
Policy Document**Child Protection Policy****Aims of the Policy**

There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy.

- 1. Prevention** through the teaching and pastoral support offered to the pupils within the whole school protective ethos.
- 2. Protection** by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns.
- 3. Support** to pupils who may have been abused.

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and resilience.
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse or neglect.
- To acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm (including the risk of involvement in acts of extremism and/or terrorism), and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school that will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.
- To develop effective working relationships with all other agencies, involved in safeguarding children.
- To ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability. This includes other community users of our facilities.

Procedures

- We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead who has undertaken Level 2 training delivered through the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board, and who undertakes other training as recommended by Children's Services every two years. This is currently Matt Clinkard, Vice Principal.

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- We have 2 members of staff who will act in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's absence who have, also received Level 2 multi-agency training, and who will have been briefed in the role. This is currently Gemma Glentworth and Henrietta McDermott.
- All members of staff are provided with opportunities to receive training in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse or neglect every year. Staff recruited in-year watch a recording of the staff training and are given a Q and A session with the DSL.
- All members of staff, volunteers, and Governors know how to respond to a student who discloses abuse or neglect and the procedure to be followed in appropriately sharing a concern or disclosure of possible abuse or neglect.
- Parents/carers are made aware of the school's responsibilities in regard to child protection procedures through publication of the Academy's Child Protection Policy, and reference to it in our prospectus and on our website.
- Our selection and recruitment policy includes all checks on staff suitability including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checking recommended by the DFE and in accordance with current legislation.
- All adults, (including supply teachers and volunteers) new to our school will be made aware of the school's policy and procedures and the name and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All visitors sign to say they have read key safeguarding information, including identification of key staff, on entry.

Responsibilities

We understand that our responsibility to safeguard children requires that we all appropriately share any concerns that we may have about children.

We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for:

- Referring a child if there are concerns about a child's welfare, possible abuse or neglect to Children's Social Care (CSC). An Early Help Assessment will be submitted for Level 4 referrals to CSC and an EHA submitted to the Level 2 and 3 Early Help Team for Level 3 referrals.
- Seeking professional advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead Consultation Line, where appropriate.
- Ensuring that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept on MyConcern even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from student records via 'MyConcern'.
- Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the student records.
- Acting as a focal point for staff concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals.

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- Ensuring that either they or another appropriately informed member of staff attends case conferences, family support meetings, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings.
- Completion of an Early Help Assessment. This form should be used where we consider that a child has needs, which cannot be met solely by the school, and where, following an assessment of the situation, we believe co-ordinated intervention is required to promote, safeguard or protect the welfare of the child. In these circumstances, we will have records detailing what work has been undertaken by our school to support the child and family and why we believe that a more corporate and co-ordinated approach is needed. This information then provides the basis for the completion of the EHA. The request for co-ordinated support services for a family should always be discussed with parents and consent gained unless to do so would place the child or others at greater risk of harm.
- Ensuring that any absence of two days, without satisfactory explanation, of a student currently subject to a child protection plan is referred to their Social Worker.
- Ensuring that all school staff are aware of the school's CP policy and procedures, and know how to recognise and refer any concerns.
- Providing an annual Safeguarding report for the Governing Body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by all staff and Governors; relevant curricular issues, number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children referred to social services and subject to child protection plans (anonymised).
- Keeping themselves up to date with knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role, including attending relevant training, at least every two years, provided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board.

Procedures around a child making a disclosure

Issues of Child Protection may relate to:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Risk of radicalisation
- A child missing from education
- Safer recruitment of all staff
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse involves: hitting, slapping, kicking, misuse of medication, undue restraint, 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.

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Sexual abuse involves: forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes non-contact situations such as viewing child abuse images.

Emotional abuse involves: persistent emotional ill treatment of children, such as frightening them, or putting them in situations of danger. It is also an abuse to convey to children the feeling they are worthless or unloved.

Neglect: and acts of omission are also a form of abuse. This could involve failure to provide an adequate level of care (e.g. food, warmth and failure to access medical care or services).

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): Child sexual exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups.

CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where a child may receive something, such as food, gifts or in some cases simply affection, as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

CSE can take many forms but the perpetrator will always hold some kind of power over the victim. It is important to note that some young people who are being sexually abused do not exhibit any external signs of abuse.

The school has adopted the following procedure for handling cases of CSE, as outlined by the DfE:

Step one – Identifying cases

School staff members are aware of and look for the key indicators of CSE, these are as follows:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly going home late
- Regularly missing school
- Appearing with unexplained gifts and new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Undergoing mood swings or drastic changes in emotional wellbeing
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour

Step two – Referring cases

Where CSE, or the risk of it, is suspected, staff will discuss the case with the dedicated member of staff for child protection. Staff will conduct the CSE Screening Tool and if this indicates the possibility of CSE the CSE Risk Assessment Tool. If after discussion a concern still remains, local safeguarding procedures will be triggered, including referral to the LA.

Step three – Support

The LA and all other necessary authorities will then handle the matter to conclusion. The school will cooperate as needed.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM.

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All school staff must be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. If staff members are worried about someone who is at risk of FGM or who has been a victim of FGM, they must share this information with the police immediately.

There are a range of potential indicators that a child may be at risk of FGM. While individually they may not indicate risk, if two or more indicators are present this could signal a risk to the child.

Victims of FGM are most likely to come from communities that are known to adopt this practice. It is important to note that the child may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so it is important for staff to be sensitive when approaching the subject.

The following indicators are taken from government guidelines regarding FGM:

Indicators that may show a heightened risk of FGM include:

- The position of the family and their level of integration into UK society.
- Any girl with a mother or sister who has been subjected to FGM.
- Any girl withdrawn from Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

Indicators that may show FGM could take place soon

- The risk of FGM increases when a female family elder is visiting from a country of origin.
- A girl may confide that she is to have a 'special procedure' or a ceremony to 'become a woman'.
- A girl may request help from a teacher if she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk.
- A girl, or her family member, may talk about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent.

It is important that staff look for signs that FGM has already taken place so that help can be offered, enquiries can be made to protect others, and criminal investigations can begin. Indicators that FGM may have already taken place include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing.
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet.
- Spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- Prolonged or repeated absences from school followed by withdrawal or depression.
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

If a member of school staff has a concern, they should immediately notify the DSL and contact the police.

As of October 2015, Section 75 of the Serious Crime Act places a statutory duty upon staff to report to the police any discovery, whether through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence, of FGM on a girl under 18. Teachers failing to report such cases will face disciplinary action.

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Staff will not examine pupils, and so it is rare that they will see any visual evidence, but they must report to the police where an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Preventing Radicalisation

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school's wider safeguarding duties. We will actively assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism. Staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff will use their professional judgement to identify children who may be at risk of radicalisation and act appropriately – which may include making a referral to the Channel programme. The school will work with the SSCB as appropriate.

Training

The school's designated safeguarding lead will undertake Prevent awareness training to be able to provide advice and support to other staff on how to protect children against the risk of radicalisation. The designated safeguarding lead will hold formal training sessions with all members of staff to ensure they are aware of the risk indicators and their duties regarding preventing radicalisation.

Risk indicators

Indicators of an identity crisis:

- Distancing themselves from their cultural/religious heritage
- Uncomfortable with their place in society

Indicators of a personal crisis:

- Family tensions
- A sense of isolation
- Low self-esteem
- Disassociation from existing friendship groups
- Searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging

Indicators of vulnerability through personal circumstances:

- Migration
- Local community tensions
- Events affecting their country or region of origin
- Alienation from UK values
- A sense of grievance triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination

Indicators of vulnerability through unmet aspirations:

- Perceptions of injustice
- Feelings of failure
- Rejection of civic life

Indicators of vulnerability through criminality:

- Experiences of dealing with the police
- Involvement with criminal groups

Policy Document**Making a judgement**

When making a judgement, staff will ask themselves the following questions:

- Does the child have access to extremist influences?
- Does the child access the internet for the purposes of extremist activities (e.g. using closed network groups, accessing or distributing extremist material, contacting covertly using Skype, etc.)?
- Is there a reason to believe that the child has been, or is likely to be, involved with extremist organisations?
- Is the child known to have possessed or is actively seeking extremist literature/other media likely to incite racial or religious hatred?
- Does the child sympathise with or support illegal/illicit groups?
- Does the child support groups with links to extremist activity?
- Has the child encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection?
- Is there evidence of extremist ideological, political or religious influence on the child?
- Have international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest had a noticeable impact on the child?
- Has there been a significant shift in the child's outward appearance that suggests a new social, political or religious influence?
- Has the child come into conflict with family over religious beliefs, lifestyle or dress choices?
- Does the child vocally support terrorist attacks; either verbally or in their written work?
- Has the child witnessed or been the victim of racial or religious hate crime?
- Is there a pattern of regular or extended travel within the UK?
- Has the child travelled for extended periods of time to international locations?
- Has the child employed any methods to disguise their identity?
- Does the child have experience of poverty, disadvantage, discrimination or social exclusion?
- Does the child display a lack of affinity or understanding for others?
- Is the child the victim of social isolation?
- Does the child demonstrate a simplistic or flawed understanding of religion or politics?
- Is the child a foreign national, refugee or awaiting a decision on their/their family's immigration status?
- Does the child have insecure, conflicted or absent family relationships?
- Has the child experienced any trauma in their lives, particularly trauma associated with war or sectarian conflict?
- Is there evidence that a significant adult or other person in the child's life has extremist views or sympathies?

Critical indicators include where the child is:

- In contact with extremist recruiters.
- Articulating support for extremist causes or leaders.
- Accessing extremist websites.
- Possessing extremist literature.

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- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining extremist organisations.
- Making significant changes to their appearance and/or behaviour.

A child missing from education

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Staff will monitor children that go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to the designated safeguarding lead – following normal safeguarding procedures.

In order to ensure accurate data is collected to allow effective safeguarding, the school will inform the LA of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home education.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and we do not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

The school will inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Safer recruitment of all staff

There are several senior staff trained in safer recruitment (see academy Safer Recruitment guidance, reviewed March 2018)

Any member of staff who identifies such concerns, as a result of observed behaviour or reports of conversations, must report these to the designated safeguarding lead.

The designated safeguarding lead will consider whether a situation may be so serious that an emergency response is required. In this situation, a 999 call will be made. However, concerns are most likely to require a police investigation as part of Channel, in the first instance.

Where a student makes a disclosure staff should:

- Listen to the student and avoid asking leading questions.
- Explain that they cannot keep information confidential but need to discuss it with other relevant staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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- Write up the details as accurately as possible making sure they write down what was said and not make judgments.

Following a disclosure the Designated Safeguarding Lead should:

- Fully document the disclosure before.
- Decide whether it is appropriate to make a referral to Somerset Direct, first by phone and followed up with an EHA if requested. Use the DSL Consultation Line where appropriate to gain further professional advice.
- Ensure all relevant notes are made and filed in the confidential child protection file
- Update Pastoral staff that the student now has a CP file and remind Pastoral Coordinator's that a green sticker explaining the existence of the Child Protection File be placed on the student's general file.
- Update the list of CP files on the M drive in the HOY section (Welfare Support Summary).
- Heads of Year and other staff should only be given access to the files on a 'need to know' basis and at the discretion of the CP Lead. This includes staff being given access to MyConcern logs, as appropriate.
- Pass on CP files to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if the student transfers school.
- Archive CP files when a student leaves at the end of Year 11. Guidance from the Records Management Society is that when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory school leaving age (or where the pupil completed 6th form studies), the last school attended should keep the general pupil records and child protection file until the pupil's 25 birthday. It should then be shredded. This timescale allows for any legal proceedings brought in terms of litigation by a pupil in respect of a school 'failing to provide an education'.

When a student tells you that they are being/have been abused:

DO

- Take the student seriously.
- Acknowledge the student has been brave to tell you.
- Reassure the student that what has happened is not their fault.
- Reassure the student that abuse in general is not unusual and has happened to lots of children.
- Be honest about your position. Explain you will have to tell and why.
- Write up the details as soon as possible.
- Speak to the CP Lead.

DON'T

- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Lead or 'interrogate' the student with lots of questions.
- Cast doubt on what the student tells you. It has taken a great deal of courage for them to tell.
- Say anything, which may make the student feel responsible for the abuse (e.g. "Why haven't you told anyone before?")
- Communicate your own feelings of anger without stating that it is the abuser you feel angry towards.
- Panic. When confronted with the reality of abuse there is often a feeling of needing to 'act immediately'. Action taken too hastily can be counter-productive.
- Ring or contact the parents.

Policy Document**Supporting Children**

We recognise that a child who is abused or neglected, who witnesses violence or who lives in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame him/herself, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth.

We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or neglected or who are at risk of harm.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

Our school will support all students by:

- Encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of school life including through the curriculum.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying other agencies as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Ensuring that a named teacher is designated for Looked After Children (LAC) as well as children adopted from care and that an up to date list of children is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Providing continuing support to a student (about whom there have been concerns) who leaves the school by ensuring that such concerns and school medical records are forwarded under confidential cover to the Head teacher at the student's new school as a matter of urgency, a photocopy of these records should be kept in a confidential file.

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose personal information about a student to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. All staff, however, must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to social services with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with social services on this point.

Policy Document**Supporting Staff**

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

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to seek further support. This could be provided for all staff by, for example, the Principal, by Occupational Health, and/or a teacher/trade union representative as appropriate.

We understand that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour. The document ***'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*** provides advice on this and the circumstances, which should be avoided in order to limit complaints against staff of abuse of trust, and/or allegations of physical or sexual abuse – this is available on our website.

We recognise that designated staff should have access to support and appropriate workshops, courses or meetings as organised by children's services or the local safeguarding children's board.

Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our students by providing students with effective lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection within their duty of care.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos, which is understood by all staff, which enables children to feel secure and encourages them to talk knowing that they will be listened to.
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Provide across the curriculum, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.

Implementation

- All students will be advised of the policy through assemblies and school notices.
- Parents will be notified of the policy through the prospectus and website.
- All employees will be notified of the policy when they begin employment.

The Principal takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the governing body, parents, LA and appropriate outside agencies. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the daily management of this policy and that all staff are adequately trained and supported.

As a matter of course, all staff, parents/carers and pupils are reminded of this policy on an annual basis following review.

Policy Document**Useful Publications (available from DfE website)**

- “Keeping children safe in education” September 2016
- “Working Together to Safeguard Children” March 2015 (Last updated 16 February 2017)
- “What to do if you are worried a Child is being abused” March 2015
- “Staying Safe Action plan” 2008

Useful Websites

www.somerset safeguarding children board.org.uk

<http://professionalchoices.org.uk/>

HM Government – Information sharing

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00340/

South West Shared Procedures

www.swcpp.org.uk/

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Useful Phone Numbers

1. **Somerset Direct 0300 1232224**
2. **Early Help Advice Hub – 01823 355803**
3. **Designated Safeguarding Lead Consultation Line 0300 123 3078**
4. **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**
Anthony Goble 01823 359029