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# FOREST HILL SCHOOL

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## CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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*January 2017*

*Review: Spring 2018 or if a  
situation occurs which  
necessitates amendment*

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**Responsible persons for Child Protection Reviewed by:**

Designated Senior Person:           Iain Haresign  
Date:   Spring 2017

Deputy Designated Persons:  
Date:   Spring 2017  
SENCO:                               Helen Sheehan  
AWO:                                   Jillian Jones

Headteacher:                           Mike Sullivan  
Date:   Spring 2017

Nominated Governor:               Richard Cory  
Date:   Spring 2017

## **1. Policy statement and principals**

The school's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements for behaviour and safety, and leadership and management.

### **Our core safeguarding principles are:**

- the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- safer children make more successful learners
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

### **Child protection statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of the local safeguarding children board (LSCB).

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/socialcare/children/Safeguarding-Children-Board/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Policy principles**

- Welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

### **Policy aims**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners
- To contribute to the school's safeguarding portfolio

### Terminology

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

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

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

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

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

## 2. Safeguarding legislation and guidance

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- The Teacher Standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- The statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2015) covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for LSCBs to monitor the effectiveness of local services, including safeguarding arrangements in schools.
- The statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education ([KCSIE 2016](#)) is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards ) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended by SI 2012/2962) and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Unless otherwise stated, 'school' in this guidance means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies and pupil referral units. All staff should read Part One of this guidance and staff can find a copy in the shared area and on the school website. A hard copy is available in the main office, in the staff room and in the school library and at [KCSIE 2016](#)

Research suggests that around 10 per cent of children will suffer some form of abuse, and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused. Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that school staff are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting

their concerns. The school will act on identified concerns and provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### Key personnel

#### The designated senior person (DSP) for child protection is:

Iain Haresign Deputy Headteacher

Contact details: email: [i.haresign@foresthillschool.co.uk](mailto:i.haresign@foresthillschool.co.uk) tel: 0208 613 8413/020 8699 9343

#### The deputy designated persons are:

Helen Sheehan (SENCo) & Jillian Jones (AWO)

Contact details: email: [j.jones@foresthillschool.co.uk](mailto:j.jones@foresthillschool.co.uk) tel: 0208 613 8467 / 020 8699 9343

Contact details: email: [h.sheehan@foresthillschool.co.uk](mailto:h.sheehan@foresthillschool.co.uk) tel: 0208 613 8505 / 020 8699 9343

#### The nominated child protection governor is: Richard Cory

Contact details: email: [info@foresthillschool.co.uk](mailto:info@foresthillschool.co.uk) tel: 020 8699 9343

All schools should appoint a member of the senior leadership team to coordinate child protection arrangements.

#### The DSP:

- has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, with updates every two years in accordance with the statutory guidance.
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
- has a working knowledge of LSCB procedures
- has an understanding of locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate
- notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
- ensures that when a pupil with a child protection plan leaves the school, their information is passed to their new school and the pupil's social worker is informed
- where children leave the school, ensures the child protection file is copied for any new school as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file

- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the LSCB
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection policy
- ensures that the child protection policy is regularly reviewed and updated annually
- liaises with the nominated governor and headteacher (where the role is not carried out by the headteacher) as appropriate
- keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, on the school's website or by other means
- ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made
- works with the headteacher to ensure cases concerning a member of staff are referred appropriately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) LADO can be contacted on the following email [safeguardingboard@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingboard@lewisham.gov.uk) or tel. 020 3049 1446

**The deputy designated person(s)** is appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

**The governing body** ensures that the school:

- appoints a DSP for child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training
- ensures that the DSP role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- maintains an overview of child protection policy and procedures, including a staff code of conduct, ensuring that they are consistent with LSCB and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the headteacher and allegations against other children
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the headteacher, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements on induction and appropriate child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of the LSCB. Checks that the DSP receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals
- ensures that all temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection
- ensures that the school contributes to inter agency working and plans
- provides a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified
- considers how pupils may be taught about safeguarding, including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The governing body nominates a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures are in accordance with the LSCB and national guidance.

**The headteacher:**

- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSP and deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online
- liaises with the Local Authority Designated Officer where an allegation is made against a member of staff
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.



#### **4. Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**

(This next section should be read together with the Behaviour and Relationships policy and with the Code of Conduct for Lewisham employees –available below)

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/how-council-is-run/Documents/EmployeeCodeConduct.pdf>

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the school's child protection policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- applying the use of reasonable force only as a last resort and in compliance with school and LSCB procedures
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSP, or, if necessary directly to police or children's social care
- following the school's rules with regard to communication with pupils and use of social media and online networking

#### **5. Abuse of trust**

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

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

## **6. Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions, and child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- living in a domestic abuse situation
- affected by parental substance misuse
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- involved directly or indirectly in sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

## **7. Specific safeguarding issues**

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

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example, information can be found on the TES, MindEd

and the NSPCC websites. School staff can access government guidance as required on the issues listed below via GOV.UK and other government websites:

- bullying including cyberbullying
- children missing education
- child missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- domestic violence
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- hate
- mental health
- missing children and adults
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation
- relationship abuse
- sexting
- trafficking

## **8. Missing children**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSP will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions.

## 9. Female Genital Mutilation

If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, 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. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, 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 pupils, 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 professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college’s designated safeguarding lead and involve children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

## 10. Further information on preventing radicalisation

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of the schools wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children’s behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately, which may include making a referral to the Channel programme.

Staff can access further information and guidance on this area from the

The department has also published advice for schools on the [Prevent duty](#). The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

There is additional guidance: [Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales](#) that applies to colleges.

The Government has launched [educate against hate](#), a website designed to equip school and college leaders, teachers and parents with the information, tools and resources they need to recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people. The website provides information on training resources for teachers, staff and school and

## **11. Helping children to keep themselves safe**

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our personal, social, health, citizenship and economic (PSHCE) education lessons and through all aspects of school life. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with a range of staff and outside agencies work out how those risks might be overcome. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are also reminded regularly about e-safety and tackling bullying procedures. The school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children, and pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff in confidence about any worries they may have.

## **12. Support for those involved in a child protection issue**

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person from the safeguarding team who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

## **13. Complaints procedure**

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a pupil or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a pupil or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by senior staff, the headteacher and governors. An explanation of the complaints procedure is available on the Lewisham website at

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/Complaints-and-feedback/Pages/Complaints-about-schools.aspx>

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

#### **14. If you have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's **whistleblowing code** which can be found on line in the staff area, as a hard copy in the library, the main office and the staffroom enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place. Link below:

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/how-council-is-run/Documents/Whistleblowing%20Policy%20Final%202014.pdf>

NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline number **0800 028 0285**

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the headteacher. Complaints about the headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

The relevant contact details are below

Lewisham MASH team duty phone number **0208 314 9181**

Or email [\*\*MASHagency@lewisham.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:MASHagency@lewisham.gov.uk)

## 15. Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the headteacher. Allegations against the headteacher should be reported to the designated child protection governor as well as to the chair of governors. Staff may also report their concerns directly to police or children's social care if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action, however, appropriate governors must also be informed.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in [KCSIE 2016](#) Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

## 16. Staff training

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and governors will receive an explanation during their induction which includes the school's child protection policy, reporting and recording arrangements, the staff code of conduct and details for the DSP. All staff, including the headteacher (unless the headteacher is the DP) and governors will receive training that is regularly updated and the DSP will receive training updated at least every two years, including training in inter-agency procedures.

Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's **Visiting Staff Pack** on arrival. This includes our safeguarding procedures.

## **17. Safer recruitment**

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff by following the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016) together with the LSCB and the school's individual procedures.

Safer recruitment means that applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed, if shortlisted.

The school will also verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's child protection policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection policy.

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies that agency staff have been appropriately checked.

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers, including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with pupils.

### **Supervised volunteers**

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

### **Contractors**

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks where appropriate.



## 18. Site security

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe. The headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## 19. Extended school and off-site arrangements

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## 20. Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- seek parental consent
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

## 21. e-Safety

Our pupils increasingly use mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's **e-safety policy** and **Social Media Policy** explain how we try to keep pupils safe in school. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access these sites in school. Some pupils will undoubtedly be 'chatting' on mobiles or social networking sites at home and parents are also encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using social media, using our policies as guidance.

Staff also receive advice regarding the use of social networking and electronic communication with pupils. Any communication with a student or their parent should be through school communication

systems, telephone and email. No member of staff should allow students or their parents access to their on-line sites, nor should they seek or agree to be added to students' on-line sites or activities, eg gaming sites. Staff should report request from students to the DSP. Where there has been an emergency which has necessitated contact outside school systems (e.g. the return from a trip is delayed) staff should make a careful note and share this with their line manager.

## **22. Child protection procedures**

All school and college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

Staff members working with 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 interests of the child.

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff members are unsure they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead Iain Haresign or in his absence the deputy safeguarding Lead. In exceptional circumstances, such as in emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can speak directly to children's social care.

Please remember that only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance.

When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that your actions do not jeopardise and legal action against the abuser.

There are a number of basic 'rules' that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child:

- Don't panic.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Listen to the child and accept what the child says.
- Look at the child directly, but do not appear shocked.
- Don't seek help while the child is talking to you.
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone.
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help.
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else.
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Write down what the child says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also.
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure
- Tell the Designated Senior Person as soon as possible.

## Important Notes:

The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the person is still working with or has access to the children.

Dealing with an allegation that a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer has abused a child is difficult but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly.

### Things TO SAY when a child discloses

- Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner
- 'I believe you'
- 'I am going to try to help you'
- 'I will help you'
- 'I am glad that you told me'
- 'You are not to blame'

### Things NOT TO SAY when a child discloses

- 'You should have told someone before'
- 'I can't believe it! I am shocked!'
- 'Oh that explains a lot'
- 'No not... he's a friend of mine'
- 'I won't tell anyone else'
- 'Why? How? When? Where? Who?'

### Things TO DO

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you.
- Let them know what you are going to do next.
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from the designated child protector.
- Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period.
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.

### Things NOT TO DO

- Do not attempt to deal with the situation yourself.
- Do NOT formally interview the child:
- Never ask leading questions.
- Never push for information or make assumptions.
- Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained, when clarification is needed.
- Do not make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents.
- Do not keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality.
- Do not take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or carers.
- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the designated child protection officer.

## **Recognising abuse**

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

**There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.**

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

### **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 a child 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 a 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, although it may occur alone.

### **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.

### **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.

Definitions taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2015).

### **Bullying**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the tackling bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the headteacher and the DSP will consider implementing child protection procedures.

### **Indicators of abuse**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated senior person.

**It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school or arrive late
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact

- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSP to decide how to proceed.

**It is very important that staff report their concerns directly to the designated child protection officer – they do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.**

Once a report has been made the designated child protection officer will consider how best to proceed.

If the report is considered to be of a Child Protection Nature immediate contact will be made with a senior social worker from the MASH team (or the equivalent agency for those children who are not Lewisham residents) Advice will be sought and a way forward agreed. Concerns will be shared verbally initially but a CAF referral will be made a later point.

The designated child protection officer will consider who to share information with and the degree of support and monitoring that is appropriate for the individual/family concerned

Forest Hill seek to work in a multiagency way whenever possible and therefore students for whom concerns have been raised or those who are already at the *Child in Need/Child in Need of Protection* stages will be placed on the school’s inclusion panel agenda so that the child’s families circumstances can be regularly reviewed and additional support/ referrals considered and monitored.

### **Impact of abuse**

The impact of child abuse should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

### **Taking action**

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- report your concern to the DSP by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

### **If you are concerned about a pupil’s welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no ‘real’

evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the **welfare concern form** to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSP.

### **If a pupil discloses to you**

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with the pupils staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the pupil’s mother think about all this
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the pupil what will happen next. The pupil may agree to go to see the designated senior person. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.
- report verbally to the DSP even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the **record of concern form** and hand it to the designated person
- seek support if they feel distressed

### **Notifying parents**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSP will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care.

### **Referral to children's social care / Police**

The DSP will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

**However if any member of staff discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 they should report this directly to the police themselves**

### **Children with sexually harmful behaviour**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's **anti-bullying procedures** where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour should speak to the DSP as soon as possible.

### **Sexual exploitation of children**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. 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. All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSP.

### **Confidentiality and sharing information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated senior person, headteacher or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.



Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 principles. Information is:

- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure.

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be kept in locked storage. Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the headteacher or DSP.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school's policy on confidentiality and information-sharing is available to parents and pupils on request.

### **Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated senior person, their deputy, the headteacher and the chair of governors are all unavailable
- They discover that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child

## **Special Circumstances**

### **Looked after children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSP have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

### **Work Experience**

Our work Experience Programme is outsourced to Lewisham who run it in line with their own policies and procedures. Lewisham has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

### **Children staying with host families**

The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. In such circumstances the school follows the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, Annex C to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

More information on this can be found in the School Visits Policy, a copy of which is available on the school website.