

Presdales School



Title	CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
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Committee Responsible	Full Trust Board
Trustee Link	Mrs Jackie Harvey
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1. Introduction

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health and/or development, ensuring that children grow up in the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding Policies

This Child Protection Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school. In particular this policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy, Attendance Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy, Policy for Children Looked After, Health and Safety Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Online Safety Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Statutory Framework

The school follows the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. The HSCP are three organisations responsible for keeping children safe in Hertfordshire and include Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary and the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Board.

The school acts in accordance with the statutory legislation and guidance to protect children from abuse and neglect outlined in:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 2002, Education Regulations 2005
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2022) Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74, Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Serious Violence Strategy 2018
- Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges DfE 2021

The school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Safeguarding Principles

All staff including supply staff, volunteers and contract workers have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding children training (which is updated every three years) and receive regular safeguarding updates, so that they are

knowledgeable and aware of their role in the early recognition of the indicators of abuse or neglect and of the appropriate procedures to follow. Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and 'it could be happening to this child' where safeguarding is concerned and should consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child concerned.

Presdales School is committed to the five outcomes which are key to children's wellbeing:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic wellbeing

The school therefore strives to establish and maintain an ethos and culture where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened and responded to when they have a worry or concern. Children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried and staff endeavour to build trusted relationships with children which facilitates communication. Staff are encouraged to talk about concerns to do with the wellbeing of children and are listened and responded to. Children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum (and in line with the compulsory teaching of Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education from September 2020).

The school endeavours to ensure the provision of appropriate support using Hertfordshire's Family First programme of early help services to help prevent the escalation of safeguarding needs.

Staff are alert to the potential need for early help for students who are more vulnerable who include:

- children with disabilities or specific additional needs
- children with special educational needs
- children with a mental health need
- young carers
- children missing from education/home/care
- children misusing drugs/alcohol
- children at risk of trafficking or exploitation
- children at risk of being radicalised
- children at risk of honour-based abuse
- children who are privately fostered
- children who have returned to their families from care
- children engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour including gang involvement
- children whose family circumstances present challenges including drug/alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues, domestic abuse or a family member in prison
- children showing early signs of abuse and neglect.

If staff think that access to early help services or a child protection contact to specialist services may be required, they should discuss this with the DSP. They should be aware of the process of making referrals to children's social care along with the role they may be expected to take in child protection assessments, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm).

A directory of early help services is available to help families and practitioners find information and support in order to prevent the escalation of needs and crisis, this can be found at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/families-first/families-first.aspx>

2. The DSP

A Designated Senior Person, from the school's leadership team and appointed by the Trust Board, takes lead responsibility for child protection. They co-ordinate action within the school, liaise with other agencies and set up inter-agency assessments as appropriate. A Deputy DSP is always available in school hours in the absence of the lead DSP and emergency contact arrangements are put in place for out of hours activities.

The DSP is Ms K Chandler Assistant Head, Pastoral Manager Key Stage 3

The Deputy DSPs are: Mrs S Miller, Deputy Head Pastoral

Mrs E Sykes, Assistant Head, Pastoral Manager Key Stage 4

Mrs K Simmonds, Head of Sixth Form.

Mr M Warren Headteacher is also a trained DSP.

Together these staff make up the school's Safeguarding Team.

These staff receive appropriate updated training every two years and they regularly refresh and share their knowledge and skills of the latest safeguarding developments. The DSP is also a Prevent trainer and the Deputy DSPs have all received Prevent training.

The Safeguarding Team:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care and engage with early help assessment processes
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding, in particular supporting staff who raise concerns and make a child protection contact to Children's Services
- They understand the importance of information sharing with safeguarding partners and the assessment processes for providing early help and statutory intervention
- They have a working knowledge of how Hertfordshire conduct a child protection conference
- They understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have on children and support them appropriately

- They understand the unique risks associated with online safety and support children to stay safe online, including those who are particularly vulnerable including those with SEND.

The DSP ensures that:

1. Record keeping

Accurate detailed records, concerns and referrals with contacts are securely kept and when children leave the school, sends the child protection file separately and securely to the relevant DSP at any new school or college once the child is in attendance, obtaining proof that these have been received and then destroying any information held on the child (unless the case is currently open) in line with the data protection guidelines. The DSP will also, if appropriate, share information with the new school/college in advance of the child leaving to ensure continued support for victims of abuse or children under a child protection plan in their new setting. Where possible the school holds more than one emergency contact number for students.

2. Children with specific needs

Particular attention is given to the specific needs of children in need, children with a social worker, those with special educational needs and young carers. Children who need a social worker, due to safeguarding and welfare needs, can be vulnerable to further harm and therefore the DSP uses information from the local authority to make decisions on the provision of pastoral and academic support (Including attendance issues) in the best interests of the child's wellbeing. Through liaison with the Assistant Head responsible for CLA, information about any Child Looked After is appropriately shared. The contact details of the CLA's social worker and Virtual Head Teacher, as well as the legal status and contact arrangements with birth parents/those with parental responsibility, are known and shared as appropriate.

3. Referrals, cases and conferences

Cases of suspected abuse or neglect are referred to Children's Services, the Police (where a crime may have been committed) and the Channel programme (where there is a radicalisation concern). Contact is made with the Child Protection Consultation Hub when advice is needed regarding concerns and contact made with relevant agencies when deciding whether a contact referral should be made. The Head Teacher is informed of ongoing enquiries. The DSP ensures the school manages child protection contacts, attending and contributing to any child protection case and review conferences.

4. Staff Training

Safeguarding induction is delivered to all staff new to the school. Supply staff, contractors and volunteers are also made aware of safeguarding policies and procedures. The DSP checks that all staff in the school have Level 1 Child Protection training which is renewed every three years and online safety training.

An annual update in safeguarding is delivered to all staff to refresh their Child Protection training at the start of each academic year and regular updates on the latest safeguarding issues are shared with

staff termly. The DSP trains all teaching staff in the Prevent Duty every three years and provides advice and support in protecting children from radicalisation.

The DSP ensures that all staff (teaching and non-teaching) are familiar with the Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct (which establishes a safe environment for children within the school), the latest version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* Part 1 and other school mandatory policies at the start of each academic year or when new staff join the school during the course of the year.

Links with HSCP are maintained to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest policies on safeguarding.

5. The Child Protection Policy

An annual review of the Child Protection Policy takes place ensuring it is understood by staff. It is then made publicly available on the school's website, thereby making parents aware of the school's statutory role regarding the safeguarding of children, that advice regarding child protection concerns could be sought from the Child Protection Consultation Hub and that contact referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made.

6. Safeguarding Teaching and Online safety

Children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety through curriculum provision in PSHE lessons, SMSC activities, assemblies and Computing lessons. Appropriate filters/monitoring systems are in place to safeguard children from inappropriate online material in school. (See Online Safety Policy)

7. Monitoring Safeguarding Procedures

There is a regular review of safeguarding procedures and compliance of this policy in conjunction with the nominated School Trustee with whom the DSP meets termly.

3. The Trust Board

The Trust Board ensures there is a whole school approach to safeguarding ensuring that all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. The Trust Board prioritises the safety and welfare of students, creating a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding issue. They comply with KCSiE and the nominated governor for child protection is Mrs Jackie Harvey, who is also the Chair of Trustees. All trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection children training to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in the school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Safeguarding updates are reported in each Trust Board Meeting including Operation Encompass notifications.

The Trust Board ensures that

- All school policies and procedures comply with the law and local criteria for action and local protocols for assessment

- They are aware of their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 to ensure that the school does not unlawfully discriminate against any person because of their protected characteristics and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- They are prepared to supply information as requested by local safeguarding partners
- School safeguarding policies and procedures are followed by staff (including with regard to child on child abuse), in particular responding to children who go missing from education, ensuring child protection files are maintained and transferred appropriately, referring cases of suspected abuse or neglect to Children's Services and ensuring children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action is taken
- A senior member of staff is appointed as DSP, checks that the DSP receives appropriate training and carries out their duties as outlined above, this is done through the nominated trustee for child protection who meets with the DSP termly
- The school contributes to multi-agency working to promote the welfare of children
- Arrangements are in place for appropriately sharing information within the school and with other organisations as required
- Staff receive child protection training at induction and regular updates
- The Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and staff are given an opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements
- Students are taught about safeguarding including online safety
- Appropriate online filters/monitoring are in place to safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate material
- Staff have due regard to data protection principles which allow them to share and withhold personal information as applicable; including how 'special category personal data' can be shared for safeguarding purposes and without consent where there is good reason to do so and not providing personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met
- They prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to the Safer Recruitment Policy and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised
- Procedures are in place to manage any safeguarding concern and allegation against staff including volunteers, contractors and supply staff including those that do not meet the harm threshold and are considered 'low-level' concerns
- Procedures are in place to make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service if required.

Additional information to support this guidance for the Trust Board is found in Part 2 of KCSiE (DfE 2022)

4. Categories of Abuse

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of school, inside and outside of home and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or 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.

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.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

5. Specific Safeguarding Issues

As well as staff being aware of the main categories of maltreatment as outlined above, staff are also to be aware of the specific safeguarding issues outlined below so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

For further information on specific safeguarding issues see Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2022).

Radicalisation and Extremism

The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

Protecting children from radicalisation and extreme ideologies is part of the school's safeguarding responsibility under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism."

Teaching staff receive Prevent training to help to identify signs of extremism and factors that indicate a child is susceptible to radicalisation or is in the process of being radicalised. Staff must be alert to changes in children's behaviour which indicate that they may be in need of Prevent support and should use the Notice, Check, Share approach, referring concerns to the DSP to make a Prevent referral if needed. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

Serious Crime, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious crime. Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation are both forms of abuse and occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity,

cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK). 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 to move drugs and money between locations. 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.

The school includes the risks of criminal and sexual exploitation in the PSHE curriculum. Staff are aware of the characteristics of young people being vulnerable to CSE and child criminal exploitation and are aware that the experience of girls being criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. Staff are vigilant to indicators of CSE and CCE such as changes in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, increased absence from school, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or significant changes in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries or unexplained gifts/new possessions, with these all being reported immediately to the DSP.

Honour-Based Abuse

'Honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. All forms of HBA are abuse.

The practice of FGM is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

Child on Child Abuse

Children and young people may pose a risk to each other inside and outside of school and online. All staff are clear on the school's approach with regard to child on child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. Child on child abuse should never be passed off as "banter," "having a laugh" or "part of growing up." Staff are aware that child on child abuse will never be tolerated, that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Staff appreciate that even if there are no reports of child on child abuse, it does not mean it is not happening and that if they have any concerns about child on child abuse they should report it to the DSP.

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, in order to ensure there is not a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Staff recognise that child on child abuse can occur between two children of any age or sex and that it can occur through a group of children assaulting or harassing a single child or a group of children and it can occur both online and face to face. Severe harm may be caused by the abusive and bullying behaviour of other children to victims of child on child abuse; which may be physical, sexual and emotional.

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate relationships between children ('teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse (such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm)
- sexual violence, (such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault)
- sexual harassment (such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse)
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- upskirting (which 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)
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images/videos
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Many of these forms of abuse can also include an online element which facilitates and threatens or encourages such abuse.

The school recognises that it is the law to protect children rather than criminalise them and all victims of child on child sexual violence and harassment will be reassured that they are being taken seriously. The school appreciates that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, that trauma can impact memory in recalling details and that some children face additional barriers in making such disclosures.

When harm is caused by one child or young person to another, the school will carefully assess whether it should be dealt with as abuse according to if there is a difference in power between those concerned, whether there are concerns about the intentions of the alleged perpetrator and whether the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children.

The school minimises the risk of child on child abuse by developing student's understanding of acceptable behaviours and keeping themselves safe through the PSHE Learn4Living Programme (in every year of study, students develop their understanding of respectful healthy relationships). The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is referred to for details on procedures of how to minimise the risk of child on child abuse and this is done through having pastoral systems in place for students to raise concerns and using risk assessments where appropriate.

If allegations raised are against other children, the school follows Herts Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual – Children Who Abuse Others and Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 'Child on Child Sexual Violence and Harassment'. When responding to sexualised behaviour the school will use the Brook Advisory Service Traffic Light Tool and when responding to sexting incidents reference is made to 'Sexting in Schools and Colleges' (UKCCIS). Support for victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer on peer abuse will then be put in place. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis with consideration of the wishes of the victim, the nature of the incident (including whether a crime has been committed), ongoing risks and any other related issues and wider context considerations.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic 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 abuse. 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 or in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). This can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development and ability to learn.

Our school is part of Operation Encompass. This is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse. Operation Encompass means that the police will share information about Domestic Abuse incidents with our school prior to the start of the next school day when they have been called to a domestic incident so that our key adults (DSPs) can support children immediately. Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass school. The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information. Our school staff are trained to be aware of Operation Encompass and the prevalence of domestic abuse and the impact of this abuse on children. Trustees are also trained and updated each term on Operation Encompass notifications to the school.

Children Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time efficient education. Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable other education. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, child sexual exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The school works in conjunction with the local authority arrangements to identify children thought to be missing from education and follows the guidance about the legitimate removal of students from the school's roll. Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored by the school. The DSP and Deputy DSPs will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions.

Mental Health

All staff should be 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. Only appropriate trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Staff should follow the school's pastoral procedures to support the mental wellbeing of students where needed. Safeguarding procedures to be used in cases of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders and anxiety and depression are to be found in the school's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by following the procedures in this policy and speaking to the school's DSP.

Other Safeguarding Issues

On other specific safeguarding issues (e.g. cyber bullying, drugs and alcohol, the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and videos) the school refers to advice and support from expert professional organisations. There is liaison between the DSPs, the Pastoral Team and the PSHE Coordinator on specific relevant issues.

6. School Procedures

Knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect and in recognising signs of specific safeguarding issues. Staff are made aware of signs of abuse and neglect in their safeguarding training so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Reminders of signs to look out for are also prominently displayed in the staffroom. For further details please consult:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Additional barriers can exist when recognising signs of concern in children with special educational needs and disabilities. These can include assumptions that they can be disproportionately impacted

by things like bullying, assuming indicators of possible abuse relate to the child's impairment without further exploration, communication barriers/difficulties, a reluctance to challenge carers, a disabled child's understanding of abuse, a lack of choice/participation and isolation.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare they should act on them immediately. They should speak to the relevant key stage DSP/Deputy DSP since they are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and should share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Response options may then include managing support for the child through the school's pastoral system, completing an early help Families First assessment or a Child Protection Contact referral. Any member of staff should be able to make a child protection contact referral to Children's Services if necessary and particularly in the case of statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 for children in need (section 17) and children suffering, or who are likely to suffer, from significant harm (section 47).

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff should consider the context in which such incidents/behaviours occur. This is known as *contextual safeguarding*, which means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors in a child's life are a threat to their safety/welfare (posing extra-familial harm).

If a child discloses that they have been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully to what is being said to you, do not interrupt.
- Reassure the pupil that it is not their fault. Stress that it was the right thing to tell. Be calm, attentive and non-judgemental. Do not promise to keep what is said a secret since this may not ultimately be in the best interests of the child. Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator and ask non-leading questions (**TED**) to clarify if necessary:

Tell me more...

Explain that to me...

Describe what happened

Explain then what has to be done next and who has to be told. A victim must never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

- The member of staff must record their account of any verbal disclosures and observations being precise and factual, using the school CPOMs system and if relevant, the Body Map should be used to indicate the position of any injuries. All dated documentation (including original records) should be passed to the DSP and should be treated as 'special category personal data' under the Data Protection Act 2018.

The DSP will then decide whether a child protection contact referral to Children's Services should be made. If a contact is made it will be discussed with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm, risk the loss of evidential material, lead to an unreasonable delay or place any other person at risk. Where reasonably possible, the school holds more than one emergency contact

number for each student to support this. Records of events, outcomes and reasons for decisions will then be recorded in writing.

If at any point if a child is in immediate danger or there is an urgent risk of immediate serious harm to a child, any person can make a child protection contact referral to Herts Children's Services on 0300 123 4043 and/or the police (see NPCC Guidance When to call the Police Guidance for Schools). The DSP should be informed as soon as possible.

If a teacher discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the teacher must report this to the police and Children's Services immediately.

If any staff member has safeguarding concerns about a child and their situation does not appear to be improving or there is an escalation of concerns, the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration and contact Herts Children's Services directly if needed on the above number.

Safeguarding issues should only be shared by staff in appropriate professional contexts and relevant information about the protection of children must be passed on, particularly to investigative agencies.

It is everyone's responsibility to report concerns related to children and make referrals to Children's Services. When safeguarding concerns are shared with the school by a parent or member of the public, it is important to note that there is equal responsibility by the complainant to report the matter directly rather than assuming it is the school's responsibility to do so. The DSP and Head can advise in such situations.

If a member of staff has dealt with a disclosure from a child, they themselves should seek support and discuss this with the DSP since safeguarding issues can be stressful.

7. Allegations Concerning School Staff

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices in the school's safeguarding arrangements and relay concerns to the school's Senior Leadership Team.

Allegations will be referred to the Head Teacher that are made about current members of staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors that:

- indicate they have harmed or pose a risk of harm to any child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they would pose a risk of harm to children or may not be suitable to work with children.

This applies regardless as to whether the school is where the alleged abuse took place and includes allegations made or reported by a child, parent or member of the public. The person to whom the allegation was first reported should take it seriously and keep an open mind. They should not investigate or make assumptions and should immediately pass a written record to the Head Teacher. Failure to report the allegation in accordance with procedures is potentially a disciplinary matter. Historical allegations of abuse and allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be

made to the police. If concerns are with the Head Teacher then the Chair of the Trust Board, Mrs Jackie Harvey, is to be contacted on governors@presdales.herts.sch.uk.

In such instances appropriate action will be taken according to the school's Whistleblowing Policy in conjunction with Herts Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual. If required a child protection strategy meeting or joint evaluation meeting will be set up, or the LADO will advise on how the allegation should be managed. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue through these channels, or feels that their concern is not being addressed, they should contact Children's Services on 0300 1234043 or alternatively the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available on 0800 028 0285. Staff may also consider discussing any concerns with the DSP and making referrals via them.

The school may also need to take action in response to 'low-level' concerns about staff. A low-level concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means a concern about an adult in the school having acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct including inappropriate conduct outside of work. A low-level concern does not meet the harm threshold and is not therefore serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Having an open and transparent culture in the school, in which all concerns about adults are dealt with appropriately and promptly enables the school to identify concerning behaviour early, minimise risks and ensures adults act within their appropriate professional boundaries. Low-level concerns are shared responsibly, recorded and dealt with appropriately to protect staff becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings. Where low-level concerns are reported, the Head Teacher will be the ultimate decision maker in respect to the school's response, the concerns will be recorded in writing and reviewed so that potential patterns of behaviour can be identified and records will be kept securely and retained in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

To reduce the risk of allegations, staff are familiar with the Staff Code of Conduct and the school adheres to the requirements set out in *Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children in education settings* (May 2019).

The school's Business Manager adheres to procedures about referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service if a person has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned.

Further Guidance

For any further detailed guidance about child protection procedures, including updated information, please consult

- the HCC Model Child Protection Policy at:

<https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/child-protection/policies-procedures-and-forms>

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education: For Schools and Colleges 2022* at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1080047/KCSIE_2022_revised.pdf

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