The Marlborough Science Academy GP11 – Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding	
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GP11 – Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding

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1. INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. For the purposes of this policy, safeguarding means providing help and support to meet children's needs as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment, whether within or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes.
All safeguarding practice at The Marlborough Science Academy will be child-centred. Staff will consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child and recognise that effective safeguarding depends on identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

In particular this policy should be read in conjunction with the:

1. Anti-Bullying Policy
2. Children in Care Policy
3. Safer Recruitment Policy
4. Use of Physical Restraint Policy
5. Whole School Behaviour Policy
6. Internet and Network Usage Policy
7. Whistle Blowing Policy
8. Equality Policy

Purpose of a Child Protection Policy
To inform staff, parents, volunteers and governors about the school's responsibilities for safeguarding children.

To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures
The school follows the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership; a guide to procedure and practice for all agencies in Hertfordshire working with children and their families.

School Staff & Volunteers
All school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. School staff and volunteers are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with children.

All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, as part of their induction. This training will be regularly updated in line with advice from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

All school staff and volunteers will receive also receive safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety, as required and at least annually, through mechanisms such as staff training, briefings, email updates and safeguarding bulletins.

Temporary staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors will be provided with safeguarding information appropriate to their role and level of contact with children, including how to report a concern and the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies.

The Designated Senior Lead will carry out refresher training every two years from a recognised training authority. (Designated Senior Lead Role – Appendix 1)

Temporary staff and volunteers will be made aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures by the Designated Senior Lead or one of the Designated Safeguarding People .

Mission Statement
Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to when they have a worry or concern.

Establish and maintain an environment where school staff and volunteers feel safe, are encouraged to talk and are listened to when they have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child.

Safeguarding is what we do for children whilst child protection refers to the procedures we use for children at risk of significant harm.

Ensure students know that there are adults and in the school whom they can approach if they are worried, as well as an online reporting system called racoon should they wish to report something out of school hours or anonymously.

Ensure that students who have been abused will be supported in line with a child protection plan, where deemed necessary.

Ensure all staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Contribute to the five outcomes which are key to children's wellbeing:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing

Consider how children may be taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

Staff members working with the children are advised to maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interest of the child.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of the Child Protection Policy

The policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body and will be a standing item on meetings of the Governors Personnel Committee. It will be implemented through the school's induction and training programmes, and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Designated Senior Lead and through staff performance measures.

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 (section 175)
- Multi Agency Practice Guidelines Female Genital Mutilation 2020

- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual (Electronic)
  Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures (Electronic)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2026)
- The Education (Student Information) (England) Regulations 2015
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and non-teaching staff (DfE 2012)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 Section 26
- Mental health and behaviour in school 2018
- Prevent duty guidance 2023

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2026) requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse, which are established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Marlborough Science Academy will have appropriate procedures in place for responding to any situation in which it believes that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse – these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse.

The Marlborough Science Academy will also follow guidance in relation to the specific safeguarding issues outlined in Appendix 2. This will include the Prevent Duty Guidance 2023, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Furthermore Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) will place a statutory duty upon **teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professional, to report to the police** where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professional to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

Furthermore Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) places the following responsibilities on all schools:

- Staff should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- We have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of students, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse.

- The Designated Senior Lead (referred to in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) as Designated Safeguarding Lead') should have responsibility for coordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies.
- Staff with the designated safeguarding lead should undergo updated child protection training every two years.
- All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from additional support before statutory intervention is required. This may include universal services and community-based Early Help or targeted early help delivered through Family Help.
- Staff will be trained to understand the difference between a safeguarding concern and a child in immediate danger of significant risk of harm. Should a member of staff think a child needs early help this information needs to be flagged with the relevant people and recorded – DSL, DoL, and tutor.
- Staff should be particularly alert to children who may require additional support, including children with SEND or medical conditions, children with mental health needs, young carers, children experiencing persistent or unexplained absence from education, children who have or have had a social worker and children experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or other vulnerabilities.
- The SENCO at TMSA has responsibility to make these children known to staff and will do so using staff meetings, management briefings, staff room noticeboards and information meetings. Staff will be made aware of particular vulnerabilities and a school culture is in place whereby all students feel safe and secure in talking to staff should they feel vulnerable. All students are seen by a member of the leadership team to ensure that they are safe in 'Learning Counts' meetings and the school ethos is reenforced in every school policy, scheme of work and written communications within the school.

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfE 2012) also states:
"Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that there is an effective child protection policy in place together with a staff behaviour policy (code of conduct). Both should be provided to all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, on induction. The child protection policy should describe procedures which are in accordance with government guidance and refer to locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP) and be updated annually, and be available publicly either via our website or by other means."
The school will liaise with the Virtual Schools headteacher with particular focus on children in care and participate fully in annual reviews regarding said children.

3. THE DESIGNATED SENIOR LEAD

The Safeguarding team in the school consists of eight members of staff with the Designated Senior Lead taking responsibility for all Safeguarding concerns across the key stages (including KS5) and makes the final decision on all aspects of safeguarding.

The Designated Senior Lead for Child Protection in this school is:

NAME: James Griggs
Contact: 01727 731333

The Deputy Designated Person for Child Protection in this school is:

NAME: Doug Eve
Contact: 01727 856877

The Designated Safeguarding Person (Years 7 and 8) for Child Protection in this school is:

NAME: Myrian Pounnas
Contact: 01727 731386

The Designated Safeguarding Person (Years 10 and 11) for Child Protection in this school is:

NAME: Louise Bullock
Contact: 01727 731378

The Designated Safeguarding Person (KS5) for Child Protection in this school is:

NAME: Jo Bustin
Contact: 01727 856874

The Designated Safeguarding Person for Child Protection (Year 9) in this school is:

NAME: Lisa Eastwood
Contact: 01727 731335

The Designated Safeguarding Person for Child Protection relating to family support in this school is:

NAME: Emma Hicks
Contact: 01727 856874

Availability and cover

During term time, the DSL or a Deputy DSL will always be available during school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. The school will also make appropriate arrangements for safeguarding cover during out-of-hours and out-of-term activities.
Robust arrangements will be maintained for periods when the DSL is unavailable because of illness, leave or other circumstances. Staff will be made aware of the arrangements for raising concerns during such periods so that safeguarding information is received, monitored and acted upon without delay.

The NSPCC whistle blowing number is 0800 028 02 85. This number is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns about child protection internally. help@nspcc.org.uk Children's Services 0300 123 4043

The broad areas of responsibility for the designated safeguarding lead are:

Managing referrals

The DSL will:

- refer cases of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation to local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals directly
- make or support referrals to the Channel programme where there are concerns about radicalisation
- refer matters to the police where a crime may have been committed
- act as a source of safeguarding support, advice and expertise for all staff.

Training

The designated safeguarding lead and DSPs should receive appropriate training carried out every two years.:

The DSL will maintain a good understanding of:

- local Family Help and statutory assessment processes and thresholds
- local child protection procedures and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- section 17 and section 47 processes under the Children Act 1989
- child protection conferences and reviews
- online safety and the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements
- Prevent and Channel procedures
- child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence
- the additional vulnerabilities and barriers faced by children with SEND, medical conditions, mental health needs and young carers
- effective information sharing and safeguarding record keeping.

Raising Awareness

- The designated safeguarding lead should ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately
- Ensure the school's child protection policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and that parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made, and the role the school plays in this process.
- Link with the local LSCP to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest policies on safeguarding
- Where a child leaves the school, including through an in-year transfer, the DSL will ensure that the child protection file is transferred securely to the receiving school or college as soon as possible and within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term. Confirmation of receipt will be obtained.
- The child protection file will be transferred separately from the main pupil file and will include a clear structured summary of current safeguarding concerns, relevant context and any ongoing support needs. Where appropriate, the DSL will share relevant safeguarding information with the receiving setting in advance so that appropriate support and risk-management arrangements can be in place when the child arrives.
- The designated safeguarding lead will provide regular updates and safeguarding bulletins during staff briefing, allowing staff to contribute ideas to the implementation of safeguarding in the school.

4. THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body must ensure that it complies with its duties under legislation. It must also have regard to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

The nominated governor for child protection is:

NAME: James Roach
Contact: Via The Marlborough Science Academy 01727 856874

The Governing Body will ensure that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of school policy and practice and that a whole-school, child-centred approach to safeguarding is maintained.

In particular, the Governing Body will ensure that:

• the school maintains an effective child protection policy which reflects current statutory guidance, local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, online safety, SEND and the whole-school approach to child-on-child abuse
• the child protection policy is reviewed at least annually and whenever significant changes or lessons learned require an earlier review
• the school promotes an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture in which racism, prejudice and discriminatory behaviour are recognised and challenged
• an appropriate senior leader is appointed as DSL and is provided with the authority, time, resources, training and support required to fulfil the role
• robust arrangements are in place to provide DSL cover when the DSL is unavailable
• the school contributes effectively to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and understands Hertfordshire's local criteria for Family Help and statutory intervention
• all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction and regular updates thereafter
• all staff read and understand Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*
• school leaders and staff who work directly with children read Annex A of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*
• appropriate safer recruitment arrangements are in place and embedded
• safeguarding arrangements are in place for children who are absent from education, particularly where absence is repeated or prolonged
• children are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online, through an appropriate and inclusive curriculum
• appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and their effectiveness is reviewed in accordance with current DfE standards
• the school fulfils its duties under the Prevent duty.

5. SCHOOL PROCEDURES – STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have a responsibility to keep their safeguarding and child protection knowledge up to date. All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, must read and understand Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, together with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. Staff will confirm that they have read and understood these documents.
School leaders and staff who work directly with children must also read Annex A of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, which contains further information about specific forms of abuse, exploitation and safeguarding concerns.
As an additional school requirement, governors, senior leaders and members of the safeguarding team may be required to read the full version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* appropriate to their responsibilities.

If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform one of the Designated Safeguarding People.

The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations reported through MyConcern The Designated Senior Lead will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services. If it is decided a referral is to be made this will be discussed with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the school has concerns. In addition any child with a social worker or who has been identified as being the subject of a child protection plan will also have their academic progress monitored by the DSL who will access additional support if necessary through the Pupil Premium fund. The school will also analyse attendance trends for students who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeated occasions In line with the statutory DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance, the school recognises that persistent or unexplained absence from education is a potential safeguarding concern. Staff will be alert to the risk of absence being linked to the childs safety or wellbeing, including any concerns around sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and or child criminal exploitation. Staff should also be aware that DSEN children are particularly vulnerable and as previously mentioned there is a duty to flag up any concerns about a student who may need intervention..

If a student who is/or has been the subject of a child protection plan changes school, the Designated Senior Lead will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the Designated Senior Lead at the receiving school, in a secure manner, and separate from the child's academic file.
The Designated Senior Lead is responsible for making the senior leadership team aware of trends in behaviour that may affect student welfare. If necessary, training will be arranged.

As a person who works with children, staff have a duty to refer safeguarding concerns to the Designated Senior Lead for child protection. However if:

- Concerns are not taken seriously by an organisation or
- Action to safeguard the child is not taken by professional and
- The child is considered to be at continuing risk of harm then staff should speak to the DSL or contact Hertfordshire County Council Children's Services on 0300 123 4043.

If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Hertfordshire Childrens Services immediately if the Designated Senior Lead,
Deputy Designated Senior Lead or the Headteacher are not available. The telephone number is 0300 123 4043 which will take the caller through to the Customer Service Centre who in turn will direct the caller to Social Services and the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

If the allegations raised by the staff member are against other children, the school should follow section 4.3 of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Child Partnership Procedures manual – Children Who Abuse Others

Mandatory Reporting Duty
Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and in force from 31/10/15) places a statutory duty upon **teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police** where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students, but the same definition or what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professional to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

6. WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

All staff and volunteers should be aware that the main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse

  Neglect

Staff should also be alert to wider safeguarding concerns including, but not limited to:

• child-on-child abuse
• harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence
• child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation
• serious violence and gang-related activity
• domestic abuse, including abuse within teenage intimate relationships
• honour-based abuse, including female genital mutilation and forced marriage
• radicalisation and extremism
• modern slavery and trafficking
• online abuse and exploitation
• prejudice-based harm, racism and discrimination
• children who are persistently or repeatedly absent from education.

All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he/she presents with any indicators of possible significant harm – **see Appendix 2 for details**.

Generally, in an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s or other household members e.g. siblings or others outside of the home
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development. (full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)
- Display insufficient sense of 'boundaries', lack stranger awareness
- Appear wary of adults and display 'frozen watchfulness'

7. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused or might have been abused in some way, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep

- Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- Make a written record (see Record Keeping)
- Pass the information to the Designated Senior Lead without delay

Staff should reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A student should never be given the impression they are creating a problem or be made to feel ashamed that they are making a disclosure.
It is also important for staff to consider that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

Support
Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and safeguarding issues can be stressful. The member of staff/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Senior Lead.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY
Safeguarding children raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in schools.

- All TMSA staff, both teaching and non-teaching staff as well as volunteers have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services and the Police).

  If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.
- Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

9. COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS
The Marlborough Science Academy will:

Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly either via the school website or by other means

Parents should be informed prior to referral unless it is considered to do so might place the child at increased risk of significant harm by:

- The behavioural response it prompts eg a child being subjected to abuse, maltreatment or threats/forced to remain silent if alleged abuser informed;
- Leading to an unreasonable delay;
- Leading to the risk of loss of evidential material;
- Placing a member of staff from any agency at risk

Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children.

10. SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARRASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN

The Marlborough Science Academy recognises that harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), sexual harassment and sexual violence can occur between children of any age and sex, individually or in groups, face-to-face or online and both inside and outside school.

HSB exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence. The school adopts a **zero-tolerance approach** to sexual harassment and sexual violence. Such behaviour is never acceptable and will not be dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”.

Staff will challenge inappropriate sexualised behaviour at an early stage. The school recognises that failing to challenge lower-level behaviour, including misogynistic or sexualised comments and conduct, may contribute to an environment in which more serious harmful behaviour becomes normalised.

The school recognises that children may not make a direct verbal disclosure. Staff should remain alert to changes in behaviour, indirect disclosures, information from friends and other indicators that a child may have experienced harm.

Any concern or report of HSB, sexual harassment or sexual violence must be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL without delay and recorded on MyConcern.

Victims will be taken seriously, supported and kept safe regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. They will never be made to feel that they have created a problem by making a report or be made to feel ashamed.

The DSL or Deputy DSL will lead the school's response, taking account of:

- the wishes and needs of the victim
- the nature and seriousness of the alleged behaviour
- the age and developmental stages of the children involved
- any imbalance of power
- whether coercion, exploitation or vulnerability is present
- whether the incident is isolated or forms part of a wider pattern
- any ongoing risks to the victim, alleged perpetrator or other children
- any online element or risk of material being shared further
- whether children's social care and/or the police should be involved.

Following a report of **sexual violence**, the DSL or a Deputy DSL will complete an immediate **risk and needs assessment**. Where sexual harassment is reported, the need for a risk and needs assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Risk and needs assessments will be recorded, regularly reviewed and used to inform ongoing safeguarding decisions.

The school will consider the appropriate response on a case-by-case basis. This may include:

- managing the incident internally
- Family Help or other pastoral and specialist support
- referral to local authority children's social care
- reporting the matter to the police.

Safeguarding and disciplinary responses are separate processes. Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, while ensuring that such action does not prejudice a police or children's social care investigation.

The school recognises that the alleged perpetrator is also a child and may themselves have safeguarding, welfare or support needs. Appropriate support will therefore be considered for all children involved.

The risk of such actions taking place at school are minimised through the schools duty teams at break and lunchtime, supervision within class and the requirement for staff to lock their classrooms when not in them. There are limited places in the school students are able to be unsupervised. Due to the nature of the washroom area the toilet cubicles in the school are floor to ceiling. Students are informed that they are not permitted to enter a cubicle with other students. In the event this is discovered to have occurred the students will be searched, interviewed and appropriate sanctions applied in line with the schools behaviour policy.

11. RECORD KEEPING

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

Make brief notes as soon as possible after any conversation. Use Myconcern to inform the DSPs of the disclosure immediately.

- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child

- Use the body map on MyConcern to indicate the position of any injuries
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions
- All records need to be given to the Designated Senior Lead promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer.

The Designated Senior Lead will ensure that all safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005.

11. CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

An allegation is any information, which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children
- Behaviour which may have taken place outside school and which may indicate a transferable risk to children.

This applies to any child the member of staff/volunteer has contact within their personal, professional or community life.

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification; it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised, (see section 8 above) and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Actions to be taken include making an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words - including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of what happened, what was said and who was present. This record should be signed, dated and immediately passed on to the Headteacher.

If the concerns are about the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors, Jane Walker-Smith, should be contacted on 01727 856874. In the absence of the Chair of Governors, the Vice Chair, Richard Sullivan, should be contacted on the same number.

The recipient of an allegation must **not** unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

The Headteacher will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer:

Children's Services – 0300 123 4043
SOOHS (Out of Hours Service – Children's Services) – 0300 123 40403

If the allegation meets any of the three criteria set out at the start of this section, contact should always be made with the Local Authority Designated Officer without delay.

If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for safeguarding, this will take place in accordance with section 5.1.5 of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures.

If it is decided that the allegation does not meet the threshold for safeguarding, it will be handed back to the employer for consideration via the school's internal procedures.

The Headteacher should, as soon as possible, **following briefing** from the Local Authority Designated Officer inform the subject of the allegation.

For further information see:
HSCP Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures (2010)
Section 5.1.5 Managing Allegations Against Adults who work with Children and Young People

13. LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS

The school promotes an open and transparent safeguarding culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school are reported, recorded and dealt with appropriately. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, including a sense of unease or "nagging doubt", that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate behaviour outside work; and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is not otherwise sufficiently serious to require referral to the LADO.

Examples may include:

- being over-friendly with children
- showing favouritism
- taking photographs of children contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child one-to-one in a secluded area or behind a closed door without appropriate justification
- humiliating children
- behaviour which otherwise falls below expected professional standards.

All low-level concerns should be reported to the Headteacher, or the DSL. In all circumstances however, the Headteacher will be the ultimate decision maker.

Staff are encouraged to self-refer where they believe that their own conduct could have been misinterpreted, may appear compromising or may have fallen below expected professional standards.

Low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. Records will include the nature and context of the concern, action taken, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions. Records will be held confidentially and securely and reviewed periodically so that patterns of inappropriate or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern emerges, or where there is doubt about whether a concern may meet the harm threshold, advice will be sought from the LADO. Low-level concerns relating to supply staff or contractors will also be shared with their employer so that any wider pattern of behaviour can be identified.

Safeguarding educational provisions and online safety

The whole school approach to safeguarding ensures students are taught about safeguarding and online safety through a variety of classroom based lessons, small group and 1:1 interventions. This is part of our commitment to providing a broad and balanced curriculum ensuring the issues raised are relevant to the wider topic explored, as well as lessons specific to the RSE and PSHCE curriculum.

The school recognises the increasing complexity of online risks and commits to a proactive approach in educating, monitoring and protecting students. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Some examples are listed below;

- Consent, sexual harassment and sexual violence taught through the RSE curriculum
- The schools safeguarding processes taught through PSHCE
- Internet safety modules taught through ICT lessons
- Healthy lifestyle and emotional well being videos created by the school through the pastoral hub
- Protective behaviours taught 1:1 and in groups by our family engagement worker
- Mental health 1:1 and workshop groups taught by our EMHP
- Healthy relationships and abuse taught through tip of the iceberg performance and workshop day
- Misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories, including deliberate or unintentional spread of false content online.
- The safe and responsible use of emerging technologies, including generative artificial intelligence (AI). Staff will be guided by the DfE's Generative AI: Product Safety Expectations to ensure safe use in education.

- Understanding the risks associated with the making and sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including images that have been digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, sometimes referred to as deepfakes or deep nudes.

The schools safeguarding and online safety education focuses on the four main categorises of risk;

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example; pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, Misandry, self harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- Contact: being subjected to harmful online/in person interactions with others for example; peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.
- Conduct: personal online/in person behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending or receiving explicit images (e.g making, sending or receiving nudes or semi-nudes, including consensual or non-consensual images and images that have been digitally altered or generated using AIand/or pornography, sharing other explicit images online, bullying, racism and sexual harassment.
- Commerce: risks such as gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, and/or financial scams.

As well as preventative education the school has a number of ways in which we filter, monitor and report online concerns. ;

- Reports through myconcern
- Reports through racoon
- The schools mobile phone policy
- Blocked websites whilst on the schools WIFI
- Switch shop alert software that informs the DSL of any suspicious internet searches attempted on the school network.
- SENSO software allowing staff to see the activity on student computers, and allowing the safeguarding team to filter and monitor any inappropriate or concerning searches.

SENSO Filtering and Monitoring System

In our continuous commitment to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all students at The Marlborough Science Academy, the school utilises SENSO filtering and monitoring software.

The SENSO system is deployed on all computers within the school premises, facilitating real-time monitoring of students' online activities during lesson hours. This system is in line with our dedication to proactively address potential risks related to online content and behaviour.

To optimise the use of the SENSO system, monitoring hours will be restricted to between 8:30am and 4:00pm, Monday to Friday, excluding bank and school holidays. During these hours, staff members will actively engage with the system to ensure the safety of students' online experiences.

While the system will not be actively monitored during break, lunchtime, or extracurricular activities, it will remain operational. Any flagged suspicious words or phrases will be subject to analysis by the safeguarding team.

These ours are to reinforce the collaborative effort between the school and parents to enhance online safety measures. While our focus primarily rests on in-school hours, we recognise the crucial role parents play in monitoring their child's online activities during non-operational hours, as such we run internet safety events organised by our online safety lead.

Children and online safety away from school

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the academy code of conduct. The Marlborough Science Academy will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. Below are the guidelines for delivering virtual lessons, teaching from home into the school environment, or allowing students who are isolating to join via google classroom:

• No 1:1s, groups only. 1:1s will be authorised by SLT for specific staff and these sessions must be recorded in line with GDPR requirements
• Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
• Any computers used should be in an appropriate communal area.
• All staff must invite the appropriate support account to their google classroom so that ATs, Pastoral, SLT and HoFs can access the lessons
• The staff member must be present in the class before the lesson is due to start and must be the last member present at the end of the lesson.
• Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
• Staff must only use the platform 'google meet' and should not send links to this meeting to anyone outside of the school community. Classes are to be arranged using a class code for anyone with a Marlborough Science Academy email address.
• The member of staff should complete a register of engagement in online learning and the lesson record form provided.

• Should staff be concerned about any student making inappropriate contact with them they must inform the DSL or Headteacher immediately, and place the details of the concern on MyConcern.

Alternative Provision

Where The Marlborough Science Academy places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, responsibility for safeguarding that pupil remains with the school.
Before and during a placement the school will:

- satisfy itself that the placement is appropriate and meets the individual needs of the child.
- obtain written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed on individuals working within the provision
- obtain written confirmation that the provider will inform the school of changes, including staffing changes, which could affect safeguarding
- undertake its own safeguarding due diligence and quality assurance rather than relying solely upon the provider's assurances
- maintain an accurate record of the provider's address and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites attended by the child
- ensure that the school knows where the child is based during school hours
- monitor attendance at the provision
- review the placement at least termly to confirm that it remains safe, appropriate and effective in meeting the child's needs.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement will be reviewed immediately and will be terminated where necessary unless and until the concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

REFERENCES

- **Children Act 1989**
- **Children and Young Persons Act 2008**
- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **Children and Social Work Act 2017**
- **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026**
- **Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children**, DfE 2018
- **Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: Virtual School Head role extension**, updated September 2025
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.
- **Working Together to Improve School Attendance**, July 2026.
- **Suspension and Permanent Exclusion**, July 2026.
- **Hertfordshire Virtual School current policies, PEP, training and guidance resources**.

APPENDIX 1

THE ROLE OF THE TMSA DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a senior member of the school's leadership team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the school's filtering and monitoring systems and processes.

The DSL has the appropriate status and authority, together with sufficient time, funding, training, resources and support, to carry out the role effectively.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard as the DSL. Safeguarding activities may be delegated to appropriately trained deputies; however, ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and cannot be delegated.

Availability

During term time, the DSL or a Deputy DSL will always be available during school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. Appropriate arrangements will be made for out-of-hours and out-of-term activities.

Robust cover arrangements will be maintained whenever the DSL is unavailable because of illness, leave or other circumstances so that safeguarding concerns can be received, monitored and acted upon without delay.

Managing referrals

The DSL will:

• refer cases of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation to local authority children's social care as required
• support staff who make referrals directly to children's social care
• make or support referrals to the Channel programme where there are concerns about radicalisation
• refer cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the statutory criteria are met
• refer matters to the police where a crime may have been committed
• liaise with the LADO and the school's case manager where safeguarding concerns relate to an adult working with children.

Working with others

The DSL will:

• act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff
• act as a point of contact with safeguarding partners and external agencies
• liaise with the Headteacher about safeguarding matters, including section 47 enquiries and police investigations
• work closely with pastoral staff, attendance staff, the SENCO, senior mental health lead, school

nurse, IT staff and other relevant professionals
• promote the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker by understanding how safeguarding issues may affect attendance, engagement, attainment and achievement.

Information sharing and safeguarding records

The DSL will ensure safeguarding records are clear, accurate, factual and securely maintained, distinguishing between observed concerns, professional opinion and historic information.

Where a child transfers to another school or college, the child protection file will be transferred securely **within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of a new term**. Confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

The file will be transferred separately from the main pupil file and will include a clear, structured summary identifying current safeguarding concerns, relevant context and ongoing support needs.

Raising awareness

The DSL will:

• ensure the school's safeguarding policies are known, understood and used appropriately
• ensure the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is reviewed at least annually
• ensure parents and carers understand the school's safeguarding responsibilities
• maintain awareness of current Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and training opportunities
• ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding updates and support.

Training, knowledge and skills

The DSL and Deputy DSLs will undertake appropriate safeguarding training at least every two years and update their knowledge and skills regularly, and at least annually, so that they understand current legislation, statutory guidance, local procedures and emerging safeguarding risks.

This includes knowledge of Family Help, statutory assessments, information sharing, online safety and filtering and monitoring, Prevent and Channel, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, mental health and the additional vulnerabilities of children with SEND, medical conditions and young carers.

Understanding the views of children

The DSL will promote a culture in which children's wishes and feelings are heard and taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Children should understand that safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be supported.

APPENDIX 2

INDICATORS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT, EXPLOITATION AND OTHER SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events. They may overlap and children may experience multiple forms of harm simultaneously.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation can take place within or outside the home, within school, elsewhere in the community or online. Children may be harmed by adults or by other children.

Staff are **not expected to diagnose abuse or determine whether significant harm has occurred**. Their responsibility is to recognise concerns, exercise professional curiosity, record relevant information and take prompt safeguarding action.

A child may not recognise their experiences as harmful or may not feel ready or able to tell someone what is happening. The absence of a direct disclosure must therefore never prevent staff from reporting a concern.

If in doubt, speak to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

Physical abuse

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

Possible indicators may include unexplained injuries, injuries for which the explanation appears inconsistent, repeated injuries, reluctance to explain an injury, fear of going home, changes in behaviour or presentation, or concerns about the manner in which medical treatment is sought.

Staff should not attempt to medically diagnose the cause of an injury. Any unexplained or concerning injury or explanation should be reported to the DSL.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which causes severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development.

It may include making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate; imposing inappropriate expectations; preventing normal social interaction; deliberately silencing or ridiculing a child; serious bullying or cyberbullying; verbal abuse such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling; or causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

Possible indicators may include significant changes in behaviour, withdrawal, anxiety, low self-esteem, extreme passivity or aggression, self-harm, social isolation or difficulty forming relationships.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening.
It may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts, or non-contact activities such as involving children in sexual images, sexualised online activity, watching sexual activity, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.
Sexual abuse may be committed by adults or by other children. Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim, although it may also be committed or facilitated by an organised network.
Possible indicators may include age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, unexplained changes in behaviour, fear or avoidance of a particular person, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, self-harm, withdrawal, anxiety or a child making a direct or indirect disclosure.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.
Neglect may involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter; protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger; provide adequate supervision; ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; or respond to a child's basic emotional needs.
Possible indicators may include persistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing, untreated medical or dental needs, frequent tiredness, repeated absence or lateness, inadequate supervision, developmental concerns or significant changes in emotional or behavioural presentation.

Child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence

All staff should recognise that children can abuse other children. This can occur inside or outside school and online.

Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator. The school recognises that such abuse is preventable and that early identification and appropriate support can reduce the risk of behaviour escalating.

The absence of reported cases does not mean that abuse is not taking place.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

• bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying
• racism, faith-targeted abuse and other discriminatory behaviour

• abuse within intimate personal relationships between children
• physical abuse, assault or the threat of physical harm
• carrying, threatening with or using weapons
• harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment
• consensual or non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated or digitally altered images
• causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent
• upskirting
• initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.

Child-on-child abuse will never be dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”.

Staff should recognise that abuse may involve an imbalance of power due to age, sex, size, ability, disability, social status or other factors, but an obvious imbalance of power is **not required** for behaviour to constitute a safeguarding concern.

All concerns about child-on-child abuse must be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL and recorded on MyConcern.

The school will consider the safeguarding and support needs of the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other children affected.

Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated imagery

The making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude visual content involving children under 18.

This includes photographs, videos and livestreams and also includes images that have been digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including “deepfakes” or “deep nudes”.

All incidents involving nudes or semi-nudes require a safeguarding response, whether the imagery was initially made or shared consensually or non-consensually.

If an incident comes to the attention of a member of staff, they should:

• report it immediately to the DSL or a Deputy DSL
• record the concern on MyConcern
• not view the imagery unless unavoidable
• not copy, print, screenshot, share, store or save the imagery
• not ask a child to send or download the imagery
• not investigate the imagery themselves
• not blame or shame any child involved

• reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking to an adult and will receive support.

If imagery has been viewed accidentally, this must be reported to the DSL.

The DSL will manage the incident in accordance with current UKCIS guidance, considering the welfare of all children involved and whether children's social care and/or the police should be involved.

Where there is any indication that an adult has created, shared or possessed sexual imagery of a child, this will be treated as suspected child sexual abuse and the appropriate safeguarding agencies and/or police will be contacted.

Staff should also be alert to financially motivated sexual extortion, where a child may be threatened that sexual imagery will be shared unless they pay money, provide further imagery or comply with other demands. Such cases must be reported to the DSL immediately.

Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) are forms of abuse in which an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal or sexual activity.

Exploitation may occur even where the activity appears consensual and may involve children who believe that they are in a genuine relationship or are voluntarily part of a group.

Children may be exploited by an individual or by an organised network or gang. Exploitation may also constitute modern slavery.

Children who are being exploited may themselves be treated as offenders because of actions they have been coerced into taking. Staff should remain alert to the possibility that apparently criminal or disruptive behaviour may indicate that a child is being exploited.

Possible indicators include:

- unexplained gifts, money, clothing, phones or other possessions
- relationships with older individuals or groups
- changes in friendship groups
- going missing or regularly returning home late
- repeated or unexplained absence from education
- travelling to unfamiliar locations
- carrying multiple phones
- drug or alcohol misuse
- unexplained injuries
- significant changes in behaviour, wellbeing or academic performance

- sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy or sexual behaviour beyond expected development
- increased secrecy or disengagement from family and established relationships.

Any concern that a child is being exploited must be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

County lines

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which organised criminal networks use children and vulnerable people to move, store or sell drugs, money or other items, often between geographical areas.

Staff should be alert to unexplained travel, repeated absence, changes in relationships, unexplained money or possessions, multiple phones, unexplained injuries, threats, intimidation and associations with older individuals or groups.

Concerns about county lines activity must be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported to the DSL.

Modern slavery and trafficking

Modern slavery includes human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Children may be trafficked or exploited for sexual exploitation, criminal activity, forced labour, domestic servitude or other forms of abuse.

A child cannot consent to their own exploitation.

Where there are indicators that a child may be a victim of trafficking or modern slavery, the DSL will consider the need for referral to children's social care, the police and the National Referral Mechanism.

Mental health and safeguarding

All staff should recognise that mental health concerns may, in some circumstances, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff should also be alert to children experiencing self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts or other significant mental health difficulties.

Potential warning signs may include significant changes in behaviour, withdrawal from social situations, ongoing sleep difficulties, loss of interest in usual activities, self-neglect, physical signs of self-harm or expressions of hopelessness or suicidal thoughts.

Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions.

Where a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, staff must report it to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

If a child is in immediate danger, 999 should be called or arrangements made for them to attend A&E immediately. Where urgent mental health support is required but the situation is not an emergency, NHS 111 can be contacted and the mental health option selected.

Serious violence and weapons

Serious violence may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with or using weapons and may arise in the context of peer conflict, bullying, gangs or criminal exploitation.

Staff should be alert to indicators including unexplained injuries, increased absence, significant changes in friendships, declining engagement with education, association with older individuals or groups, unexplained gifts or money, drug or alcohol use, threats or intimidation.

Any concern that a child is carrying, using or threatening to use a weapon, or expressing an intention to do so, must be reported immediately to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

The DSL will assess the safeguarding risk and determine the appropriate response, including police involvement where necessary.

Children with SEND, disabilities and medical conditions

Children with SEND, disabilities or certain medical and physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline.

Staff should be particularly alert to:

• assumptions that changes in behaviour, mood or injury are caused by a child's condition without further exploration
• increased vulnerability to bullying and prejudice-based harm
• children being disproportionately affected by harmful behaviour without outwardly showing signs
• communication barriers which may make it harder to report abuse
• dependency on adults for care or support
• safeguarding issues arising through intimate or personal care.

Safeguarding concerns involving a child with SEND should be considered in close liaison between the DSL and SENCO, with appropriate communication and pastoral support provided.

Staff should also recognise that failure to provide appropriate care for a child's medical condition may raise safeguarding concerns, including where essential information or medication is repeatedly withheld or not supplied.

Young carers

Staff should be alert to children who have caring responsibilities for family members. Caring responsibilities can affect attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing.

Early identification is important so that young carers can access appropriate school, community, local authority or health support.

Prejudice-based harm and discrimination

Children may experience safeguarding harm through racism, faith-based prejudice or other forms of discrimination.

Such experiences can affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health and willingness to seek help. Staff should therefore recognise prejudice-based harm as a potential safeguarding issue rather than treating it solely as a behaviour or disciplinary matter.

A child's sexual orientation is not in itself a safeguarding risk. Staff should, however, be alert to safeguarding concerns arising from discrimination, bullying or prejudice relating to actual or perceived sexual orientation. Where a child is questioning their gender, any safeguarding concerns will be considered on an individual, child-centred basis in accordance with current statutory guidance.

Concerns about prejudice-based harm should be recorded and considered through the school's safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Honour or faith-based abuse, including FGM and forced marriage

Honour or faith-based abuse encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family or community. It can include female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and other harmful practices.

Abuse linked to honour may involve multiple perpetrators within a family or community. Staff should take all concerns seriously and must not approach family or community members where doing so could increase the risk to the child.

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM comprises procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Possible indicators that a girl may be at risk include:

- disclosure or reference to a forthcoming "special procedure" or ceremony
- discussion of an extended trip abroad where FGM is known to be practised
- a girl asking for help or expressing fear about a forthcoming journey
- FGM having been carried out on a mother or sister
- other specific information indicating that FGM is being planned.

Possible indicators that FGM may have occurred include:

- prolonged or repeated absence followed by changes in behaviour
- difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- spending unusually long periods in the toilet
- urinary, menstrual or abdominal problems
- reluctance to undergo medical examination
- direct or indirect disclosure of pain or a procedure.

Teachers have a specific statutory duty. Where, in the course of their professional work, a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must personally report this to the police.

Suspected risk of FGM, where it is not known to have already occurred, should be reported immediately through the school's normal safeguarding procedures.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is one in which one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. Staff should report any concern about a child being at risk of forced marriage to the DSL immediately and should not contact family members where this could increase risk.

APPENDIX 3
USEFUL LINKS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Keeping Children Safe in Education

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual

https://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
The Governing Body will review this policy each year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.

Policy Review
The Governing Body on an annual basis or when amendments arise will review this policy in full.
The policy was last adopted and agreed by the Governing Body in October 2026.
This document is due to be reviewed and ratified in October 2027
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Signature Date:
Headteacher

Signature Date:
Chair of Governors

Signature Date:
DSL

Signature Date:
Deputy DSL