can be found in Appendix 3.

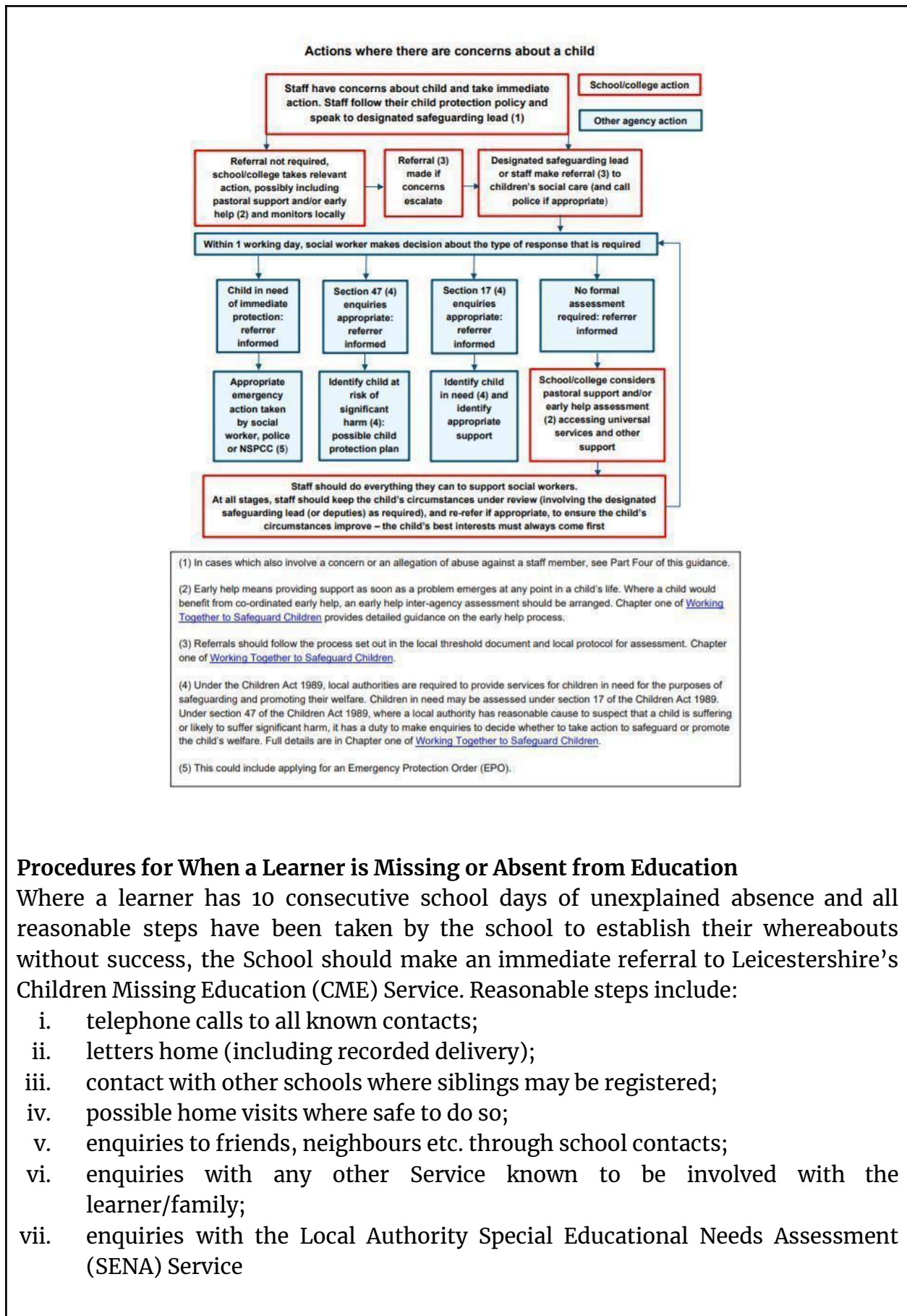
### **Non-emergencies**

If there is no immediate danger or if you need advice, contact the Leicestershire Professionals Consultation Line on 0116 305 5500 or Email [childrensduty@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childrensduty@leics.gov.uk).

If there is no immediate danger, you will need to establish the level of need and risk before you take action. The flowchart below helps with this.

If you need advice about the levels of need and whether to make a referral, please contact First Response Children's Duty.

To make a referral to First Response Children's Duty please complete the online referral form at [www.leics.gov.uk/firstresponse](http://www.leics.gov.uk/firstresponse)



All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the learner's record. If the CME Service is able to contact the learner and her/his parents, arrangements will be made with the School and family for a return to education, including a reintegration programme where necessary. If the learner has registered at another school, the School will delete the child's name from the roll and transfer the child's educational records to the new school in the normal way. Any child protection records will be transferred separately and securely for the attention of the DSL in the new school and a receipt secured.

### **If a child makes a disclosure to you**

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions, examine or photograph them;
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset;
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner;
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret;
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it;
- Record the concern on a Cause for Concern form and pass on to the DSL promptly and ideally within 15 minutes. Copies of the form are kept in reception.

### **If you discover that FGM has taken place or a learner is at risk of FGM**

The Department for Education's, Keeping Children Safe in Education, explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs". FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a learner has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a learner may be at risk, are set out in appendix 1.

Any teacher who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a learner under 18 must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. The duty above does not apply in cases where a learner is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine learners.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a learner under 18 must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures. Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM, must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

### **Early Help**

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will support you in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

### **Referral**

If it is appropriate to refer a case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so. If you make a referral directly (see above), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL must contact the local authority and make sure the case is reconsidered to ensure the concerns have been addressed and the child's situation improves.

### **If you have a concern about extremism**

If a child is not at immediate risk of harm, where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. Alternatively, make a referral to local authority children's social care directly if appropriate. Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team. To make a Channel referral, Leicestershire Prevent Engagement Team can be contacted on 0116 248 6726.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, that school staff and Directors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a learner. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.



In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

### **Concerns about a staff member or volunteer**

There are procedures in place for dealing with safeguarding concerns (including lower level concerns - see Appendix 4) and allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers. If you have concerns about a member of staff or volunteer, speak to the Headteacher. If you have concerns about the Headteacher, speak to **Gary Balcombe**, Safeguarding Governor and Compliance Director at Cavendish Education. The Headteacher or Governor will then follow the procedures set out in Appendix 2: Allegations of abuse made against staff.

The Headteacher (or Governor, in the case of a concern about the Headteacher) will also inform the designated officer for the local authority (LADO). Where appropriate, the school will inform Ofsted of the allegation and actions taken, within the necessary timescale.

### **Allegations of abuse made against other learners (child on child abuse)**

We recognise that children sometimes display harmful behaviour themselves and that even if there are no reports, it may still be happening, but not yet reported. Incidents or allegations will be referred on for appropriate support and intervention. Such abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at all or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. This abuse could for example include sexual violence and sexual harassment, “upskirting”, initiation/hazing type violence, all forms of bullying, abuse in intimate relationships between peers, consensual and non-consensual sharing of indecent images, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent and physical violence (eg hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, etc). This may be experienced by both boys and girls, however, girls are more likely to be the victims and boys perpetrators. Child on child abuse can also take place within families.

There are different school and local authority or Safeguarding Children Partnership guidances and policies which detail the school’s procedures to address and minimise these concerns including;

- Positive Relationships Policy (Behaviour)
- Counter-Bullying including Cyber Bullying Policy
- E-safety/Online safety Policy

- “Guidance for schools working with children who display harmful sexual behaviour” (Leicestershire LA Guidance)
- DfE guidance “Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges” and Part 5 of “Keeping children safe in education”.

Children will be encouraged to report to a trusted adult in school all incidents of child on child abuse wherever it may have happened and will be taught about alternative ways of doing this both in school and elsewhere e.g. via the school’s “Worry Box” located in the Common Room, or via school email. They will always be taken seriously and never given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting their concern or made to feel ashamed; the law and guidance regarding child on child abuse is there to protect them and not to criminalise them. Where the child on child behaviour is within a family, the school will provide support for the child and siblings as appropriate.

Where an incident has occurred or specific risks are identified, the details will be added to a safeguarding or behaviour record for the children concerned and a thorough investigation conducted by the DSL where appropriate. A written risk assessment will be undertaken by the DSL in order to minimise the risk of further harm and to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils. Parents or carers of the children involved will be informed as soon as it is appropriate to do so. Support plans will be written and help offered, by different adults in school (to avoid a possible conflict of interest), to the alleged victim, the child or young person accused and any other children involved. A referral to any relevant outside agency will be made eg Police or Social Care. Detailed guidance and procedures are included in the linked school policies listed above. School will be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree to the levels for the different types of assessment as part of local arrangements.

**We will minimise the risk of child on child abuse by:**

- challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour;
- ensuring staff are trained and have an understanding of what child on child abuse is and how to recognise signs;
- being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female learners, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys;
- ensuring our curriculum helps to promote a supportive environment by teaching about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (including online), in consultation with the school therapy team;
- ensuring learners know they can talk to staff confidentially by notifying their class/form teacher or any member of staff;

- ensuring staff understand that a child hurting another child could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.
- ensuring appropriate staff supervision of learners and identifying locations around the school site that are less visible and may present more risk to learners.

### **Filtering and Monitoring**

Hardwick House School and Cavendish Education take responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide a safe environment in which to learn. The DSL and Governing Body do all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to risks from the school's IT system and school owned devices. The School ensures that there are appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly reviews their effectiveness. The current software used by Hardwick House School and the wider Cavendish Education group is Smoothwall. This system regularly monitors the traffic on the network and the use of certain websites and search topics are restricted. The DSL has the lead responsibility in this area, ensuring that the Leadership team and staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place, how to manage them effectively and how to escalate concerns when identified.

## **24 Procedures for Keeping Records Secure and Retaining Confidentiality**

Child protection records are to be maintained independently from the learner's school file and the school file is to be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. Such records will only be accessible to the DSL and school leaders who need to be aware.

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All staff are clear about the need to record and report concerns about a child or children within the school. Records of concerns are written down, signed and dated and passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy). The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for such records, including adding them to the electronic MyConcern system, and for deciding at what point these records should be shared with other agencies (in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR principles).

Records relating to actual or alleged abuse or neglect are stored apart from normal learner or staff records. Normal records sometimes have markers to show that there is sensitive material stored elsewhere. This is to protect individuals from accidental access to sensitive material by those who do not need to know.

Child protection records are stored securely on the MyConcern system, with access confined to specific staff, e.g. the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and relevant deputies) and the Headteacher.

Child protection records are reviewed regularly to check whether any action or updating is needed. This includes monitoring patterns of complaints or concerns about any individuals and ensuring these are acted upon. A case file chronology, summarising case activity and significant events in the child's life, helps to enable effective monitoring. Any actions taken are clearly indicated.

When children transfer school their safeguarding records are also transferred within 5 days of them starting. Safeguarding records will be transferred separately from other records and best practice is to pass these directly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead in the receiving school, 6<sup>th</sup> form or FE college, with any necessary discussion or explanation and to obtain a signed and dated record of the transfer. Where a child needs specific ongoing support, relevant information will be transferred prior to the child arriving at their new school. In the event of a child moving out of area and a physical handover not being possible then the most secure method should be found to send the confidential records to a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and a photocopy kept until receipt is confirmed. Files requested by other agencies e.g. Police, are copied.

## **25 Related Policies**

- Disciplinary Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Learner Privacy Notice
- Job Applicant Privacy Notice
- Learner Attendance Procedure
- Performance and Capability Policy
- Counter Bullying Policy including Cyber Bullying
- Positive Relationships Policy (Behaviour)
- Digital Policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy (Appendix to this policy)

## **Appendix 1: Specific Safeguarding Issues**

*All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues, some of which are listed below. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancy and sexting put children in danger.*

*All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based abuse/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school policy and procedures with regards to child on child abuse, these are documented in the Behaviour Policy.*

*All staff should understand that children may not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected. This should not stop staff from having a “professional curiosity” and speaking to the DSL.*

### **Children missing from education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child’s name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children’s social care team, and the police, if the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

### **Non-collection of children**

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

- Ensure they are supervised by a member of staff
- Contact the named guardians, as provided by the parent/guardian on enrolment
- If the school is unable to make contact with a listed parent/guardian before 17.00 the school will contact Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership for further advice.

### **Missing pupils**

The school will follow Leicestershire official guidance when a learner is deemed missing from school.

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/child-protection-and-safeguarding/children-missing-from-education>

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will:

- Where a learner has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the School should make an immediate referral to Leicestershire's Children Missing Education (CME) Service (this is part of the Inclusion Service)..

Reasonable steps include:

- telephone calls to all known contacts;
- letters home (including recorded delivery);
- contact with other schools where siblings may be registered;
- possible home visits where safe to do so;
- enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts;
- enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the learner/family;
- all contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the learner's file.

If this also fails to establish the learner's whereabouts, the school will be informed to remove the learner from roll by the commissioning local authority.

If the CME Service is able to contact the learner and her/his parents, arrangements will be made with the school and family for a return to education, including a reintegration programme where necessary. If the learner has registered at another school, the School will liaise with their commissioning local authority, and delete the child's name from the roll and transfer the child's educational records to the new school following their instruction. Any child protection records will be transferred separately and securely for the attention of the DSL in the new school and a receipt secured.

Procedure to follow in the event of the parent failing to collect a learner. This is dependent on the age of the learner and whether this is unexpected. In the first instance, the school will make contact with the parents. If contact cannot be raised with any known contacts and an hour has passed from the normal collection time then contact will be made with First Response Children's Duty for advice.

If parents arrive late to collect the learner and this becomes a regular occurrence, then parents should be invited in for a meeting with the class form teacher and the DSL.

### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)**

We believe that respect for ourselves and others is a fundamental right and responsibility of/for all. We will always challenge inappropriate language or behaviour and never ignore 'banter'.

It is the duty of all staff to ensure that every member of the school community feels valued, irrespective of their sexual/gender orientation, race or religion. Diversity is celebrated and valued at Hardwick House School. LGBT children can be targeted by other children and this will not be tolerated. The school provides safe spaces for these children to speak out and their concerns with members of staff. *Please note that guidance may change pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation (DfE, 2023b).*

### **Mental Health**

All staff need to be aware that mental health concerns may be an indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation. **Additionally, learners can become temporarily vulnerable due to their mental health.** Education staff are not qualified to make a diagnosis, but are well-placed to observe and identify mental health concerns and behaviours. Staff should be aware that adverse experiences and abuse can impact children's mental health, behaviours and educational outcomes. Immediate action should be taken where there are safeguarding concerns and these concerns should be passed on to the DSL in accordance with this policy. There are a number of useful resources around mental health that can be used by staff working with children, including "Rise Above". <https://riseabove.org.uk/tag/mental-health/>

### **Child Criminal Exploitation**

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can affect both males and females and can include children who have been moved (trafficked) for the purpose of exploitation.

CCE can also involve working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing and may involve coercing children to commit vehicle crime or serious violence towards others. It is important to note that the experience of girls can be very different to that of boys but girls are also at risk.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;



- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex but they may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. CSE can include children who have been moved (trafficked) for the purpose of exploitation. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

The above CCE indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant. The department provide: [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#)

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

### **County Lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the [Home Office](#).

**Staff should raise any concerns they have linked to County Lines with the DSL immediately who will then respond accordingly including contacting the Police and/or First Response.**

### **Online Safety and Sexual Images (sexting)**

Hardwick House School recognises that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and that children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. Some children may use mobile and smart technology to sexually harass their peers, share indecent images (consensually and non-consensually) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Many children have unrestricted access to the internet via their mobile phones and our online safety policy describes the rules governing their use in school. It also sets out the school's response to incidents which may involve one or more of the four areas of risk – content, contact, conduct and commerce. Online safety is a consideration running through the planning and implementation of all relevant policies and procedures, and is explicitly taught all key stages. Lessons focus on the importance of online safety, including making parents aware of what we ask the children to do online, e.g. websites they need to visit or who they will be interacting with online.

Staff will always respond if informed that children have been involved in sharing indecent images. The DfE guidance "Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people" (Dec 2020) will be used to guide the school's response on a case by case basis.

The key points for staff and volunteers (not including the DSL) being:

- Report immediately to the DSL.
- Do not view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal.
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL (or equivalent) and seek support.
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it. Leave this for the DSL if needed.
- Do not ask the child/children or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL (or equivalent).
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL (or equivalent).

### **Upskirting**

“Upskirting” typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. *Upskirting is a criminal offence (Keeping Children Safe in Education)*. Any allegation of upskirting will be dealt with in accordance with section 4.19j: Allegations of abuse made against other learners (child on child abuse).

### **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences as described under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 including rape and sexual assault. Sexual harassment is ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and may include sexual name-calling, taunting or “jokes” and physical behaviour, for example, deliberately brushing against someone or interfering with clothes. ‘Upskirting’ is also a criminal offence (under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019) and typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without them knowing, in order to obtain sexual gratification or to cause humiliation, distress or alarm (anyone of any gender can be a victim). Evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are more likely to be the victims of sexual violence and harassment and boys are more likely to be the perpetrators. We will take positive action to create a safe and supportive culture in school, recognising the disproportionate vulnerability of these groups so that all pupils feel supported and have a safe space in order to speak openly with trusted adults if they wish to do so. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children of any gender. Children who have experienced sexual violence can display a wide range of responses, so school should remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting those signs and show sensitivity to their needs.

Planned PSHCEE and Relationships, Sex and Health Education will include personal privacy, respect and consent so that children will have a better understanding of how to behave towards their peers including online. This will be taught alongside other safeguarding issues as set out in the DfE statutory guidance “Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education”. This will be appropriate to learners’ age and stage of development. It will also be underpinned by the school’s behaviour policy and pastoral support system.

### **Responding to an incident**

- The School will follow the DfE guidance on “Child on child Sexual violence and sexual harassment” in Part 5 of “Keeping children safe in education”.
- Relevant staff will liaise with the police, social care and parents as appropriate.
- Support will be offered to both the alleged victim(s) and child(ren) accused. Parents will be included in discussions about the format that this support will take.

## **Serious Violence**

Serious Violence is associated with a number of risk indicators in children including increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Staff will be made aware of these and of the other risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, including, being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending such as theft or robbery. Staff training will raise awareness to these risks and any concerns will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to coordinate a safeguarding response.

## **FGM**

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 4.19 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A learner confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/learner already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
  - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
  - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
  - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
  - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
  - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
  - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
  - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
  - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
  - Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
  - Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a learner may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues

- A girl:
  - o Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
  - o Having limited level of integration within UK society
  - o Confiding to a professional that she is to have a “special procedure” or to attend a special occasion to “become a woman”
  - o Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
  - o Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
  - o Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
  - o Being unexpectedly absent from school
  - o Having sections missing from her ‘red book’ (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

### **Forced Marriage**

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the ‘one chance’ rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a learner is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the learner about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority’s designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fmf@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmf@fco.gov.uk)
- Refer the pupil to a learning mentor or school counsellor, as appropriate

### **Breast Ironing**

Breast ironing (also known as breast flattening) is the pounding and massaging of a pubescent girl's breasts, using hard or heated objects, to try to make them stop developing or to disappear. Usually carried out by mothers on their daughters to protect them from rape and sexual harassment. In certain African cultures men believe that as soon as a girl has breasts she is ready to have sexual relationships. There have been incidents of this

happening in the UK, you may notice an unwillingness to get changed for PE, pain when moving, or a flattened breast area.

### **Honour Based Abuse (formerly known as Honour Based Violence)**

'Murder or violence in the name of so-called honour' are murders/violence/abuse in which, predominantly females, are killed/harmed for actual or perceived immoral behaviour, which is deemed to have breached the honour code of a family or community, causing shame. They are sometimes called 'honour killings/violence'. There is, however, no honour in murder, violence or abuse.

The honour code means that women must follow rules that are set at the discretion of male relatives and which are interpreted according to what each male family member considers acceptable. Breaking the rules is seen as destroying the good name of the family, and is deserving of punishment at the discretion of male relatives.

Honour is an unwritten code of conduct that involves loss of face on someone's part if offended against, especially in groups where loyalty is considered paramount. Honour Based Violence cuts across all cultures and communities: Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, South and Eastern European for example. This is not an exhaustive list. Where a culture is heavily male dominated, Honour Based Abuse may exist.

Signs:

- withdrawal of learner from school by those with parental responsibility
- pupil/student being prevented from attending higher education
- truancy or persistent absences
- request for extended leave or student not returning from an overseas visit
- surveillance by siblings/cousins/extended family members at school
- decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality, poor exam results.  
– in particular for previously motivated learner.
- decline in physical presentation or demeanour

### **Modern slavery and human trafficking**

This can take on many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Children may be trafficked into the UK from abroad or moved around the country. Staff need to be aware of indicators which include, but not limited to, neglect, isolation, poor living conditions, having few personal belongings and a lack of trust and reluctance to seek help. Staff will refer any concerns to the DSL without delay who will take action and also refer victims to the [National Referral Mechanism \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

### **Preventing radicalisation**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding children board and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our learners to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in learners' behaviour. The government website Educate Against Hate and charity NSPCC say that signs that a learner is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong. If staff are concerned about a learner, they will follow our procedures set out in section 4.19 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

**Staff should always take action if they are worried.**

## **Domestic Abuse**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional. It can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. Staff will refer concerns to the DSL and where the police have attended an incident of domestic abuse and school receive an “Operation Encompass” call, any learner who may have been impacted will be supported. Complaints or concerns raised by parents or pupils will be taken seriously and followed up in accordance with the school’s complaints process.

## **Operation Encompass**

Operation Encompass operates in the majority of police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child’s circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs. Police forces not signed up to operation encompass will have their own arrangements in place.

## **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- [NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects](#)
- [Refuge what is domestic abuse](#)
- [SafeLives: young people and domestic abuse](#)



### **Private fostering arrangements**

Where a child under 16 (or 18 with a disability) is living with someone who is not their family or a close relative for 28 days or more, staff inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead so that a referral to Children's Social Care for a safety check, can be made. (A close relative includes step-parent, grandparents, uncle, aunt or sibling).

Complaints or concerns raised by parents or learners will be taken seriously and followed up in accordance with the school's complaints process.

### **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: [Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets](#). The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The department and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation: [here](#).

### **Checking the identity and suitability of visitors**

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

All visitors to our setting, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise learners or staff.

## Appendix 2: Allegations of abuse made against staff

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### Suspension

Suspension will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location.

### Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)

### **Procedure for dealing with allegations**

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the Headteacher or the Lead Governor (Stephen Aiano, Safeguarding Governor and Compliance Director at Cavendish Education) where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation) – the ‘Case Manager’ – will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children’s social care services. (The Case Manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children’s social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children’s social care services are involved, the Case Manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children’s social care services, as appropriate
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children’s social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate. For additional support, the member of staff can also contact their trade union for further advice and/or support.

- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The Case Manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

If the school is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the Case Manager will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

### **Timescales**

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days

### **Specific actions**

#### **Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution**

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

#### **Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated**

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the

case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

### **Individuals returning to work after suspension**

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

### **Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the Headteacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the Headteacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the learner(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a learner.

### **Confidentiality**

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The Case Manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

### **Record-keeping**

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file and provide a copy to the individual. We will retain these records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

### **References**

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

### **Learning lessons**

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

### Appendix 3: Named staff and Local Authority Contacts

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Chris Sinclair, Deputy Headteacher
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Sarah Unwin, Headteacher; Karen Reyes, Assistant Headteacher; and Lois Morris, Assistant Headteacher
- Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC): Sarah Unwin, Headteacher
- Designated Teacher for Children in Care: Chris Sinclair, Deputy Headteacher
- Nominated Safeguarding Governor: **Gary Balcombe**  
[g.balcombe@cavendisheducation.com](mailto:g.balcombe@cavendisheducation.com)

#### Head of Service – Safeguarding and Performance Service (Leicestershire)

Hayley Binley 0116 3056566 / 07538562293

#### Leicestershire LADO / Allegations Manager:

Kim Taylor / Lovona Brown / Shellie Miskella 0116 305 4141

#### Safeguarding Development Officers:

Simon Genders 0116 305 7750

Ann Prideaux 0116 305 7317

#### First Response Children’s Duty (Same-day referrals)

Telephone: 0116 3050005

Email Address: [childrensduty@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childrensduty@leics.gov.uk)

#### First Response Children’s Duty

Room 100b

County Hall

Championship Way

Glenfield

LE3 8RF

#### All other referrals including Early Help Services

<http://lrsb.org.uk/childreport>

#### Early Help queries and Consultation Line

0116 3058727

#### Derby City Council

Derby City Council can be contacted during normal working days between 9am and 5pm on 01332 641172. At all other times concerns can be discussed with Careline who can be contacted on 01332 786968.

<https://www.derby.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/safeguarding-children/worried-about-a-child/>

#### Leicester City Council

If you are concerned about the safety and welfare of a child in Leicester, please contact by calling 0116 454 1004 (24 hour service) or the police on 0116 222 2222.



<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-social-care/child-protection/>

**Northamptonshire County Council**

<http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/schools/referrals-eha/>

If you need to contact children's social care urgently during the evening, at night or at the weekend, phone our out of hours team on 01604 626938

Designated Officer /LADO: 01604 364 031 or [LADOREferral@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADOREferral@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

**Nottinghamshire County Council**

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/129861/pathwaytoprovisionhandbook.pdf>

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns. Telephone 0300 500 80 90 during work hours or during an emergency call 0300 456 4546.

**Rutland County Council**

During normal office hours you can contact Rutland's Children's Duty Team by calling: 01572 758 407 or emailing: [Safeguardingunit@rutland.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:Safeguardingunit@rutland.gcsx.gov.uk)

When their offices are closed and it's an emergency please call: 0116 305 0005. If a child is in immediate danger please call 999 and ask for the police.

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/health-and-family/childrens-social-care/report-a-concern-children-and-young-people/>

## Appendix 4: Low Level Concerns Policy

### 1.0 Purpose

This policy sets out a framework whereby staff are expected to report concerns, no matter how small, about their own behaviour or that of another member of staff, volunteer, supply teacher, contractor or other person working in school. Its purpose is to help create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour set out in the “Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings” (February 2022) (sometimes called the safeguarding code of conduct) are lived, monitored, and reinforced.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the current statutory guidance – “Keeping Children Safe in Education” Part 4, Section 2, and with the School’s Whistleblowing Policy.

### 2.0 Who does the policy apply to?

This policy applies to all staff and other individuals who work or volunteer in school.

### 3.0 Definition of a low-level concern

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’, that a person working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice” (February 2022), including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to make a referral to the LADO

*An example of adult behaviour that could be a low level concern is any behaviour that humiliates a child.*

### 4.0 Reporting low-level concerns

Low level concerns can arise in several ways and from various sources such as suspicion, complaint or a disclosure.

Where a low-level concern has been identified this will be reported as soon as possible to the headteacher. However, it is never too late to share a low-level concern if this has not already happened.

Where the headteacher is not available, the information will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy (ie the most senior member of SLT acting in this role).

Low-level concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be reported to the Headteacher and those about the Headteacher will be reported to **Gary Balcombe**, Safeguarding Governor and Compliance Director at Cavendish Education.

Where the low-level concern has been reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they will inform the Headteacher of the details as soon as possible.

A low-level concern about a supply teacher or contractor will be reported to their employer.

### **5.0 Recording concerns**

A summary of the low-level concern should be written down, signed, timed, dated and shared by the person bringing the information forward.

Where concerns are reported verbally to the headteacher a record of the conversation will be made by the headteacher which will be signed, timed, and dated.

### **6.0 Responding to low-level concerns**

Where a low-level concern has been raised this will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The headteacher will:

- Speak to the person reporting the concern to gather all the relevant information
- Speak to the individual about the concern raised to ascertain their response, unless advised not to do so by the LADO or Police (HR advice may also need to be taken).
- Where necessary further investigation will be carried out to gather all relevant information. This may involve speaking to any potential witnesses.
- The information reported and gathered will then be reviewed to determine whether the behaviour,
  - is consistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings” (February 2022): no further action will be required,
  - constitutes a low-level concern: no further action is required, or additional training/guidance/support may be required to rectify the behaviour via normal day to day management processes. The employee should understand that failure to improve or a repeat of the behaviour may lead to further action being taken, e.g. either via the Performance Management Policy or Disciplinary Policy.
  - is serious enough to consult with or refer to the LADO: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the school’s Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.
  - when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been raised about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO or Police: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the school’s Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.
- Records will be made of, i) all internal conversations including any relevant witnesses, ii) all external conversations eg with the LADO iii) the decision and the rationale for it, iv) any action taken

### **7.0 Can the reporting person remain anonymous?**

The person bringing forward the concern will be named in the written record. Where they request to remain anonymous this will be respected as far as possible. However, there may be circumstances where this is not possible e.g. where a fair disciplinary investigation is needed or where a later criminal investigation is required.

### **8.0 Should staff report concerns about themselves (i.e. self-report)?**

It may be the case that a person finds themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or might appear compromising to others; or they may have behaved in a manner which on reflection they consider falls below the standard set out in the “Guidance for safer working practice”. In these circumstances they should self-report. This will enable a potentially difficult situation to be addressed at an early opportunity if necessary.

### **9.0 Where behaviour is consistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice” (February 2022)**

Feedback will be given to both parties to explain why the behaviour was consistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice”.

### **10.0 Should the low-level concerns file be reviewed?**

The records will be reviewed periodically, and whenever a new low-level concern is added, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and referred to the LADO if required. A record of these reviews will be retained.

### **11.0 References**

Low-level concerns will not be included in references unless a low-level concern, or group of concerns, has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated.

### **12.0 What is the role of the Governing Body?**

The headteacher will regularly inform the Governing Body about the implementation of the low-level concerns policy including any evidence of its effectiveness eg with relevant data. The Safeguarding Governor may also review an anonymised sample to ensure that these concerns have been handled appropriately.