

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy



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1. The Policy

It is essential that everybody working in a school understands their safeguarding responsibilities. Advantage Schools (AS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Child Protection is defined as:

- The activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (Working Together, DfE 2018).

We believe:

- That **all** staff and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding children.
- All children have the *right* to be protected from harm as defined by Article 3 in the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child.
- Children need to be safe and to feel safe in school in order to grow, learn and develop.
- Schools can contribute to the promotion of children's welfare and the prevention of harm.
- Children need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.

2. References

AS will fulfil local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents: -

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (DfE 2015 Part 2,6,7)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)
- Teaching online safety in school (DfE 2023)
- Information Sharing (HM Government, 2018)
- The Children Act, 1989 and 2004
- The Education Act, 2002 (s175 / s157)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (DfE, 2015)
- Use of reasonable force in schools (DfE, 2013)
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, 2018)
- Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, 2017)
- Prevent Duty, Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UK Council for Child Internet Safety, 2016)
- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults county lines (Home Office guidance 2020)

- Children missing education (DfE, 2016)
- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (DfE, 2014)
- Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners (DfE, 2017)
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Drugs (DfE and ACPO guidance, 2012)
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act February 2015
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2014
- The Schools Staffing Regulations 2009
- Statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (HM Government July 2020)
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2023)
- The Policies & Procedures of **Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board** (Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements - MASA)
<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/children-young-people/safeguarding-children-board>
- The Policies & Procedures of Central Bedford Safeguarding Children Board **Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board** (CBSCB)
<https://www.centralbedfordshirelscb.org.uk/lscb-website/home-page>

3. Overall aims

This policy and the related documents which must be read alongside it will contribute to safeguarding (preventing, protecting and supporting) our pupils and promoting their welfare by:

- Clarifying standards of behaviour expected for both staff and pupils.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient and robust ethos in the school, built on mutual respect, and shared values.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding.
- Ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities in terms of being aware and can recognise the signs of the causes of harm and indicators of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect) and respond to concerns.
- Highlighting that staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Encouraging pupils and parental participation in practice
- Reinforcing the necessity to address concerns at the earliest possible stage.
- Creating an organisational culture that is safe for children.
- Capitalising on opportunities to address issues relating to child protection/safeguarding through the curriculum.
- Ensuring staff implement child protection policies and procedures.
- Recognising the need to work in partnership with pupils, parents and other agencies.
- Identifying individual needs where possible and
- Providing a framework around how staff may plan to meet safeguarding, child protection or

early help needs where necessary. (All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. *Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.*)

4. Key Principles

Key principles of our child protection work are: -

The safety and wellbeing of our children must, and always, be at the heart of everything we do. **Every adult in our school is responsible for protecting the welfare of every child.** Therefore, staff should not assume that somebody else will act and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. If an adult has a concern about a child, then they must act. To say nothing is to do nothing. We will always strive to work together and do the basic things as well as possible. We will always aim to see the child first. We will always promote a child-centered approach which underpins a listening culture where the voice of the child is paramount. From there we will always follow procedures robustly and will ensure that dialogue and relationship building are central to securing the best academic and personal outcomes for our pupils.

We encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in the school and where political issues are brought to the attention of the pupils, reasonably practicable steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils. AS will promote fundamental British values as part of a broader requirement to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

All staff will receive appropriate training in safeguarding, in line with statutory guidance.

5. Key Processes

All staff will read this policy, the school's safeguarding handbook, the school's behaviour policy (and other school safeguarding-related documents and policies) and Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (and know to refer to Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education for further advice if necessary).

All staff should be aware of the Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, and their Local Authority partnership, which may be found here:-

<https://www.safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/p/about-us/pan-bedfordshire>

Staff will also be made aware that when working in a school setting that they are in a 'Position of Trust' (Sexual Offences Act 2003).

The Principal will ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and in line with advice from the safeguarding partners.

Each school within the Trust has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL. These are clearly identified to staff when they are inducted and staff are given regular reminders of the safeguarding staff thereafter. All the designated safeguarding personnel attend regular safeguarding training and/or appropriate forums. The DSL or one of the deputies will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns.

All staff are familiarised with safeguarding children procedures and all concerns regarding child abuse or suspected child abuse are reported immediately to the designated safeguarding team of staff who have responsibility for referring suspected child abuse cases to Social Care. This includes concerns regarding a fellow staff member or volunteer's behaviour and all such concerns will be discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

There is always at least one person on any interview panel who has had training in Safer Recruitment; we adhere to all guidelines issued by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 Part three 'Safer Recruitment' when vetting, selecting and recruiting potential staff and volunteers (see section 14).

All details of checks are kept on the school's Single Central Record (SCR). Procedures are in place for recording details of all staff and visitors to school.

We follow the guidelines of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, (Part four: Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) in respect of any member of staff who has received an allegation made against them that may indicate that they would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work with pupils – see section 15

All staff members are updated annually regarding effective use of the systems and procedures which operate to support safeguarding and child protection.

All new staff to the school;

- Receive safeguarding training through our induction programme.
- Are informed who the DSL, Deputy DSL and other designated person are.
- Have to read the related documents and the school's behaviour policy.

All supply staff and visitors to the school are given a copy of our safeguarding procedures and these are also displayed on our website.

Effective working relationships with other agencies are developed and promoted; e.g. the Local Authority, Police, Education Welfare, School Nurse, Social Care and the Early Help Service. The school follows the government guidance issued in Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) in order to act in the best interests of the children in our care.

In general, we will discuss concerns with parents/carers before approaching other agencies, and will seek their consent to making a referral to another agency. Appropriate staff will approach parents/carers after consultation with the DSL. However, there may be occasions when the school will contact another agency **before** informing parents/carers because it considers that contacting them may increase the risk of significant harm to the child.

Parents/carers will be informed about our child protection and safeguarding policy through the school website.

At AS we are working in partnership with councils and Bedfordshire Police to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced domestic abuse in their household; nationally and locally, this scheme is called Operation Encompass. In order to achieve this, the police will share information with the Nominated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) of all domestic incidents where one of

the pupils in the school has been affected. On receipt of any information, the SPOC will decide on the appropriate support the child requires.

All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the 'Operation Encompass guidance for schools'. The information will be recorded and stored in accordance with our record keeping procedures.

6. Expectations

All staff and visitors (for the purpose of this policy visitors are defined as: - individuals contracted by school to work with pupils unsupervised) will;

- Be familiar with this safeguarding and child protection policy (for visitors working with children a summary of our policies and procedures will be provided together with information on how they should report concerns).
- Be aware of the role and identity of the DSL, Deputy DSL and other designated person of their school.
- Be alert to signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and possible abuse.
- Record concerns on CPOMS and ensure all 'Initial Concerns' are handed to the DSL or a member of the safeguarding team as soon as is safely possible.
- Deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child in line with the school's guidance and procedures
- Be involved, as required, in the implementation of any individual education, interagency child protection or child in need plans.
- Be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers etc.

7. Roles and Responsibilities of Staff, including the DSL

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. Staff play a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment.

The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school. This includes online safety, and understanding the filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.

The DSL delegates regular reviews of vulnerable children. The reviews are evidenced in recorded notes, on a regular basis and during safeguarding update meetings. These meetings between the DSL, Deputy DSLs and the Pastoral Coordinators also enable the regular review of all children for whom concerns have been raised.

Where a member of staff has reason to believe a pupil has been, or is likely to be, harmed, the DSL or one of the Deputy DSLs will decide what steps should be taken, including considering whether the matter needs to be referred to the relevant Children's Services and will record this decision in confidential notes.

Child protection (which refers to a subset of safeguarding children practice, namely, abuse and neglect resulting in or likely to result in, significant harm which is attributable to the child's parenting) and other safeguarding information will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the DSL feels that having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability

to support an individual child and/or family. A written record will be made of what action has been taken.

Child protection records will be stored securely in a central place separate from academic records. Electronic and in some cases hard copy files will be kept for at least the period during which the child is attending the school, and beyond that in line with current data legislation. Access to these records by staff, other than by the DSL and Deputy DSLs, will be restricted to only those who need to know in order to keep the child safe.

Communications with parents will be in line with any home school policies and give due regard to which adults have parental responsibility.

Staff will not disclose to a parent any information held on a child if this would put the child at risk of significant harm.

Where a pupil moves to another educational establishment, child protection records will be forwarded on to the DSL at the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature. We will forward the child protection records to their new destination in their entirety and will ensure receipt is confirmed. We will archive electronic notes and destroy hard copies once receipt is confirmed. Direct contact between the schools may be necessary. We will adhere to current guidance from the Data Commissioner and seek advice from our lawyers in respect of forwarding files abroad.

Any records sent by post will be sent by "Special/Recorded Delivery". For audit purposes the details of the transfer of any records concerning any pupil known to under child protection will be recorded, including the name of the recipient, location and date of transfer.

If a pupil is permanently excluded, child protection records will be forwarded on to the relevant organisation.

When a DSL resigns their post or no longer has safeguarding responsibility, there should be a full face-to-face handover/exchange of information with the new post holder. On handover, all permissions to secure files will be terminated.

In exceptional circumstances when a face-to-face handover is unfeasible, the Principal will ensure that the new post holder is fully conversant with all procedures and case files.

8. The Trust Board/Governing Board

The Trust Board/Governing Boards will ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They will have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our schools are effective and comply with the law at all times.

There will be a nominated Safeguarding Governor for each Local Governing Board in the Trust who will be responsible for liaising with the DSL over all matters regarding the safeguarding of pupils. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils.

The DSL will liaise with the nominated Safeguarding Governor and the Principal to produce reports for the Governors at least annually and will ensure that Safeguarding is a regular item on the agenda for Governors' meetings.

The Trust Board will ensure that the Trust:

- Has a safeguarding and child protection policy in accordance with DfE statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023.
- Have procedures for dealing with allegations of the abuse of pupils against any staff/volunteers.

The Governing Board will ensure that the Trust:

- Has at least one senior member of the school's leadership team acting as a DSL for Child Protection.
- Operates, "safer recruitment" procedures in line with statutory guidance.
- Ensures that the DSL, Deputy DSL and other designated person attend appropriate refresher training every two years.
- Ensures that the school appoints designated person(s) as Prevent Lead and Encompass Lead
- Ensures that the Principal and all other staff who work with children undertake training, which will be appropriate to their roles and in line with advice issued by the council's local safeguarding board.
- Ensures that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children and their responsibilities.
- Ensures that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.
- Remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay.
- Make sure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness.
- Review the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discuss with IT staff and service providers about what needs to be done to support the school to meet these standards.
- Make sure the DSL takes lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place as part of their role.
- Make sure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and in line with advice from the safeguarding partners.
- Make sure staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training.

The Trust Board will review the safeguarding and child protection policy/procedures annually.

The Chair of the Trust Board/Chief Executive Officer is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Principal or member of the Governing Board.

9. Responding to concerns about a child: -

Cause for concern:

- Record and detail concern on CPOMS.
- Speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Discuss with:

- Concerned party.
- Safeguarding Personnel.
- Parents where deemed appropriate and safe.

Safeguarding personnel follow appropriate steps according to need: -

Monitor (within school)

- Placed on monitoring list and discussed at regular safeguarding update meetings.
- Child leaves school – information passes to future DSL.
- Where further concerns are raised go discuss with concerned party, safeguarding personnel and parents, where deemed appropriate and safe.

Seek external advice from appropriate agencies

And if deemed necessary: -

Refer to Children's Services (Integrated Front Door/ Central Beds Access & Referral Hub)

- Initial assessment by Integrated Front Door/ Access and Referral teams (Children Services.) At times Children's services recommend that extra support is sought via an Early Help Assessment [EHA.] Where this is advised the school will contact the family [to gain consent] and complete it with them, to access external services.
- If no further action clarification for reason why should be sought by school's safeguarding team and then back to Monitor (within school).
- Enquiries made under child protection procedures.

Keep all records in line with policy

10. Working with Parents and Carers to Protect Children

In general, we will discuss safeguarding children concerns with parents/carers before approaching other agencies and will seek their consent to making a referral to another agency. However, there may be occasions when the school will contact another agency, before informing the parent/carers, because it considers that contacting them may increase the risk of significant harm to the child.

Parents/carers will be informed about our safeguarding and child protection policy through the website.

11. Working with Other Agencies to Protect Children: Multi-Agency Work

AS will work with the Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnerships and follow Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council's Multi Agency Safeguarding arrangements. <https://www.safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/p/safeguarding-children/welcome-to-children-young-people>

Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership's Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASAs), published on 30 May 2019 and implemented from September 2019.

"The MASA sets out the arrangements for safeguarding partners to work together with other agencies to identify and respond to the needs of children in Bedford Borough and the three safeguarding partners Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police and the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board (BLMK ICB) have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements." <https://www.safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/about-us/bedford-borough-safeguarding-children-partnership>

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) in Central Bedfordshire are known as Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CBSCP).

<https://www.safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/p/about-us/central-bedfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership>

AS will work in partnership with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. The school will, where necessary, liaise with the school nurse and make referrals to Children's Services. Referrals will normally be made by the DSL to Children's Social Care in the local authority where the child resides, although any member of staff can make such a referral. Where the child already has a safeguarding social worker, the request for service should go immediately to the social worker involved, or in their absence to their team manager.

We will co-operate with any child protection enquiries conducted by Children's Social Care: the school will ensure representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings such as initial and review child protection conferences, core group meetings and integrated support plan meetings.

We will provide reports as required for these meetings. If the school is unable to attend, a written report will be sent. The report will, wherever possible, be shared with relevant parties prior to the meeting.

Where a child in school is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan, a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meeting, or a Multi-Agency Planning meeting for Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation the school will contribute to the preparation, implementation and review of the plan as appropriate.

12. Our Role in the Prevention of Abuse

We will identify and provide opportunities for children to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge to promote their safety and well-being.

The Curriculum

Relevant issues will be addressed through the wider school pastoral programme. For example, British Values, self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, relationship and sex education, child-on-child abuse, sexting, online and e-safety and bullying.

Relevant issues may be addressed through other areas of the curriculum, for example, English, history, drama, art and for some children through social skills and other specific groups, as appropriate to individual needs.

Other Areas of Work

All our policies which address issues of power and potential harm, for example bullying, equal opportunities, positive handling, positive behaviour, will be linked to ensure a whole school approach.

Our safeguarding and child protection policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the school, which should ensure that children are treated with respect; high expectations; dignity, feel safe, and honesty (are listened to).

13. Our Role in Supporting Children

Where we are aware, we will offer appropriate support to individual children who have experienced abuse, or who have abused others, as early as possible.

A record of any safeguarding support plans which are devised, implemented and reviewed regularly will be logged in the confidential Child Protection files. Plans will detail areas of support, who will be involved, and the child's wishes and feelings.

Children and young people who abuse others will be responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others within the school community through a multi-agency risk assessment. We will ensure that the needs of children and young people who abuse others will be considered separately from the needs of their victims.

We will ensure the school works in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate.

14. A Safe School Culture

Safer Recruitment and Selection

All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils. The Trust pays full regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (where applicable). A 'Prohibition from teaching' check, which will also include GTCE sanctions will be completed for teaching staff. All shortlisted candidates will be informed that the Trust may carry out online checks as part of the due diligence process in the recruitment process, which will be consistent, transparent and fair.

S128 checks are completed on those members of staff, Trustees and Governors taking part in management roles.

All staff with responsibility for recruitment will have undertaken Safer Recruitment training. A Safer Recruitment trained member of staff will be involved in the recruitment of all staff and volunteers and will sit on the recruitment panel.

We recognise the stressful and traumatic nature of child protection work. We will support staff by offering them opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and will assist them in seeking further support, as appropriate.

15. Responding to an Allegation or Concern about a Member of Staff

This procedure should be used in any case in which it is alleged that a member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers), Trustee, Governor, visiting professional or volunteer 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.
- Breached their responsibility to avoid promoting partisan political views by failing/refusing to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views when bringing political views to the attention of pupils.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Although it is an uncomfortable thought, it needs to be acknowledged that there is the potential for

staff in school to abuse or mistreat children.

All staff working within our organisation must report any potential safeguarding concerns about an individual's behaviour towards children and young people immediately. Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Principal, unless the concern relates to the Principal. If the concern relates to the Principal, it must be reported immediately to the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of Governors.

The LADO will be consulted when an allegation is made against a member of staff to decide on any action required and how to progress it.

AS will follow all advice and guidelines specifically within the DfE documents: - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018.

For further detail of our statement of procedures please see appendix B.

16. Responding to Other Allegations of Abuse

Should the school receive an allegation **or concern** relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, safeguarding policies and procedures will be applied to inform the LADO, as with any safeguarding allegation.

17. Children with Additional Needs

AS recognises that while all children have a right to be safe, some children may be more vulnerable to abuse, both online and offline, for example those with a disability or special educational need, those living with domestic violence or drug/alcohol abusing parents, etc.

AS recognises that children with additional needs may be vulnerable to the promotion of partisan political views, and all staff will take steps to ensure that when bringing political views to the attention of pupils, extra care is taken to offer balance.

Staff at AS recognises that children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) may be more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils and as such will consider additional pastoral support for those children. Additionally, we are aware that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration;
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children;
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges;
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

When a school is considering excluding, either fixed term or permanently, a vulnerable pupil and /or a pupil who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan or about whom there are significant child protection

concerns, we will take into account safeguarding factors when making the decision to exclude. In the event of a one-off serious incident, resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, agencies involved with the pupil will be informed of the decision and a risk assessment will be completed, if necessary. Any Looked After Child or child subject to a Child Protection Plan, will be placed in an educational provision from the first day of any exclusion, in line with DfE guidelines. The Principal/DSL will liaise with the Head of the Virtual School.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we work together with the Local Authority and other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. We will do this before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

18. Children who may benefit from early help

All staff will know that early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life and be prepared to identify and highlight children who may benefit from early help.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all AS staff should be particularly alert to highlight, if necessary, to the school's DSLs, the potential need for early help for a child who;

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan).
- Has a mental health need.
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- has returned home to their family from care.
- Is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- Is a privately fostered child.
- Is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

If a pupil is referred by a member of staff to the DSL, Deputy DSL or other designated person then an assessment may be undertaken to provide help to the child and family.

19. Children in Specific Circumstances and Specific Safeguarding Issues and those children potentially at greater risk of harm

All staff will have an awareness of specific safeguarding issues and circumstances which may give rise to them or particular areas which may cause greater vulnerability, some of which are listed below:

- Child-on-child abuse

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Children who are absent from education
- Children missing from education
- Child missing from home or care
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Domestic Abuse
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage, including causing a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday
- Modern day slavery
- Gang related violence (contextual/extra familial risk)
- Hate crimes
- Mental health
- Private fostering
- Sexualised behaviours
- Youth generated sexualized imagery
- Children who need a social worker
- Looked after or previously looked after children
- Serious violence
- Homelessness
- Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT)

Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to issues such as listed above and for example drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger.

All staff should also be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse.

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child-on-child abuse which can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports in line with a zero-tolerance approach.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their schools it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to the DSL and/or Deputy DSL. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including, but not limited to, sexual abuse, including harassment and exploitation, domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

All staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between

children, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, or as part of growing up can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to)

- physical abuse
- cyber-bullying
- sending or posting sexually suggestive images including nude or semi-nude photographs via mobiles or over the internet by persons aged under 18 (referred to as Youth Produced Sexual Imagery)
- sexual assault
- sexual violence or harassment
- upskirting
- sexually harmful or problematic behaviour
- gang initiation or hazing type violence
- harassing messages and misogynistic messages
- the non-consensual sharing of indecent images
- the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. AS will ensure that appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place on school devices and networks and DSLs will ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training that includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

An effective whole school approach to online safety will be implemented which will enable the protection and education of pupils and staff in the use of technology and we will maintain mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. (*Refer to Home School Agreement with regards to the use of electronic devices in school.*)

AS is mindful of the summary below of the four areas of risk with regards to online safety:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

AS recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where

AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

AS will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our behaviour policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school.

All staff will deal effectively, swiftly and fully with any inappropriate behaviours any other behaviours which are deemed to be breaking the school code of conduct according to the school's behaviour policy, systems and procedures

With regards to 'children who are absent from education', AS staff will work closely with the Trust's Education Welfare Office and Local Authority Educational Welfare Services and will follow Bedford Borough Council/Central Bedfordshire Council's guidelines for dealing with children that go are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, HBV, FGM , forced marriage and modern day slavery.

School staff will follow school safeguarding procedures and heed the advice and use the guidance given on how to support children in specific circumstances as specified in section 19 and in;

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 Parts one and two
- Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018
- Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board:- <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/children-young-people/safeguarding-children-board/>
- <https://www.centralbedfordshirelscb.org.uk/lscb-website/home-page>

Appendix A – Key Contacts

Bedford Free School	Name	Telephone	E-mail
Principal	Jane Herron	01234 332297	jherron@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
DSL	Alice Damon	01234 332211	adamon@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
DDSL	Christina Costin-Webb	01234 332223	Ccostin-webb@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Other Designated People	Emma Morris	01234 332224	emorris@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
SPOC for Prevent	Alice Damon	01234 332211	adamon@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
SPOC for Encompass	Alice Damon	01234 332211	adamon@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
CEO of Advantage Schools Trust	Stuart Lock	N/A	slock@advantageschools.co.uk
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding	Peter Turnbull	07807429953	pfturnbull@gmail.com
NSPCC	N/A	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
Emergency Duty Team Bedford Borough	Integrated Front Door	01234 718700 (office hours) 0300 300 8123 (outside office hours)	Website: https://www.bedford.gov.uk/
LADO	Bedford Borough	01234 276 693	via secure email: Lado@bedford.gov.uk

Elstow School	Name	Telephone	E-mail
Principal	Sarah Ciantar	01234 302300	sciantar@elstowschool.co.uk
DSL	Sarah Ciantar	01234 302300	sciantar@elstowschool.co.uk
DDSL	Liz Polson	01234 302300	lpolson@elstowschool.co.uk
Other Designated People	Vicky Maples	01234 302300	vmaples@elstowschool.co.uk
SPOC for Prevent	Sarah Ciantar	01234 302300	sciantar@elstowschool.co.uk
SPOC for Encompass	Sarah Ciantar	01234 302300	sciantar@elstowschool.co.uk
CEO of Advantage Schools Trust	Stuart Lock	N/A	slock@advantageschools.co.uk
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding	Ryan Tobias (31 December 2023) Sharon Crisp (1 January 2024)	N/A	RTobias@advantageschools.co.uk scrisp@elstowschool.co.uk
NSPCC	N/A	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
Emergency Duty Team Bedford Borough	Integrated Front Door	01234 718700 (office hours) 0300 300 8123 (outside office hours)	Website: https://www.bedford.gov.uk/
LADO	Bedford Borough	01234 276 693	via secure email: Lado@bedford.gov.uk

Queen's Park Academy	Name	Telephone	E-mail
Headteacher	Emma Bolton	01234 352901	ebolton@queensparkacademy.co.uk
DSL	Emma Bolton	01234 352901	ebolton@queensparkacademy.co.uk
DDSL	Sarah Higgins	01234 352901	SHiggins@queensparkacademy.co.uk
Other Designated People	Nadia Qayyum	01234 352901	NQayyum@queensparkacademy.co.uk
SPOC for Prevent	Carole Denton	01234 352901	cdenton@queensparkacademy.co.uk
SPOC for Encompass	Emma Bolton	01234 352901	ebolton@queensparkacademy.co.uk
CEO of Advantage Schools Trust	Stuart Lock	N/A	slock@advantageschools.co.uk
NSPCC	N/A	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
Emergency Duty Team Bedford Borough	Integrated Front Door	01234 718700 (office hours) 0300 300 8123 (outside office hours)	Website: https://www.bedford.gov.uk/
LADO	Bedford Borough	01234 276 693	via secure email: Lado@bedford.gov.uk

Houstone School	Name	Telephone	E-mail
Principal	Elizabeth English	01582 377771	eenglish@houstoneschool.co.uk
DSL	Sian Bellett	01582 377771	sbellett@houstoneschool.co.uk
DDSL	Michael Scarisbrick	01582 377771	mscarisbrick@houstoneschool.co.uk
SPOC for Prevent	Sian Bellett	01582 377771	sbellett@houstoneschool.co.uk
SPOC for Encompass	Sian Bellett	01582 377771	sbellett@houstoneschool.co.uk
CEO of Advantage Schools Trust	Stuart Lock	N/A	slock@advantageschools.co.uk
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding	Daniela Maran	01582 377771	DMaran@houstoneschool.co.uk
NSPCC	N/A	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
Emergency Duty Team Central Bedford	Access and Referral Hub	0300 300 8585 (office hours) 0300 300 8123 (outside office hours)	Website: https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
LADO	Allegations Manager	0300 300 8142	Secure email: LADO@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Appendix B – Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff

Inappropriate behaviour by staff/Trustees/Governors/volunteers could take the following forms:

- **Physical**
For example: the intentional use of force as a punishment, slapping, use of objects to hit with, throwing objects or inappropriate physical handling.
- **Emotional**
For example: intimidation; belittling; scapegoating; sarcasm; lack of respect for children's rights; excessive and/or aggressive shouting; and attitudes that discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, disability or sexuality.
- **Sexual**
For example: sexualised behaviour towards peers; sexual harassment; sexual communication including via social networking, email, text; grooming behavior; and sexual assault and rape.
- **Neglect**
For example: failing to act to protect a child or children, failing to seek medical attention or failure to meet a child's basic needs.
- **Behaviours which may pose a risk**
Some behaviours which may take place outside of the workplace could present a transferable risk in an employee's professional role working with or in the vicinity of children. For example, alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse, offences demonstrating a sexual interest in children, abuse or neglect of their own children or behaviours that are incompatible with a professional role working with children.

Section 1: allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school.

If we're in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the Principal or their delegate. Where the Principal is the subject of the allegation, this will be the Chief Executive Officer, their delegate, or the chair of governors. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO.

Suspension of the subject of the allegation until the case is resolved

Suspension of the subject will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual where there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we may consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned.
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children.
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children.
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment.
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the academy trust.

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the Trust's personnel adviser/Director of People and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation.
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence).
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below.
- Discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. (If contact cannot be made immediately on the telephone, a message will be left and followed up with an email expressing the need for assistance.) This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police).
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case

manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies.

- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate.
- Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to children's social care.
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day where possible, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details.
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate.
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate for example from a trade union, Edapt, support from a work colleague or from the Care First Employee Assistance Service.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member) where necessary.
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

If the school is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- The Principal or their designated case manager will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation.
- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required.
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary).

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

Timescales

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week where possible.
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days where possible.
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days where possible.

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will take this with gravity, and consider disciplinary action against the individual(s) who made it.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider disciplinary action against the individual(s) who made it

Confidentiality and information sharing

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared.
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality.
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation.
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises.

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file). For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.

References

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious

- Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff.
- The duration of the suspension.
- Whether or not the suspension was justified.
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

Non-recent allegations

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

The section is based on 'Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Further concerns

Any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the school has that includes, for example:

- actions inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; and
- Humiliating pupils.

Sharing such concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share such concerns
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system
- Conducting at least termly supervision in EYFS where concerns can be addressed

Responding to concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Principal will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The Principal will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's staff behaviour policy/code of conduct. The Principal will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

Record keeping

All concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority.
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school.

Where a concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

We will not include concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance.

Appendix C – Reporting a safeguarding concern

Bedford Borough

If you're worried about the wellbeing of a child or a case of abuse or maltreatment has already occurred, you **must** report it immediately.

Here are the steps you need to know, from how to report a concern to what happens next.

1. Know What Constitutes a Safeguarding Concern

People in need fall into two categories.

Children in Need

Under the Children Act 1989, a child in need is defined as one who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development. It could also mean a child whose health and/or development is likely to be impaired or a child who is disabled.

Local authorities are required by law to provide services to children in need to both safeguard them and promote their welfare and development.

Children Suffering or Likely to Suffer Significant Harm

Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, it's the legal and moral responsibility of authorities or organisations to make enquiries or act in regards to any suspected abuse or maltreatment.

If there are any concerns regarding maltreatment with either of these categories, direct action must be taken. This may be the gathering of information or the notifying of an authority.

If you have a suspicion of maltreatment cases such as abuse, neglect, radicalisation, sexual exploitation or other concerns, you must raise your concerns via the following steps:

2. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- If a child or young person has approached you, make sure they know they have done the right thing.
- Listen carefully to their story and respect their rights.
- Notify the child or young person that only the people who need to know will be informed.
- Don't try to solve the situation yourself or confront anyone.
- Remember to take all claims seriously.
- Write up their narrative, giving as much detail as possible. Remember to include date and time, what was said and any names and locations.
- Don't disclose any information to non-relevant parties.
- Contact your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately and inform them of the situation using the report you made. The DSL will directly contact Bedford Borough Council Children's Services Integrated Front Door, the police or simply provide further advice.
- If the DSL is unavailable, contact the Deputy DSL in their absence.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns During School Holidays

- If you are unable to contact the DSL and Deputy DSL and you think the child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.
 - Or Bedfordshire Police: 01234 841212
 - NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- If the child's not in immediate danger, but you're still concerned about them, please contact Bedford Borough Council Children's Services Integrated Front Door (previously known as MASH) online: <https://lchildandfamilies.bedford.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home>

- If you are unable to use the online form, you can contact the Bedford Borough Council Children’s Services Integrated Front Door by phone:
 - Tel: 01234 718700 (office hours)
 - Tel: 0300 300 8123 (out of hours)
- All cases are treated in confidence by highly experienced staff who work with children and young people.

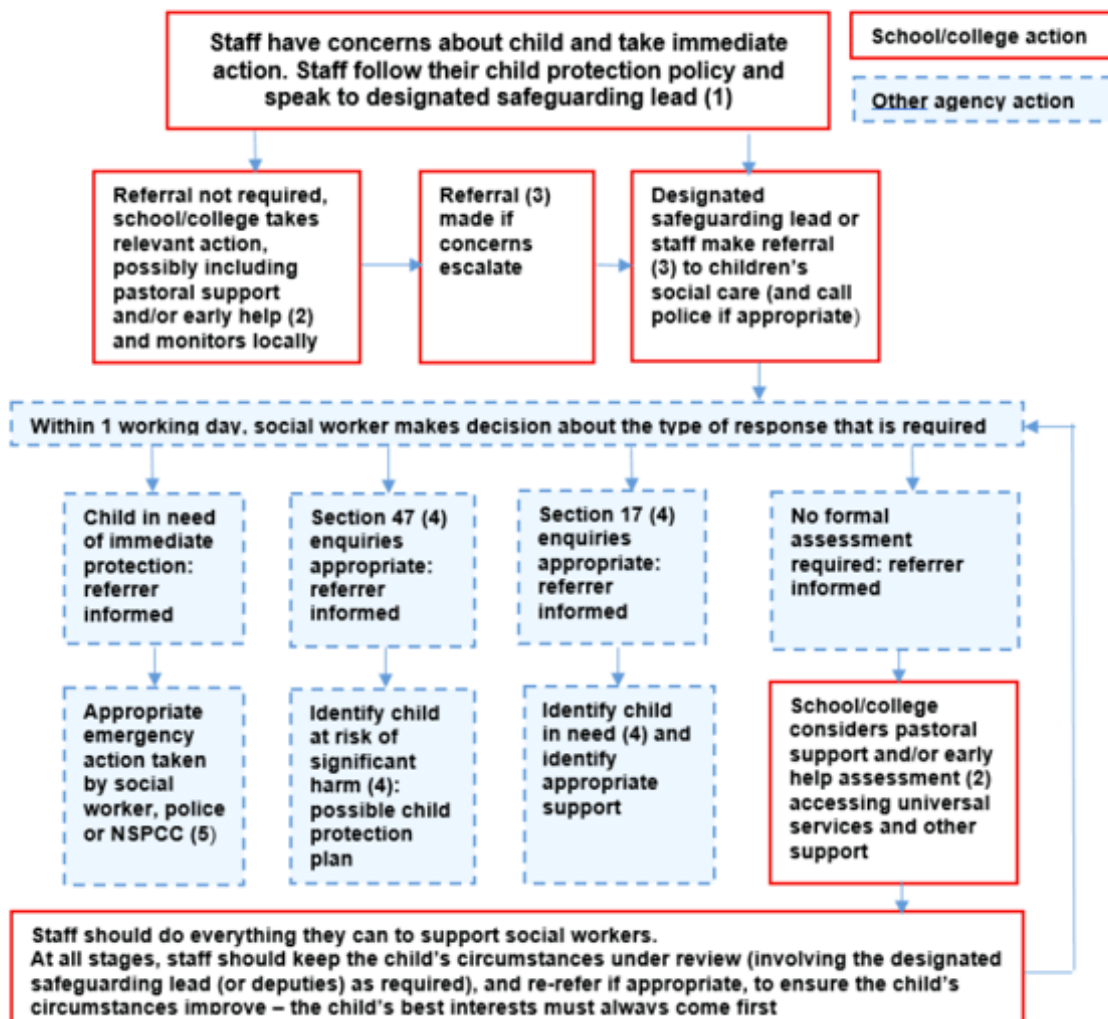
After the disclosure, take these steps:

- Make a report of what you’ve seen and any evidence that would support your claim, including time and date and ensure it is logged on CPOMs. Do this in line with the school’s child protection and safeguarding policy.
- Report what you have seen to the DSL who will then take the issue further if they see fit.

Reporting Flowchart

The following flowchart sets out the process for staff when they have concerns about a child. It details the actions you must take on behalf of the school, and the actions carried out by any external agency.

Actions where there are concerns about a child



3. What Happens After a Report

If you’ve contacted Bedford Borough Council Children’s Services Integrated Front Door or the police, they will take your report and act on it accordingly. If you’ve given your report to a DSL, they may simply contact

a further authority while making sure the Principal and Chief Executive Officer is aware of the issue.

Furthermore, these parties may:

- Make efforts to gain more information surrounding the concern.
- Inquire with any relevant social worker about historical information or ask them to seek out evidence.
- Take immediate action if they think the child is severely at risk.

Within one day of an official report being made, a local social worker will decide which type of response to the concern is required.

If a social worker decides to carry out a statutory assessment, staff members and the DSL must support this with their full capabilities.

Depending on the situation after this point, the process may be escalated to a higher authority.

Reporting a safeguarding concern

Central Bedfordshire

If you're worried about the wellbeing of a child or a case of abuse or maltreatment has already occurred, you **must** report it immediately.

Here are the steps you need to know, from how to report a concern to what happens next.

1. Know What Constitutes a Safeguarding Concern

People in need fall into two categories.

Children in Need

Under the Children Act 1989, a child in need is defined as one who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development. It could also mean a child whose health and/or development is likely to be impaired or a child who is disabled.

Local authorities are required by law to provide services to children in need to both safeguard them and promote their welfare and development.

Children Suffering or Likely to Suffer Significant Harm

Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, it's the legal and moral responsibility of authorities or organisations to make enquiries or act in regards to any suspected abuse or maltreatment.

If there are any concerns regarding maltreatment with either of these categories, direct action must be taken. This may be the gathering of information or the notifying of an authority.

If you have a suspicion of maltreatment cases such as abuse, neglect, radicalisation, sexual exploitation or other concerns, you must raise your concerns via the following steps:

2. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- If a child or young person has approached you, make sure they know they have done the right thing.
- Listen carefully to their story and respect their rights.
- Notify the child or young person that only the people who need to know will be informed.
- Don't try to solve the situation yourself or confront anyone.
- Remember to take all claims seriously.
- Write up their narrative, giving as much detail as possible. Remember to include date and time, what was said and any names and locations.
- Don't disclose any information to non-relevant parties.
- Contact your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately and inform them of the situation using the report you made. The DSL will directly contact Bedford Borough Council Children's Services Integrated Front Door, the police or simply provide further advice.
- If the DSL is unavailable, contact the Deputy DSL in their absence.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns During School Holidays

- If you are unable to contact the DSL and Deputy DSL and you think the child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.
 - Or Bedfordshire Police: 01234 841212
 - NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- If the child's not in immediate danger, but you're still concerned about them, please contact Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services Access and Referral Hub online:
<https://forms.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/Bic100.ofml>

- If you are unable to use the online form, you can contact the Central Bedfordshire Council Children’s Services Access and Referral Hub by phone:
 - Tel: 0300 300 8585 (office hours)
 - Tel: 0300 300 8123 (out of hours)
- All cases are treated in confidence by highly experienced staff who work with children and young people.

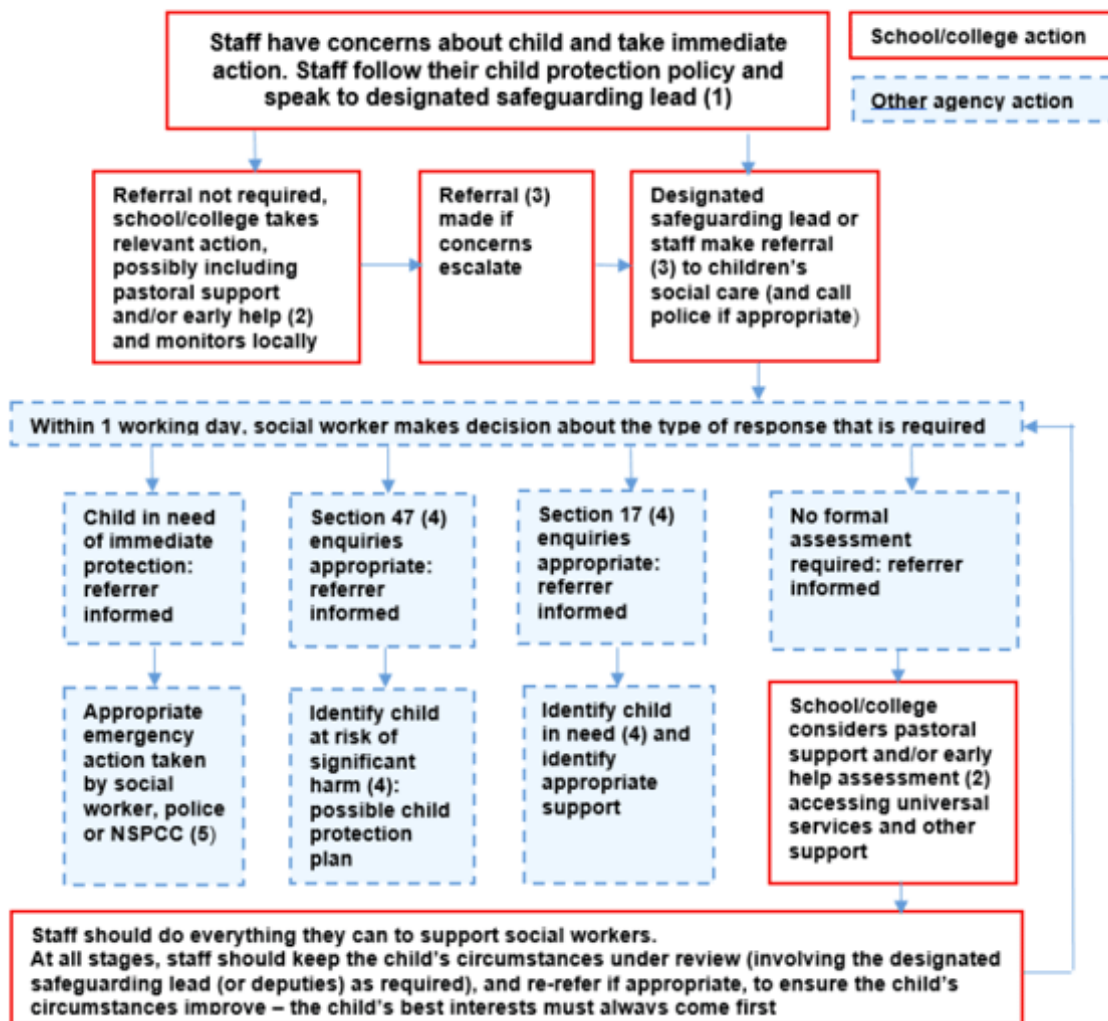
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