

# Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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# **SAFEGUARDING and CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The schools in the Mead Academy Trust (TMAT) are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. They fulfil their local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018 updated April 2021)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)
- Non-statutory interim guidance: COVID-19: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers
- The procedures of the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (formerly WSCB)
- Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018)

### **Safeguarding children is defined as:**

- ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- acting to enable all children to have the best life chances
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development and
- protecting children from maltreatment.

The term 'safeguarding children' covers a range of measures including child protection procedures. It encompasses a preventative approach to keeping children safe that incorporates pupil health and safety; school behaviour management and preventing bullying; supporting pupils with medical conditions; personal, health, social economic education; providing first aid and site security.

This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by the Academy Advisors (previously governors) and should be read alongside the following policies relevant to the safety and welfare of our pupils:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Online and Digital Safety Policy
- PSHEE Policy
- Sex and Relationships Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equalities and Accessibility Information

## **1. Purpose of Policy**

The Mead Academy Trust fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection. This policy aims to clarify these responsibilities and the processes and practices staff and adults in school will be expected to follow. We recognise that because of their day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

There are three key elements to the Trust's approach to safeguarding:

- **PREVENTION** (Positive and safe school environment, safer recruitment, careful and vigilant teaching, accessible pastoral care, support to pupils, good adult role models).
- **PROTECTION** (Agreed procedures are followed; staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns).
- **SUPPORT** (To pupils, who may have been at risk of significant harm and the way staff respond to their concerns and any work that may be required).

Schools within the Mead Academy Trust will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried
- include opportunities throughout the curriculum, including Computing and PSHEE, for children to develop the skills they need to recognise, and stay safe from abuse, and take advantage of experts outside school to reinforce those messages (e.g. NSPCC and Police regarding 'Stranger Danger')
- ensure we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- support pupils who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan in liaison with other agencies

**This policy applies to all staff, Academy Advisors and Visitors in our schools.**

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, in a paid or regular voluntary capacity.
- **A volunteer** is a person who performs an activity that involves spending time, unpaid in school (except for approved expenses).
- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.
- **Child** refers to all children on our school roll and any child under the age of 18 who comes into contact with our school. This includes unborn babies.

**Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to a child at school or outside of school hours are within the scope of this policy.**

**NB Guidance around safeguarding is constantly evolving and TMAT schools will:**

- refer to Local Authority updates for up to date information and advice
- ensure all members of the Safeguarding Teams attend regular training
- ensure a member of the school's Safeguarding Team attends local Safeguarding meetings/updates and feedback to the team

- receive and consider weekly updates from [www.safeguardingschools.co.uk](http://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk)
- refer to government updates

## **Expectations**

All staff are:

- familiar with this Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review.
- alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.
- able to record and report concerns as set out in this policy.
- able to deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child.
- involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, integrated support plans, child in need plans and interagency child protection plans as required.

In addition, all staff have read and understood Part 1 of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2020). School leaders and staff who work directly with children have also read Annex A.

## **Staff Code of Conduct (for safer working practice)**

Our schools are committed to positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for our pupils underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour.

The Staff Code of Conduct sets out staff behaviours that should be avoided as well as those that constitute safe practice and supports our commitment to safeguarding children. Teaching staff are additionally expected to act within the guidance of the 'personal and professional conduct' section of the Teachers' Standards.

## **Visitors**

All visitors sign in and out, wear a school ID lanyard or sticker – WCC employees wear their own lanyard, and are provided with key safeguarding information including how to report a safeguarding concern in school.

Scheduled visitors in a professional role (eg fire officer) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at school.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the school, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity, if necessary.

### Action to be taken by the schools (based on s.175 Education Act 2002)

Our schools will follow the child protection procedures set out by Wiltshire's Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) available at [www.wiltshirescb.org.uk/](http://www.wiltshirescb.org.uk/) and will take account of guidance issued by the Department of Education to:

- ensure there is a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) for child protection in each school** who has received appropriate training and support for this role which are site specific
- ensure there is a **nominated Academy Advisor** taking a lead role for safeguarding and child protection, including:
  - championing child protection issues within each school and liaising with the Headteacher
  - having an overview of Safeguarding and Child Protection
- ensure every member of staff, volunteer and Academy Advisor knows the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for child protection and their role. See table below

<b>TMAT Lead:</b> Head of Inclusion & Safeguarding, TMAT – Kirsty Jamieson <b>TMAT Deputy Lead:</b> Inclusion Lead, River Mead school – Leala Purdie <b>TMAT Central Team:</b> Kirsty Jamieson, Lyssy Bolton, Executive Headteacher and Lindsay Palmer <b>TMAT Lead Academy Advisor:</b> Jayne Bullock				
	<b>The Mead School (Hilperton site)</b>	<b>The Mead School (Wingfield site)</b>	<b>Castle Mead School</b>	<b>River Mead School</b>
<b>DSL</b>	Mark Stenton	Mark Stenton	Emma Larkham	Karen Austin
<b>DDSL</b>	Jennie Jones	Emma Stacey	Harriet Phillips Gaby Simons Polly Marsh	Leala Purdie Lisa Penfold
<b>Nursery</b>	Theo White	Emma Stacey	Gaby Simons	Leala Purdie
<b>Safeguarding Academy Advisor</b>	Graham Mallard	Graham Mallard	Jayne Bullock	TBC

<b>Children's Social Care referrals:</b> Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): Out of hours:	0300 456 0108 0300 456 0100
<p>If you believe a child is <b>at immediate risk</b> of significant harm or injury, you <b>must</b> call the police on 999.</p>	

**Training** – each school will:

- ensure that members of the Leadership Group/Inclusion Team are trained so that there is always a senior member of staff available who is aware of the more detailed procedures in the absence of the DSL. In addition, each school can consult with members of the Central Team, who are qualified and experienced at an advanced level
- ensure that ALL staff, including Graduate Teacher Trainees, access a Safeguarding Induction Session
- ensure all staff and volunteers across each school receive child protection training every three years, and that lead people (DSL & DDSL, and their nominated Safeguarding & Child Protection Academy Advisor) are trained every two years and that all staff access annual safeguarding updates
- ensure that, as part of The Mead Academy Trust's induction procedures, all staff and trainee teachers are fully informed about The Mead Academy Trust's policy and procedures
- ensure that all regular visitors, volunteers and students (either on one-off or regular placements) are given access to a copy of the school's Safeguarding and Code of Conduct leaflet as part of their induction, which they must be asked to read and subsequently sign to acknowledge their receipt, which will be kept in the school office
- ensure that 'one-off' visitors and volunteers to the school see a copy of the school's key Safeguarding Information and Code of Conduct leaflet, on arrival at the school. *This will be displayed by the sign in area.*

**Practice** – each school will:

- ensure all staff, Academy Advisors and volunteers receive and sign for a copy of this policy as part of induction procedures – this maybe via CPOMS or a paper copy
- monitor the attendance of pupils subject to a Child Protection Plan/social worker and will notify the appropriate Children's Social Care team if there is an unexplained absence as soon as possible and at the latest when of more than two days
- develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Use CPOMs to keep written records of child welfare and child protection concerns about children, including actions taken and outcomes as appropriate
- ensure all child welfare and child protection records are kept securely, and in locked locations
- ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed
- ensure staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities for safer working practices, as outlined in this policy
- ensure that any allegations against members of staff with a child protection aspect are dealt with following local procedures – all such concerns to be dealt with urgently, with concerns about staff to be reported to the Headteacher, but concerns about the Head of School reported to the Chair of Academy Advisors (see Wiltshire Council schools' allegations flowchart)
- ensure that the school building and site are appropriately secure, with a clear record kept of

any risk assessments carried out

- ensure that other Mead Academy Trust policies which have a safeguarding element (e.g. health and safety; e-safety; behaviour) are all consistent with this policy and with each other and where appropriate make cross-reference to this policy
- ensure that the Academy Advisors carry out an annual child protection and safeguarding audit, and track progress against a safeguarding action plan, using the Wiltshire Annual School Safeguarding Audit return as a starting point
- ensure that parents receive information from each school about the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection. This will be done through the website
- ensure that the DSL has a clear understanding of the Local Authority's Escalation Policy (now known as Case Resolution) in the event that the school is unhappy with the response received from the LA.

### **Support to pupils at risk**

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. Schools may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. Each school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- the content of the curriculum
- the ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued
- the Behaviour for Learning policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils. Each school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred
- each school having a Parent Support Advisor (PSA) who liaises with parents and external agencies
- liaison with other agencies supporting the pupil such as Children's Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Education Welfare Service (EWS) and Educational Psychology Service (EPS), and where appropriate initiate and/or contribute to Early Support Assessments (ESA, formerly CAF) and Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings or Team Around the School (TAS) meetings.
- ensuring that, where a pupil leaves a school within The Mead Academy Trust, any child protection records are promptly transferred to the new school. Child welfare records below the child protection threshold but with continuing relevance to the child's well-being are also transferred.

### **Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities**

We recognise that for a variety of reasons, children with additional needs face an increased risk of abuse and neglect; therefore adults are expected to take extra care to notice and report indicators of apparent signs of abuse or neglect. Indications of abuse will be reported as for other all other pupils.

- The schools will provide an environment in which pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities feel confident and able to discuss their concerns. Whenever possible, pupils will be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills. The DSL will work with the Inclusion and/or Resource Base Leads to identify pupils with particular communication needs.
- The schools recognise that additional barriers can exist around abuse and neglect in children with SEND. This can include:
  - assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's SEN or disability without further exploration
  - children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by experiences

- such as bullying – without outwardly showing any signs, and
  - barriers to communication, and difficulties in overcoming these barriers
- Our schools ensure that parents/carers are aware of our responsibility with regard to child protection and advise parents/carers of this through our School Prospectus, as part of our Foundation Stage Induction and also through the website.



## Process for considering and acting on concerns about child abuse

All adults who work with, or volunteer with children should be able to identify and act on concerns about child abuse. The following link provides helpful information relating to a wide variety of types of abuse.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/>

### Identifying the signs

All staff know how to recognise, and are alert to the signs of neglect and abuse. Definitions of abuse, set out in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners' (2015) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2020) along with notes from safeguarding training, are important reference documents for all staff. Every member of staff is provided with a copy of Part 1 of KCSiE which they are required to read and which also includes supporting guidance about several specific safeguarding issues. Staff who work directly with children are also required to read Annex A of KCSiE (2020).

### Indicators of child abuse

All adults who work or volunteer with children should be able to identify concerns about child abuse. Abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap one another. Abuse is 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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting or online by those known to them, or more rarely, by others. Children may be abused by an adult/s or by another child/ren

- The **four key types of abuse**, described in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020* are:
  - **Physical abuse**  
A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
  - **Emotional abuse**  
The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say, or the way they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. This may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of expectation and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation, or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
  - **Sexual abuse**  
This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (eg by rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the

production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education – see section on peer on peer abuse.

- **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, eg, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or responsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Specific safeguarding issues:** There are other specific safeguarding issues that staff must be aware of, and alert to. These are detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020. Five key areas are referred to in greater detail below:

- **Children missing education and poor school attendance:**

- A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. If a member of staff or volunteer becomes aware that a child is missing, or missing education, **they need to report that to the DSL immediately.**
- After reasonable attempts have been made to contact the family, the school will follow the SVPP procedure and refer to the MASH team.
- If a **Looked After Child** or a **child who has an allocated social worker** goes missing, a referral will be made to the MASH team within 24 hours.
- Poor school attendance, including any regular patterns of non-attendance can be a possible indicator of abuse and neglect. The school will monitor attendance and challenge poor attendance or specific patterns of absence to satisfy themselves that there is no cause for concern with regard to child protection.
- Unauthorised absence procedures will be followed where a child or young person:
  - has 10 days or more continuous absence from school without an explanation and/or
  - has left school suddenly and the destination is unknown and/or
  - has not taken up an allocated school place as expected.
- Any such concern will be reported to the LA through the Educational Welfare Service.
- The school will inform the Local Authority if a parent intends to electively educate their child at home (EHE)
- The school will also refer to the MASH team any child being withdrawn from school with the intent to be electively home educated (EHE) where there are safeguarding concerns.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):**

- CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
- The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe that they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them.

- A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.
- There are several other signs that might be indicators of sexual exploitation and these are detailed in Annex A of Appendix 2b – Keeping Children Safe in Education – Part 2.

- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):**

- CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.
- The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
- Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:
  - children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
  - children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
  - children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
  - children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
  - children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
  - children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

- **'County Lines':**

- County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".
- Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.
- Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

- FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
- It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
- Staff must inform the DSL immediately if they suspect a girl is at risk of FGM (unless they have a good reason not to).
- **In addition, there is a statutory duty upon individual teachers** (along with regulated health and social care professionals) to personally report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18.

- **'Honour- based' Abuse (HBA)**

- So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.
- Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the DSL as a matter of urgency.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

- We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and by other children.
- Staff must be aware that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse is abuse, and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".
- Such behaviours are most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
  - bullying (including cyberbullying),
  - gender based violence
  - sexual assaults and sexting (maybe known as youth produced sexual imagery)
  - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
  - 'upskirting' or any picture taken under a person's clothing without their permission or them knowing to obtain sexual gratification or cause humiliation or distress.
- Whenever allegations are made against children by other children this must be reported immediately to the DSL or DDSL in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The school, through its ethos and curriculum (particularly its PSHE curriculum) will address these issues with children at the appropriate level for their age.
- Pupils who are victims of such abuse or displayed such harmful behaviours, will be supported in the same way as all other children for whom there is a safeguarding concern. Consequently, peer on peer abuse is regarded as a safeguarding issue and is not managed through the systems set out in the Behaviour Policy

### **• Domestic abuse**

- Staff understand that domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional harm.
- When police are called to an incident of domestic abuse where there are children in the household the school will be informed via operation Encompass (in the MASH team). The DSL ensures that relevant staff receive up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and will ensure key staff provide emotional and practical support to the child according to their needs.

### **• Mental health**

All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff understand that:

- abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Staff are aware of how these experiences can impact on children's mental health, behaviour and education.
- they have a duty to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will report this concern using the agreed reporting mechanisms.

- **Serious violence**

- Our staff are committed to success in learning for all our pupils as one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime.
- Our curriculum includes teaching conflict resolution skills and understanding risky situations to help our children develop the social and emotional skills they need to thrive.
- Staff are trained to recognise both the early warning signs of contextual risks and that pupils may be vulnerable to exploitation and getting involved in gangs as well as indicators that a pupil is involved in serious violent crime. They are also aware of the associated risks and know the measures put in place to minimise such risks.

- **Preventing Radicalisation:**

- Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of the school's wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.
- During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised.
- Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and speak to the DSL if they are concerned about a child. The DSL will act proportionately, which may include making a referral to the 'Channel' programme or the MASH team.
- TMAP schools follow the guidance in the Home Office publication; Prevent Duty Guidance Mar 2016 .
- Staff induction includes online training for the prevention of radicalisation

## **Recording and reporting concerns**

Where any adult has concerns about a child they should report these as soon as possible to the DSL, or in their absence, the DDSL via the CPOMs system. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that concerns and discussions are written up properly and acted on appropriately. The DSL should be alerted of any concern that is urgent and requires immediate attention via a 'safeguarding card' system whereby a card is sent to the school office for the DSL's immediate attention. This is then followed up by reporting the concern via the CPOMs system.

Each school's Safeguarding Team meet regularly (at least 2 x per short term) to further review and

reflect on concerns that have been raised and on any subsequent actions.

Escalation of Concerns – where Safeguarding staff disagree with decision making by other professionals they must feel confident to press for re-consideration if they believe a decision to act/not act inresponse to a concern raised about a child is wrong. In such cases the SVPP Escalation Policy can be used if necessary.

### 3. Responding to disclosures: guidance for staff

- Our schools recognise that children will talk to an adult they know and trust and therefore our expectation is that this person will listen to the child about their concerns and then report this to the DSL or their deputy as soon as possible afterwards. The DSL will consider next steps to be taken, including consultation with, or referral to, MASH/Children's Social Care
- If a child discloses harm to any staff member, it must be remembered that the school role is to recognise and refer abuse, **not** to investigate. This is to avoid contamination of evidence gained in any subsequent investigation undertaken by the Police and/or the Social Services. This does not mean however that the staff member involved cannot ask any questions but must avoid anything that might be interpreted as 'leading' the child
- If a child wishes to confide in you the following guidelines should be adhered to:
  - stay calm
  - take the child to a private and safe place if possible
  - reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame and they were right to tell you
  - listen to the child and tell them that you believe them and are taking what is being said seriously
  - tell the child you have to speak to someone who can help keep them safe and what you are going to do next
  - keep questions to a minimum and encourage the child to use his/her own words.- do not interview the child
  - Questioning should only include **TED** questions:
    - **T**ell me
    - **E**xplain
    - **D**escribe
  - Or use the mirroring technique i.e. "*My dad hit me last night*" – respond by "*Your dad hit you last night?*"
  - Record as soon as possible exactly what the child has said to you, what you have heard, what you saw and any other relevant information +
  - Immediately inform your DSL or DDSL (and nobody else) so that an appropriate action can be taken to protect the pupil if necessary.

#### **DO NOT:**

- make written notes whilst a child is disclosing abuse as this may deter them from speaking
  - promise total confidentiality eg do not say you can keep a secret.
  - investigate the issue yourself
  - ask the child to write down what they said or repeat it to another adult
  - record the conversation on any device
  - take photographs of any injuries – record on CPOMs body map.
  - ask another adult to witness their disclosure – the child has chosen to tell you
  - approach or inform their alleged abuser
- Following any disclosure from a child, staff will be involved on a 'need to know' basis so that the child can be supported throughout the process that follows. This may include time out and/or additional support from specific adults who they trust or feel comfortable with. However, there is no set process as the needs of each child are likely to be different, so the school will respond accordingly.
  - The child should be kept informed regarding the process and the DSL (or their deputy) should ensure that they are supported.

- We are also aware that the member of staff or volunteer to whom the disclosure has been made may also be in need of support and the school's senior leadership team will ensure that such support is given.

### **Safer working practice**

The government's 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People' update April 2020, indicates that there must be clear professional reason for all conduct of staff and volunteers.

- The 'Staff Code of Conduct' clearly outlines the school's expectations for all staff and volunteers who work at our schools. All members of staff receive a copy of the 'Code of Conduct' when they join the schools as part of their induction process.
- As part of the same induction process, all staff will be made aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and, where necessary, receive updated training. This will include an understanding of indicators of abuse.
- Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If staff are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, they should seek medical advice. Schools must ensure that staff only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly.
- Staff medication on the school premises must be stored securely and out of reach of children at all times.

### **4. Managing allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers**

The guidance in KCSIE (Part Four) is followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including supply teachers and volunteers, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- The school follows the procedure set out in the current <https://www.wiltshirescb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ALLEGATIONS-AGAINST-ADULTS-WHO-WORK-WITH-CHILDREN.pdf>
- Any report of concern about the behaviour of a member of staff, including supply staff or volunteer, or allegation of abuse against a member of staff must immediately be reported to the Head Teacher who will refer to the Designated Office for Allegations (DOFA) at the local authority who can be contacted on 01225 713945
- Any concern or allegation against the Headteacher will be reported to the Chair of Academy Advisors without informing the Headteacher.
- If any staff members have concerns about another staff member or volunteer then this should be referred to the Headteacher or in the case of the Headteacher the Chair of Academy Advisors.
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- Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- In some circumstances the member of staff will, without prejudice, be asked to take a period of paid leave pending the results of the investigation.



- The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.
- Malicious allegations against staff will be investigated and dealt with by the Headteacher and, if appropriate, a committee of governors.
- Low Level Concerns (LLC) regarding staff and other adults who support children in school are to be reported to the Headteacher, or in the case of the Headteacher to the Chair of the Academy Advisors. TMAT introduced LLC guidance, training and processes for staff during term 2, 2020/21.
- Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount. The school's Whistle Blowing Policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.
- Where a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue with the Headteacher or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should address their concerns to Lyssy Bolton Executive Headteacher.
- They may also find it helpful to refer to the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/whistleblowing/). Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8.00am to 8.00pm – Monday to Friday) and/or by emailing [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

#### Confidentiality **Record keeping and information sharing**

- The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent.
- Staff have a professional responsibility to share any relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigating agencies.
- Information should only be shared with those who need to know.

Each school:

- liaises with partner organisations to ensure any safeguarding records for learners are shared on transition:
  - by the setting/school/organisation previously attended by the child.
  - by our DSL when the child leaves our school.

If any child is dual-registered with another school/setting/organisation, the DSL liaises regularly with the DSL at that base to ensure information is shared in the child's best interests. This includes contextual safeguarding information about relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online to enable assessment and intervention to happen within these extra-familial contexts.

- keeps clear written records of all pupil safeguarding and child protection concerns using a standard recording format on CPOMs, with a body map, including actions taken and outcomes as appropriate.
- ensures all pupil safeguarding and child protection records are kept securely in a locked location.
- ensures the records incorporate the wishes and views of the pupil as appropriate.

The DSL/DDSL acts in accordance with Information Sharing – Department for Education (DfE) (2018) and in line with the Wiltshire Council Record Keeping Guidance which includes details about file retention. Information about pupils at risk of harm is shared with members of staff in keeping with the seven golden rules to sharing information in the DfE guidance.

We are committed to work in partnership with parents and carers. In most situations, we will discuss initial concerns with them. However, the DSL/DDSL will not share information where there are concerns that if so doing would:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm
- place an adult at increased risk of serious harm
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child, or serious harm to an adult.

When schools become aware that a child is being privately fostered, the carer/parent is reminded of their legal duty to notify Wiltshire Children's Social Care. This is followed up by contacting Children's Social Care directly.

### **Exceptional operating circumstances**

TMAT has a robust and regularly reviewed Covid Risk Assessment for each school to safeguard all pupils, families, staff and visitors. If any school is required to change the way provision is offered to children due to exceptional circumstances eg during a pandemic lockdown, staff responsibilities to remain alert to the signs and risks of abuse to children will continue to apply. In such circumstances:

The DSL will:

- work closely with social care and partner agencies to support children in these circumstances and to identify children who may be at risk for the first time and/or benefit from additional support
- use specific local and national guidance about safeguarding in such circumstances to inform practice and will ensure staff, children, and families are provided with written:
  - amended DSL arrangements as required (names, location and contact details)
  - temporary changes to procedures for working with children eg online.
  - amended procedures for reporting concerns
  - safeguarding training arrangements
  - timescales for such changes so that all children, families and staff understand when such arrangements will end, and arrangements revert to those in place prior to the events leading to the need for the temporary changes.

The curriculum offer during such circumstances, continues to promote learners' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

### **The use of IT**

Staff must only use school devices and only contact groups or individual pupils via the pupil's login to Seesaw / Class Dojo (VLP), Google Classroom or the individual children's school email address, (eg @meadprimary.co.uk).

Use of school devices and network ensures that the setting's filtering and monitoring software is enabled. When children use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems. Any devices lent to pupils will have relevant control systems and must only be used for appropriate content for the pupil's learning whilst at home.

During the Covid period, learning and day to day meetings/activities may be carried out online. The following needs to be adhered to:

- Staff engaging in online activity should display the same standards of dress and conduct that they would in the real world; they should also role model this to pupils and parents. The following points should be considered:-
  - think about the background; photos, artwork, identifying features, mirrors – ideally the

- backing should be neutral
  - staff and pupils should be in living / communal areas – no bedrooms
  - staff and pupils should be fully dressed
  - resources / videos must be age appropriate – the child may not have support immediately to hand at home if they feel distressed or anxious about content
- It is the responsibility of the staff member to act as a moderator; raise any issues of suitability (of dress, setting, behaviour) with the child and / or parent immediately and end the online interaction if necessary
- If a staff member believes that a child or parent is recording the interaction, the session should be brought to an end or that child should be logged out immediately.
- If staff need to contact a pupil or parent by phone and do not have access to a work phone, they should discuss this with a senior member of staff and, if there is no alternative, always use 'caller withheld' to ensure the pupil / parent is not able to identify the staff member's personal contact details.

### **Policy review**

The policy is reviewed annually earlier as required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

- Monitoring and evaluation for schools within the Trust will be undertaken each year through TMAP Safeguarding reviews. This information will be shared with the Trust's School Effectiveness Group (SEG) at Trust level.
- Each school monitors its own practice via regular internal Safeguarding reviews.
- Each school submits a Wiltshire Safeguarding audit each year and follows any recommendations made.
- The Headteacher ensures that safeguarding is an agenda item for every leadership meeting.
- Academy Advisors have a role in monitoring by:
  - ensuring that safeguarding is an agenda item for every full Advisors' meeting.
  - reviewing Child Protection practice in the school via the termly Safeguarding Report for Academy Advisors
  - auditing safeguarding measures annually alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) using Wiltshire Local Authority's Annual Safeguarding Audit .