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**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**Adopted:** April 2012 by Adelle Chapman: Designated Child Protection Coordinator (DCPC)

**Revised:** April 2013 by Jonathan Higgins DCPC

**Revised:** April 2014 by Jonathan Higgins DCPC

**Revised:** April 2015 by Jonathan Higgins DCPC

**Revised:** February 2016 by Jonathan Higgins: Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

**Revised:** February 2017 by Nicole Bradley: Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

**This policy is to be reviewed: February 2018**

**Contacts**:

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**Medway:** Children’s Advice and Duty Service (CADS): 01634 334466

 Out of hours emergency number: 03000 419191

 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Claire Wilkes 01634 331229

**Kent:** Enquiries, Principal Officer: 03000 412445

North Kent Safeguarding adviser:03000 412445

 West Kent Safeguarding adviser: 03000 412284

East Kent Safeguarding adviser: 03000 418707

South Kent Safeguarding adviser: 03000 415057

PLEASE NOTE: Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, any concerns you may have about a child’s welfare or safety in relation to the remit and content of this policy should at all times be referred to your site’s Designated Safeguarding Officer, or Deputy Safeguarding Officer who will advise you on the action necessary to safeguard student welfare.

***Introduction***

**‘***Education staff have a crucial role to play in helping identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse or neglect at an early stage’*

*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015*

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children[[1]](#footnote-1) who are pupils of the school.

We recognise that all adults, staff and volunteers,at this school have a full and active part to play in protecting and safeguarding the children in our care, and that the pupils’ welfare is our paramount concern.

This policy takes into account and should be read in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures,

‘Working together to Safeguard Children’ DfE March 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

 and ‘Keeping Children safe in education’ DfE April 2015. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education—2](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education%E2%80%942)

An online copy of the Kent and Medway Safeguarding procedures can be found at: <http://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway/>

***Aims***

• To provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that cares for the social, physical and moral development of the individual child. The Proprietors take seriously their legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and to work together with other agencies in so doing.

• To provide an environment in which students feel safe, secure, valued and respected; and where they feel confident and know how to approach responsible adults if they are experiencing difficulties.

• To develop effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children.

***Definitions of abuse***

The following definitions cover the vast majority of safeguarding cases, for further definitions and other specific types of abuse see page 11

**Neglect**

Neglect is a form of Significant Harm, which involves 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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is a form of Significant Harm, which involves 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.

**Physical abuse**

Physical Abuse is a form of Significant Harm, which may involve including 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is a form of Significant Harm which 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.

**Significant harm**

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of Significant Harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes Significant Harm but consideration should be given to the following:

* The severity of ill-treatment which may include the degree and extent of physical harm including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;
* The duration and frequency of abuse and neglect;
* The extent of premeditation.

***Procedures and Responsibilities***

School procedures for safeguarding children are in line with Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures, which may be accessed at www.mscb.org.uk

A copy of ‘What to do if you are worried about a child being abused’ is available for all staff to read. This may also be downloaded from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2

The school has a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), who has undertaken basic child protection training delivered through the Medway Safeguarding Children Board and the one-day DSO training provided by the Local Authority (LA). They will attend refresher training provided by the Local Authority every two years. We have a deputy DSO who has also received the basic multi-agency training and has received one day DSO training. The name and role of the DSO will be clearly displayed in the school.

It is the responsibility of the DSO to ensure that all adults in school receive a copy of the policy and follow the schools internal child protection procedures and Kent/Medway Council’s record keeping procedures. All child protection records will be kept in a secure place away from school files, in a locked cabinet in the head teacher’s office. It is also the responsibility of the DSO to make any referrals necessary to Kent/Medway Council’s Social Care. All adults who work in schools, are legally required to participate in child protection training at least every three years. Opportunities will be provided to receive training consistent with Kent/Medway Safeguarding Children Board’s standards, in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse, and their knowledge regarding what to do if they feel a child may be suffering abuse.

All members of staff know how to respond to a student who discloses abuse, and they are familiar with procedures to be followed (see below).

If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about alleged abuse, there are a number of things that must be done to support the child:

• Do not make promises e.g. to keep secrets

• Stay calm and be available to listen.

• Listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying.

• Question minimally without pressurising; only using open questions.

• Do not put words in the child’s mouth but note the main points carefully.

• Keep a full record - date, time, what the child did, said etc.; on Medway Council’s ‘record of concern’ form using a body map if appropriate.

• Re-assure the child and let them know that they were right to inform us.

• Inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on.

• Immediately inform the DSO.

All parents/carers are made aware of the school’s responsibilities in regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school’s child protection policy on the school website. Reference will be made to it in a prospectus/brochure and home school agreement.

Our DSO will ensure a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, they will ensure that we contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children.

We acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils. Our DSO will ensure a structured procedure within the school, which will be followed by all of the members of school community in cases of suspected abuse.

Our policy and procedures will be reviewed annually and updated by the Proprietors, who will ensure that they are in line with Medway Safeguarding Children Board’s policies and procedures.

**The procedures to be followed are set out below**

Any suspicion of child abuse must be reported immediately to the DSO or another designated member of staff.

If any child/young person appears to be in need of immediate medical treatment they should be taken to the local Accident and Emergency Department in accordance with the procedure for Emergency Medical Treatment. If in the judgment of the DSO there are indications that the cause of the problem may be related to child abuse then the local authority must be immediately informed in order to give direction to the process to be followed. If the injuries are potentially non-accidental and the local authority direct the school to have the child medically assessed then the Accident and Emergency Department must be informed.

Staff must fill out the Incident Report form with the senior they reported to and this will be kept for future reference. Please note: if the incident concerns a particular member of staff, then the team leader/teacher should ensure that the member of staff in question is temporarily removed from the area while the DSO is contacted.

Staff should not take any further action, unless any relevant information is volunteered by a parent, guardian or any other individual in which case it should be recorded and passed on to the DSO for action.

Any case of suspected child abuse or allegation of child abuse, even in the absence of physical evidence, must be brought to the immediate attention of the Local Authority by the DSO and their advice obtained. This is particularly relevant where the abuse is alleged or suspected to have been perpetrated by an outside caregiver and therefore the children/young people is particularly vulnerable to further abuse.

Any allegations about past abuse or neglect must be referred to the local safeguarding children’s team and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred.

Should a member of staff feel that a young person is at an immediate and serious risk of harm then the emergency services should be contacted, if in the opinion of that member of staff that is immediately necessary. However, in all but the most urgent and serious of circumstances the DSO should be consulted prior to this happening. In any event, the DSO should be consulted without unnecessary delay.

Should any incident occur out of hours the DSO will give consideration to informing the relevant Local Authority out of hours team.

In line with the Quality Standards for Children’s Homes 2015 the registered manager has a duty to inform Ofsted about any referral under the Safeguarding Children Procedure, and/or a serious incident alleged or otherwise, as a notifiable event (Reg 40.)

The Responsible Person may contact the Reviewing Unit in order to ascertain previously recorded and/or ongoing issues.

The DSO must keep hand written records of all observations and actions taken, timed, dated and signed. These records are to include any signs of abuse, neglect or injury where appropriate and must also include records of any communication with the relevant Local Authority and/or Police.

When a referral is made to a statutory protective agency such as Social Care, the Responsible Person should ensure that there is no misunderstanding regarding:

* 1. The reasons for making the referral
	2. Any special needs of the child/young person including any linguistic, cultural, religious, physical or psychological factors (and where appropriate the child/person’s family)
	3. Their expectations of the agency to which the referral has been made.

The DSO must confirm all verbal communication in writing within 24 hours repeating all relevant information and agreed actions.

Following an investigation, if the DSO still has concerns about the safety of the child/young person, this will be discussed with the placing authority.

At each stage of a referral there will be a review of the child’s risk assessment to ensure safeguarding measures are adhered to (such as suspending a member of staff or re-assigning them to a different area). There is a clear risk reduction plan post incident subsequent to the outcome of a referral. Both the risk assessment and the placement plan (Individual Pupil Care Plan - IPCP) are updated to reflect this. (See the Risk Assessment policy).

If a member of staff has concerns or receives concerns from a third party about the DSO then this needs to be reported to the Blue Skies School Proprietors.

***Supporting children***

We recognise that a child who has been abused or neglected, who witnesses abuse or lives in an abusive environment may feel helpless and, or humiliated. They may blame themselves, have low self-esteem and find it difficult to see the world as a positive place.

We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. We accept that research demonstrates the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to that which is aggressive or withdrawn. We will provide, across the curriculum, opportunities, which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for, help. We will promote a school ethos that is positive and supportive, and a secure environment, which provides all pupils and adults with a sense of being respected and valued. ***Supporting staff***

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or who appears likely to suffer harm, may find this situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSO, and to seek further support. This could be provided by, for example, the Head of School, by The School Workforce Team, Medway Council, Occupational Health Service, through the Medway Counseling Service, Care First, and/or a teacher/ trade union representative as appropriate.

We understand that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour. The document ‘Guidance for Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings’ provides advice on this and the circumstances that should be avoided in order to limit complaints against staff of abuse of trust and/or allegations of physical or sexual abuse made against staff. These matters form part of staff induction and are referred to in the staff handbook.

We recognise that DSO’s should have access to support and appropriate workshops, courses or meetings as organised by the Local Authority.

***Confidentiality***

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential, however, a member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil, nor should they agree to keep a secret. Where there is a Child Protection concern it must be passed immediately to Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator within 24 hours of the concern being noticed.

The Head of School or DSO will disclose personal information, including the level of involvement of other agencies, about a pupil to other members of staff only on a ‘need to know’ basis.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

***Safe staff***

Checks will be undertaken on all adults working in the school to establish the suitability of a person to work with children corresponding to Medway Council’s Safe Recruitment procedures and Part Three of ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ DfE 2015, each recruitment selection group and interview panel will have a ‘Safer Recruitment’ trained member. All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted with or in view of other adults. All staff understand that they are employed in a ‘Position of Trust’ and that inappropriate behaviour with or towards children is unacceptable. It is an offence for a person in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18, even if the relationship is consensual. This applies where the child is in full-time education and the person works in the same establishment even if s/he does not teach the child. Sexual Offences Act 2003 If an allegation is made against another member of staff, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher or the most senior teacher if the Headteacher is not present. The Headteacher or most senior teacher will then consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (Clare Wilkes 01634 331229) if they not available contact Education Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Joanne Cook 01634 331017).

If the allegation made to the member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the proprietors who will consult the Local Authority, (as above) without notifying the Headteacher first.

The school will follow the Local Authority procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which can be found in the staff room.

Where another body provides services or activities separately, using the school premises, the proprietors will ensure that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safe recruitment and safeguarding children.

***Whistle blowing***

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude and actions of colleagues as per the Blue Skies School ‘whistleblowing Policy’. If necessary, they should consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (Clare Wilkes 01634 331229) if they are not available contact Education Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Joanne Cook 01634 331017). See also Medway Council Whistle blowing procedures, if you are unhappy with the response you have received please contact Office for Standards in Education or contact the Department for Education and Skills (0870 000 2288 or complaints.peu@dfes.gsi.gov.uk).

***Other types of abuse***

**Child sexual exploitation**

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is a form of Sexual Abuse.  The sexual exploitation of children is described in the government guidance document as “involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.  It can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.  Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.  What marks out sexual exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.  Children involved in any form of sexual exploitation should be treated primarily as the victims of abuse and their needs carefully assessed. The aim should be to protect them from further harm and they should not be treated as criminals. The primary law enforcement response should be directed at perpetrators who groom children for sexual exploitation. If any member of staff has concerns that young person is potentially the victim of CSE then this should be reported to the DSO without delay.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures, which include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. It is an extremely harmful practice that violates the most basic human rights

Female circumcision, excision or infibulation was made illegal in this country by the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985, except on specific physical and mental health grounds. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 strengthens and amends the 1985 legislation. It makes it an offence for the first time for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.

FGM involves the use of instruments to circumcise, mutilate or alter female genitalia, without reference to medical or surgical procedures, and with or without the supervision of a registered medical practitioner.

This practice is not required by any major religion.

The practice is illegal and medical evidence indicates that FGM causes harm to those who are subjected to it.

Girls may be circumcised or genitally mutilated illegally by doctors or traditional health workers in the UK, or sent abroad for the operation.

A child may be considered to be at risk if it is known that older girls in the family have been subject to the procedure. FGM is typically performed on girls aged between 4 and 13, although in some cases it is performed on newborn babies or young women prior to marriage or pregnancy

Prepubescent girls of seven to ten are the main subjects, though the practice has been reported amongst babies.

If any agency is informed that a girl has been or may be subject to these practices, a referral must be made to Children's Services

**Child Missing from Education (CME)**

Local authorities have a duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. Blue Skies School and its staff recognise their duty to co-operate with local authorities in this regard. A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The school has in place appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. Blue Skies staff are alert to signs to look out for of potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. Blue Skies staff maintain an admissions and attendance register for this purpose. Blue Skies School recognises its duty to inform the local authorities of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admissions register, for the reasons stated in Keeping Children Safe In Education March 2015, or for any other reason

**Preventing Radicalisation (the PREVENT duty)**

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (February 2015) places a duty on Blue Skies School as a provider of education, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (‘’the Prevent Duty’’) and other expressions of radicalisation. Blue Skies also recognises its duty to ensure that members of staff identify where young people are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and the senior management team understands that it has a role to play in working with the police and local authorities to provide support to these individuals. With regard to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015’ Blue Skies recognises its duty to take part in Channel panels where required.

With regard to the Independent Schools Regulations (2014), Blue Skies recognises its duty to actively promote British values, and this duty is appropriately reflected in the school’s curriculum and operational policies.

***Access to information on other types or contexts of abuse***

There are other forms of abuse and members of staff are encouraged to be familiar with contexts of abuse as described on the TES, NSPCC and GOV.UK websites. These may include:

- Bullying and Cyberbullying

- Domestic violence

- Drug use and abuse

- Fabricated or induced illness

- Forced marriage

- Gangs and youth violence

- Gender-based violence/Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

- Mental health

- Private fostering

- Sexting

- Teenage relationship abuse

- Trafficking

***Other policies***

The Child Protection and safeguarding policy should be read alongside and in conjunction with other policies regarding the safety and welfare of children and these together make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school.

* Whistleblowing Policy
* E-safety Policy
* Anti-bullying Policy
* Behaviour policy
* First aid Policy
* DBS Policy
* SEN & Inclusion Policy
* Health and Safety Policy
* Equality and Diversity Policy
* Code of conduct and Confidentiality agreement
* Educational visits Policy

**Original Revised by:** Joanne Cook, Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Education).

**Revised:** and adopted by Adelle Chapman, Blue Skies School DCPC 2012

**Revised:** Jonathan Higgins, Blue Skies School DCPC April 2013

**Revised:** Jonathan Higgins, Blue Skies School DCPC April 2014

**Revised:** Jonathan Higgins, Blue Skies School DSO January 2016

**Revised:** Nicole Bradley, Blue Skies School DSO February 2017

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| **Signed:** | **Print Name:** **Nicole Bradley** |
| **Position:** **HEADTEACHER** | **Date:****9/2/17** |

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| **Signed:** | **Print Name:****Jonathan Higgins** |
| **Position:****Proprietor**  | **Date:** |

1. That is children and young people up to the age of 18 years [↑](#footnote-ref-1)