

The Brook Special Primary School



Safeguarding Induction Handbook

Date policy last reviewed: Autumn Term,2023

Last updated: 16 May 2023

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Aim of this handbook

The Brook Special Primary School (the Brook) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the physical and mental welfare of every pupil in our school. We pride ourselves in delivering a whole-school preventative approach to managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken.

This induction handbook informs you of all the vital information you will need to familiarise yourself with upon starting your role at our school. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy – a copy of which will be distributed to you during induction. It is important that you read and understand both documents – any questions you have can be directed to the DSL.

The DSL of our school is Maureen Duncan and our deputies are Sukina Campos, Thibaut de Wolf, Felicia Rock.

1. Safeguarding responsibilities

In line with the DfE's statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education', all adults who come into contact with children have a responsibility to safeguard them and promote their welfare. As a member of school staff, this responsibility is particularly important for you, and you have a legal responsibility to help cultivate a safe environment that protects children from harm and promotes their welfare in the school.

Upon your employment to our school, you will have a number of responsibilities to ensure the safety and security of our pupils, staff and stakeholders. We expect you to adhere to the responsibilities below – any member of staff found to not follow the school's procedures will be dealt with formally in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

All staff members have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the profession as part of your professional duties.
- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of individual pupils.
- Provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- Be aware of the signs of abuse, exploitation and neglect, and other safeguarding issues that can put pupils at risk of harm.
- Be aware of behaviours linked to issues such as drug-taking, alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, serious violence, and sharing indecent images, and other signs that pupils may be at risk of harm.
- Be aware of the school's systems which support safeguarding, including any policies, procedures, information and training provided upon induction.
- Be aware of the role and identity of the DSL and their deputies.
- Undertake safeguarding training, including online safety training, during your induction.
- Ensure you receive and understand child protection and safeguarding (including online safety) updates, e.g. via email, as required, and at least annually.
- Be prepared, and understand how, to identify pupils that may benefit from early help and understand their role in the process.
- Act in accordance with school procedures with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including in relation to child-on-child abuse.

With regard to specific cases of safeguarding concerns, you have a responsibility to:

- Be aware of and understand the procedure to follow in the event that a child confides they are being abused, exploited or neglected.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, that they will be supported, and that they will be kept safe.
- Be aware of, and understand, the process for making referrals to the LA's children's social care services (CSCS), as well as for making statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, and your role in these assessments.
- Make a referral to CSCS and/or the police immediately, if at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child.

- Support social workers in making decisions about individual children, in collaboration with the DSL.
- Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with individual cases.
- Act immediately, following the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and speaking to the DSL with any concerns.
- Challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns, where necessary.

2. Definitions

The terms “**children**” and “**child**” refer to anyone under the age of 18.

For the purposes of this handbook, “**safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children**” is defined as:

- Protecting pupils from maltreatment.
- Preventing the impairment of pupils' mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that pupils grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all pupils to have the best outcomes.

“**Abuse**” is a form of maltreatment of a child which involves inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. It can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Abuse comes in various different forms, including physical, emotional and sexual, and may be by an adult or another child.

“**Neglect**” is a form of abuse which involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, e.g. not providing adequate food, clothing and shelter or protecting them from physical and emotional harm, likely to result in serious impairment of a child's health or development.

3. Types and indicators of abuse and neglect

It is imperative that all staff understand what constitutes abuse and neglect against children to ensure that instances where pupils in our school are in unsafe circumstances, are at risk of harm or are potentially already facing harm can be identified and handled appropriately.

You should always exercise professional curiosity and know what to look for to be able to identify abuse and neglect as early as possible.

You are expected to be aware that abuse, exploitation, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be given a specific label and multiple issues often overlap one another. You should consider whether pupils are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families and that extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms, including sexual exploitation and abuse, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence.

You should also bear in mind that the school has a responsibility to respond to all safeguarding concerns, whether they occur inside or outside of school, or occur online or in person. Technology has increasingly become an instrument through which abuse or exploitation can

be carried out, and it is important that you are aware that online abuse can be as damaging and severe as abuse committed in person.

You are expected to read and understand the following information:

Abuse

You must remain cognisant of the fact that abuse can be committed by one child, or a group of children, against another child or group of children – this is known as “child-on-child abuse”. You can find further information on abuse amongst peers in the school’s Child-on-child Abuse Policy, with which you are expected to familiarise yourself.

The following are the different types of abuse you may encounter.

“**Physical abuse**” is a form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, suffocating and poisoning, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse can also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

“**Emotional abuse**” is defined as a form of abuse which involves the emotional maltreatment of a child to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, and may include not giving them the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of how they communicate. It can also involve age-inappropriate expectations, e.g. interactions beyond a child’s developmental capability, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing them from normal social interactions.

“**Sexual abuse**” is defined as a form of abuse which involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, and whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical assault, such as penetrative assault and touching, or non-penetrative actions, such as kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as grooming, looking at sexual images or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse can take place online, and can be committed by other children.

The term “**sexual harassment**” is used to describe any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, both online or offline, which violates a child’s dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence. Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to:

- Sexual comments, e.g. sexual stories, lewd comments, sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and sexualised name-calling.
- Sexual “jokes” and taunting.
- Physical behaviour, e.g. deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes.
- Displaying photos, pictures or drawings of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting

- Online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. This includes:
 - The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
 - Sharing unwanted explicit content.
 - Sexualised online bullying.
 - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
 - Sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats.

The term “**sexual violence**” encompasses the definitions provided in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with their penis, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally penetrate the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of their body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent:** A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally cause another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

“**Upskirting**” refers to the act, as identified in the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, of taking a picture or video under another person’s clothing, without their knowledge or consent, with the intention of viewing that person’s genitals or buttocks, with or without clothing, to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Upskirting is a criminal offence. Anyone, including pupils and staff, of any gender can be a victim of upskirting.

The “**consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos**”, colloquially known as “**sexting**”, is defined as the sharing between pupils of sexually explicit content, including indecent imagery. “**Indecent imagery**” is defined as an image which meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Nude or semi-nude sexual posing
- A child touching themselves in a sexual way
- Any sexual activity involving a child
- Someone hurting a child sexually
- Sexual activity that involves animals

Indicators of abuse

You should be aware of the following potential indicators of abuse in children:

- Unexplained injury

- Visible desire to cover bruises or other injuries
- Acting frightened in response to sudden movements, raised voices, someone entering their personal space, etc.
- Avoiding being alone with others
- Sudden lack of confidence or self-assurance
- Struggling to control emotions
- Difficulty making or maintaining friendships
- Frequent self-deprecatory comments
- Withdrawing from social situations and/or social isolation
- Displaying sexual knowledge inappropriate for their age
- Pregnancy or STIs

Exploitation

The following are the different types of exploitation you may encounter. **“Child sexual exploitation” (CSE)** is a form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants; and/or
- For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator; and/or through violence or the threat of violence

CSE does not always involve physical contact, as it can also occur online. It is also important to note that a child can be sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

“Child criminal exploitation” (CCE) is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants; and/or
- For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator; and/or
- Through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact – it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, being forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or being forced to threaten other young people.

“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, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of ‘deal line’.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools.

Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), where the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs – a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, staff will refer their concerns to the DSL who will also consider the availability of local services and other agencies who offer support to victims of county lines.

Indicators of exploitation

You should be aware of the following potential indicators of exploitation in children:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly going home late
- Regularly missing lessons
- Appearing with unexplained gifts and new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older partners
- Undergoing mood swings or drastic changes in emotional wellbeing
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Misuse of drugs and alcohol
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education

Neglect

Neglect may involve:

- A parent failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment.
- Failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger.
- Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Failing to secure adequate supervision, including through the use of inappropriate caregivers.
- Neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of neglect

You should be aware of the following potential indicators of neglect in children:

- Poor appearance and hygiene
- Health and development problems, e.g. untreated injuries, medical or dental issues, a recurring illness
- Housing and family issues, e.g. having to take on the role of carer for another family member, unsuitable living conditions, parents appearing under the influence of drugs
- Mood and behavioural changes, e.g. changes in emotional wellbeing, lacking in concentration, becoming defensive or aggressive
- Concerning behaviour, e.g. missing school, being persistently late, getting into trouble at school or with the police
- Other warning signs, e.g. alcohol or substance abuse, discomfort around being touched, flinching at sudden movements

Other safeguarding issues

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse; they may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships. KCSIE refers to the latter as teenage relationship abuse. This can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn. The [NSPCC](#), [Refuge](#) and [SafeLives](#) all have advice on how children who are affected by domestic abuse can be identified and supported. [Operation Encompass](#) operates in the majority of police forces across England – it helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The school actively engages in Operation Encompass – please ask the DSL for more information on this.

Serious violence

You should be aware of the indicators, which may signal pupils are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- Increased absence from school
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- A significant decline in education performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a pupil has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may also be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Homelessness

This is also a serious safeguarding concern of which you must be aware. In some cases, children could be living independently from their parents, e.g. through exclusion – the DSL and deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise and progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. In some cases, 16 and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians (e.g. through exclusion from their home), and will require a different level of intervention and support than the context of homeless children who live with their families.

'Honour-based' abuse (HBA)

This involves crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and community including FGM, forced marriage and breast ironing. All forms of HBA are abuse and will be treated as such by schools. If in any doubt, staff will speak to the DSL for guidance. Guidance on warning signs of FGM or forced marriage as HBA can be found in the ['Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation'](#) and the ['Forced marriage'](#) guidance.

Local safeguarding procedures will be activated if a staff member has concerns regarding HBA. Where FGM has taken place, teachers must personally report the case to the police,

though this does not apply for suspected or 'at risk' cases, or where the victim is over 18; in such cases, staff will follow local safeguarding procedures.

Radicalisation

This refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the school has a specific duty to have due regard to the need to prevent young people being drawn into terrorism (the 'Prevent' duty). The school is expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, which means they need to understand the potential risks and how to support them.

Safeguarding arrangements will consider the policies and procedures of local safeguarding arrangements. As part of the changes, LAs are expected to ensure 'Channel panels' are in place. These panels will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and provide support to those individuals.

The school is required, as partners of the Channel programme, to cooperate with the panel and the police in undertaking the initial assessment as to whether a referral is appropriate. We will engage with parents and families to spot signs of radicalisation. Any concerns of radicalisation will be discussed with children's parents, in line with the school's safeguarding policy.

Cyber-crime

Cyber-crime is criminal activity using technology and/or the internet. Pupils at our school who show particular aptitude or skill for technology or computing may be at increased risk of entering into cyber-crime. Where you have any concerns about a pupil, you should talk to the DSL. The DSL may consider referring pupils where concern exists to the [Cyber Choices programme](#), which can help them to use this talent in a positive way, and prevent them from being drawn into cybercrime.

Child abduction and community safety

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a child from those with parental responsibility for them. You should bear in mind that child abduction can be carried out by any adult, including family members of the child. The school aims to give practical advice and support to pupils on keeping themselves safe when vulnerable, e.g. when walking to and from school, and it is important that all of our staff are on high alert for any suspicious behaviour, e.g. someone loitering near the school, or a pupil's parent whose parental responsibility was revoked turning up to pick them up from school.

Modern slavery

Modern slavery is an umbrella term which encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Modern slavery is a serious crime that violates human rights. Victims are forced, threatened or deceived into subjugating situations, degradation and control which undermine their identity. We expect you to familiarise yourself with the Home Office's [statutory guidance](#) on modern slavery, which outlines the types of modern slavery and the indicators that a child, or a someone whom a child is dependant on, is a victim of modern slavery.

4. Pupils with increased vulnerability to harm

You should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to abuse than others. This does not mean that all pupils with the below characteristics will be abused, or that they cannot be perpetrators of abuse themselves; however, it is important that you remain aware that the risk for these pupils may be heightened and that you may need to observe them more closely, especially if you have existing concerns. Below are some considerations you should make with regard to these pupils.

Pupils who need a social worker

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. A pupil's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL has a record of all the pupils at the school with a social worker and will use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of these pupils' safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

Pupils requiring mental health support

The school recognises that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

You are expected to observe children day-to-day, where appropriate, and be able to identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. You must not, however, attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, as this can only be done by an appropriately trained professional. You should be aware of how the experiences of pupils who have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially adverse childhood experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

You must report mental health concerns about pupils that are also safeguarding concerns immediately, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Looked after Children (LAC) and Post looked after children (PLAC)

You will receive training as part of your induction, and then annually, to ensure you have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe. The DSL will hold a record of the details of pupils' social workers and the name of the virtual school head (VSH) in the LAs that look after each pupil. Staff members, if appropriate to their role, should have access to the information they need in relation to a pupil's looked after legal status and the pupil's care arrangements. The designated teacher will work with LAs to promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school.

Pupils with SEND

The school recognises that pupils with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline and understands that further barriers may exist when determining abuse and neglect in this group of pupils.

You must be aware that pupils with SEND are at increased risk of child-on-child abuse. The school will ensure that there are mechanisms in place to support pupils with SEND in reporting abuse, with due regard paid to the fact that these pupils may face additional barriers to reporting abuse and that spotting signs of abuse in these pupils may be harder.

Staff will be aware of the following:

- Certain indicators of abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, may relate to the pupil's disability without further exploration; however, it should never be assumed that a child's indicators relate only to their disability
- Pupils with SEND are more prone to peer group isolation or bullying, and can be disproportionately impacted by this, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers may exist, as well as difficulties in managing and reporting these
- Cognitive understanding issues, such as being unable to appreciate the difference between fact and fiction in online content, and then repeating the content or behaviours in school

When reporting concerns or making referrals for pupils with SEND, the above factors will always be taken into consideration. When managing a safeguarding issue relating to a pupil with SEND, the DSL will liaise with the school's SENCO, as well as the pupil's family where appropriate, to ensure that the pupil's needs are effectively met. Extra pastoral support and attention, where appropriate, will also be put in place for pupils with SEND.

Girls

The school recognises that girls are more likely to be on the receiving end of some forms of abuse, particularly sexual abuse and child-on-child abuse, than their male peers, and that sexual violence and harassment against girls is very common and accounts for the majority of cases.

Taking into account that sexual violence and harassment against girls is widespread in society, and largely based in gender inequality, the school aims to encourage gender equality in all aspects of its operations. You are expected to challenge any incidents of misogynistic language or gender-based abuse, whether of a sexualised nature or not, as holding misogynistic viewpoints can make a pupil more likely to commit sexualised violence in the future.

LGBTQ+ pupils

The school recognises that pupils who are LGBTQ+, or are perceived to be LGBTQ+ whether they are or not, are more likely to be targeted by their peers, e.g. for discriminatory bullying, and may face increased risk of abuse outside of school. All staff should aim to provide a safe space for pupils to speak out or share their concerns, reducing the additional barriers LGBTQ+ pupils face and ensuring there is a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

The school holds a zero-tolerance policy towards pupils using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, regardless of whether or not the language is being directed at another individual. You are individually responsible for challenging such behaviour and making clear

to all pupils that any abuse towards pupils who are LGBTQ+, or who are perceived to be, is unacceptable.

Pupils from BAME backgrounds

The school holds a zero-tolerance policy towards the use of racist language, regardless of whether the language is being directed at another individual. You are individually responsible for challenging such behaviour and making clear to all pupils that any abuse towards pupils from BAME backgrounds is unacceptable.

You should be aware that BAME girls, BAME pupils with SEND, or BAME LGBTQ+, or perceived LGBTQ+, pupils are likely to face increased abuse due to the intersection of these identities. Staff will be vigilant with regard to these pupils and the ways in which other pupils behave towards them, in order to ensure any incidents or potential incidents can be handled as soon as they occur.

You should also be aware that minority ethnic pupils, particularly black pupils, may be less likely to report abuse committed against them, and may be more likely to be misidentified as perpetrators of abuse.

Children with family members in prison or who are involved with the court system

Where pupils have parents or other family members in prison, they are more likely to be at risk of poorer outcomes, including poverty, isolation, poor mental health, substance misuse and partaking in criminal activity themselves.

It is also important to remember that pupils who are required to give evidence at criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed, are likely to face increased stress and poor mental health. Such instances can also entrench conflict in families.

We offer increased support to pupils who have dealt with criminal activity and criminal justice, whether through witnessing or being the victim of crime, or having their family member imprisoned; you should ensure that you record and report any behaviour from these children which is concerning to you without delay.

Children absent from education

Where pupils are absent from education, particularly persistently, this can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Where you have any concerns about a pupil's patterns of attendance, you should report this to the DSL. Please do not assume that someone will already have flagged concerns about a pupil – it is always better to raise a concern someone else has already raised than not to share the concern, which could result in harm coming to a pupil.

Elective home education (EHE)

Although many children receiving EHE have positive experiences, some children can be put at increased risk of harm, particularly as being home educated can, in some instances, make children less visible to services put in place to ensure children's needs are met. Although it is unlikely, as a staff member at a school, that you will come into immediate contact with

safeguarding concerns surrounding children receiving EHE, we still expect that you will be aware of this issue as you may have to handle disclosures, e.g. from former peers of home-educated children or their parents.

5. Concerns about a pupil

The school expects that you will familiarise yourself with the procedure for reporting concerns and understand your responsibilities in relation to confidentiality and information sharing.

If at any point you have **any** concerns about a child's welfare, you must act on them **immediately** by speaking to the DSL or a deputy. Where the DSL is not available to discuss the concern, you should contact the deputy DSL with the matter.

The school aims to ensure that there is a trained DSL or deputy DSL on the school site at all times; however, in the rare occasion that this is not possible, e.g. due to sickness absence, you should speak to the headteacher immediately. It is important that you do not delay.

Once you have referred this to the DSL, the school will make one of the three following decisions:

- Managing any support for the child internally via the school's or college's own pastoral support processes
- Undertaking an early help assessment
- Making a referral to statutory services

Where a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer from, harm, the case will be referred to children's social care immediately. If a referral is made about a child by anyone other than the DSL, the DSL will be informed as soon as possible. The LA will decide what action is required within one working day of the referral being made and will notify the referrer. Staff are required to monitor a referral if they do not receive information from the LA regarding what action is necessary for the pupil.

If the situation does not improve after a referral, the DSL will ask for reconsideration to ensure that their concerns have been addressed and that the situation improves for the pupil. If early help is appropriate, the case will be kept under constant review. If the pupil's situation does not improve, a referral will be considered.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, as well as the reasons for making those decisions, will be recorded in writing by the DSL and are uploaded onto MyConcern. Other documents are locked away in a filing cabinet in the Headteacher's office.

If a pupil is in immediate danger, a referral will be made to CSCS and/or the police immediately. If a pupil has committed a crime, such as sexual violence, the police will be notified without delay.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, the school will ensure that the pupil's wishes are always considered, and that there are systems available for pupils to provide feedback and express their views.

6. Managing disclosures

We pride ourselves on creating a trusting atmosphere between staff and pupils. This is particularly important for when an incident happens and a pupil needs to disclose information but may be apprehensive about the consequences.

We are committed to ensuring our staff are sensitive to the personal barriers pupils may face when disclosing information, so it is essential that we remind pupils in exercises, such as PSHE days, what sort of behaviour is unacceptable and the importance of reporting said behaviour.

It is important that you maintain a professional curiosity and speak to the DSL with any concerns, recognising that pupils may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

Where a pupil makes a disclosure to you, you should act calmly and supportively, ensuring that the pupil feels like they are being listened to and believed, and reassure them that they have done the right thing by talking to you and they will be supported and kept safe.

You should ensure that you bear in mind that trauma can impact memory, meaning pupils may not be able to recall all details or a timeline of abuse, and you should not take this as an indication that the pupil is not being truthful, nor should you use this as an opportunity to interrogate the pupil on specific details. It is also important to be recognise than an initial disclosure may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident. You should attempt to gather essential facts without asking leading questions, being sensitive and avoiding pressing the pupil for information they do not, at this point, feel comfortable sharing. Remember to make notes so you can accurately report the disclosure to the DSL.

You must, at all costs, avoid promising a pupil that you will keep the disclosure confidential, and be honest and upfront with them about who you will have to share the information with and why. The information must not be shared with anyone who does not need to know.

Upon receiving a disclosure, confidentiality will be maintained at all times and you must adhere to the seven principles outlined in the DfE's ['Information sharing advice'](#) when disclosing information to either the DSL or an external agency – these are:

- **Necessary and proportionate:** consider how much information needs to be released – only share information that is necessary and adheres to your obligations under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- **Relevant:** only information that is relevant to the purposes should be shared.
- **Adequate:** information should be adequate to enable a thorough investigation to be conducted, ensuring it is understood and reliable.
- **Accurate:** information given should be accurate and up-to-date and should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion.
- **Timely:** you should not wait to disclose information. Prompt information delivery can reduce the risk of missed opportunities to offer support and protect a child.

- **Secure:** wherever possible, the information provided should be shared securely to avoid data breaches – you must always adhere to our Data Protection Policy.
- **Record:** information sharing decisions should be recorded, even if the information doesn't get shared – the reasons should be cited along with what information has been shared and who shared it. This should be done in line with our Records Management Policy.

7. Early help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life.

Any pupil may benefit from early help, but you should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for pupils who:

- Are disabled or have certain health conditions and have specific additional needs.
- Have special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory EHC plan).
- Have a mental health need.
- Are young carers.
- Show signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Are frequently missing/going missing from care or from home.
- Misuse drugs or alcohol.
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- Are returned home to their family from care.
- Show early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- Are at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Have a family member in prison, or are affected by parental offending.
- Are at risk of 'honour-based' abuse such as FGM or forced marriage.
- Are privately fostered.
- Are persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

Early help will also be used to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour to prevent escalation.

You should inform the DSL immediately if you feel as though a pupil may benefit from early help.

8. Appropriate behaviour towards pupils

You must be aware of the standards of appropriate behaviour expected of you when interacting with pupils.

You must have due regard to the fact that:

- You are in a unique position of trust, care, responsibility, authority and influence in relation to pupils.
- There is a significant power imbalance in the pupil-staff dynamic.
- There are more stringent expectations on your behaviour with regard to pupils due to your position as a public professional.

You must remain aware of the fact that all pupils under the age of 18, regardless of the phase they are at within the school, are children by law – resultantly, you must ensure that you do not assume maturity on behalf of a child and do not engage with children as they would with their own peers. You should be aware that, where there is any doubt regarding whether the behaviour of another adult is appropriate, this should be reported to the DSL immediately.

You should report any concerns you have related to your own behaviour or the behaviour of other adults, including your colleagues; concerns should be reported even if they are low-level. Low-level concerns are differentiated from concerns that can cause harm. The harms threshold is the point at which a concern is no longer low-level and constitutes a threat of harm to a child. This threshold is defined as accusations that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour that has happened outside of school.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour that would constitute a low-level concern that should be reported to the DSL include:

- **Being overly friendly with children** – this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with a child or children, e.g. conversations that are about your personal life.
- **Having favourites and treating those favourites differently** – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment or buying pupils gifts.
- **Taking photographs of children on your personal mobile phone or devices.**
- **Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.**
- **Humiliating pupils.**

You should be aware that some of the above low-level concerns may meet the harms threshold depending on certain factors, e.g. the age or needs of the child or the content of exchanged messages, and that some of the above incidents may not be concerns in context, e.g. a pre-approved, one-to-one meeting with a child behind a closed door between the child and a school counsellor who has received all appropriate safety checks.

When reporting concerns about other members of staff or leaders of the school, you are protected in law, and by the 'Whistleblowing and concerns about staff' section of this policy.

9. Whistleblowing and concerns about staff

Whistleblowing

A “**whistleblower**” discloses confidential information regarding an employee, which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct which is connected with the workplace.

Any of the following people can raise a concern:

- Employees of the school
- Employees of contractors working for the school, e.g. agency staff, builders and drivers
- Employees of suppliers
- Voluntary workers working with the school
- A trainee, such as a student teacher

We recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to take; as such, we will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect staff who raise a concern in good faith.

You are protected in law by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which gives employees protection from detriment and dismissal where they have made a protected disclosure, providing the legal requirements of the Act are satisfied. Concerns will be expressed in writing to the headteacher (or the governing board if the concern pertains to the headteacher), and will include: the background to the concern, names, dates and places where possible, and express the reasons for the concern.

Individuals are encouraged to let themselves be known, either in person, or through their union representative, as concerns expressed anonymously are difficult to investigate.

You can seek confidential advice at any time from Protect, a registered charity which advises on serious malpractice in the workplace. For more information, visit their [website](#) or ring them on 020 7404 6609.

You are not responsible for investigating the alleged illegal or dishonest activity, or for determining fault or corrective measures. Once the school has been informed of the concern, the headteacher will write to the whistleblower within 10 days of the initial meeting to confirm that the concern has been received, as well as indicate proposals for dealing with the matter.

The initial stage will be an interview between you and the headteacher, then an assessment of further action will be discussed. If an investigation is carried out, you will be informed of the final outcome.

If the investigating officer needs to talk to you, you are permitted to be accompanied by a trade union representative, a professional association representative, a friend, or a fellow member of staff not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates. This person will provide support only, and will not be allowed to become involved in the proceedings.

If no action is to be taken, and/or you are not satisfied with the way the matter has been handled, they can make a complaint under the school's complaints procedure.

Although we are committed to ensuring our staff members can report concerns about their colleagues' conduct, if, for any reason, you feel unable to raise an issue with the SLT, they should access other whistleblowing channels such as the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline:

- Telephone: 0800 028 0285 – available from 8:00am to 8:00pm Monday to Friday
- Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Any allegations of abuse made against staff members will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

In the event that an allegation is made about you, the school has welfare support on offer. We recognise the sensitivity of the issue, and how distressing it can be to be the subject of an investigation; the headteacher will provide you with information about the support available in the event that an allegation is made about you.

10. Self-reporting

In the event that you feel as though you have acted in a way that:

- Could be misinterpreted, by a pupil or bystander.
- Could appear compromising to others.
- You realise, upon reflection, falls below the standards set out in the Staff Code of Conduct.

You are encouraged to self-report in the event you feel as though you have acted inappropriately or in a way that could be construed as inappropriate upon reflection. We aim to be sympathetic and understanding to those who self-report.

Self-reporting does not mean you will be treated more favourably during any resulting investigations than staff members who were reported by someone else; however, your self-awareness and intentions will be taken into consideration when a final decision is being made on the severity of the incident.

11. Training and further information

Training

In addition to this handbook, you will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction, which will be regularly updated on an annual basis or whenever there is a change in legislation.

The induction training will cover:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The Behaviour Policy.
- The Staff Code of Conduct.
- The Children Missing from Education Policy.
- The identity of the DSL and any deputies.
- The role of the DSL and deputy DSLs.

You will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually.

Training will include:

- Keeping children Safe in Education (2023/4)
- Signs of Abuse
- MyConcern and keeping appropriate records
- Online safety
- Scenarios of real safeguarding incidents
- Safer recruitment

You will receive opportunities to contribute towards and inform the safeguarding arrangements in the school. The DSL and deputy DSL will undergo updated child protection training every two years, as well as additional training to refresh their skills and knowledge at regular intervals (at least annually), to allow them to keep up-to-date with any developments relevant to their role.

Online training will be conducted for all staff members as part of the overall safeguarding approach.

Further information

This handbook includes a general summary of the school's approach to safeguarding, and your role within it. For more detailed information on specific aspects of our approach, we strongly encourage you to ensure you have read and fully understand the following school policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Reporting Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- LAC Policy
- Pupil Confidentiality Policy
- Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy

12. Monitoring and review

We recognise that many staff members may use this handbook as a reference point throughout their career at the school; therefore, we will review and update the handbook **annually**, and in response to any new or updated government guidance or legislation.

The handbook will be reviewed and updated by the DSL and headteacher.