

BIRKENHEAD HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
September 2021

This policy applies to the whole school: Seniors, Juniors and EYFS.
It should be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education, the ATB Safeguarding Procedures and the Academy's Online Safety Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at the School is Klaire Costello, Vice Principal. Other Key Safeguarding Leads are: [Gwen Saccheri (Assistant Vice Principal, Deputy DSL) & Maryanne Ramsbottom (Head of Junior School, Deputy DSL incl. EYFS)]

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1.1.1 Birkenhead High School Academy ("the School") is committed to a whole school approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All pupils have the right to be protected from all types of harm and abuse, and all school systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. This *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* ("this Policy") forms a fundamental part of our approach to providing excellent pastoral care to *all* pupils, including young people who may be over the age of 18 years.

1.1.2 Key documents with which this Policy is in accordance:

- The Education Acts
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Children Act 2004
- *What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused* March 2015
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* July 2018 (A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* September 2021
- *Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006* September 2018
- *Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services* July 2018
- DBS Referral Guidance (as may be amended from time to time)
- *Teacher misconduct- regulating the teaching profession* March 2014 (and related guidance)
- *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* July 2013
- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* July 2017
- *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools* November 2018
- *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)* September 2021
- *Prevent Duty Guidance, Channel Guidance, and Prevent Departmental Advice* 2015
- *The use of social media for online radicalisation* July 2015
- *Teaching Online Safety in School* June 2019

- *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people* UKCIS December 2020
- *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges* September 2021
- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education*
- *When to call the police: guidance for schools and colleges* NSPCC

1.1.3 The School recognises and acts upon the legal duties set out in the above statutes, regulations and guidance, to protect its pupils (and staff) from harm, and to cooperate with other agencies in carrying out those duties and responding to safeguarding concerns.

1.1.4 This Policy is used in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures, and specifically in accordance with Wirral local safeguarding partner guidance (see para 11.3 for contact details). The school will ensure that its safeguarding arrangements take into account the local procedures and practice, including local criteria for action and protocol for assessment.

1.1.5 This Policy is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers at the School (temporary and permanent). Adherence to this Policy is mandatory for **all** staff and volunteers and its use is not subject to discretion. This Policy applies whenever staff or volunteers are working with pupils, including where this is away from the School, for example at another institution, on school visits and trips, as well as sporting and cultural activities.

1.1.6 This Policy is available to all parents/carers, staff and volunteers on the School's website. A paper copy of this Policy is also available to parents/carers upon request to the School office.

1.1.7 Pupils are taught about safeguarding, both on and offline, including how to adjust their behaviour to reduce risks, keep themselves safe and build resilience; and are made aware of this Policy through the PSHE programme and other means of sharing information appropriate to their context, age and understanding, within a broad and balanced curriculum.

1.2 Creating a Culture of Safeguarding

1.2.1 The School recognises that safeguarding covers much more than child protection and so this Policy will operate in conjunction with the *Academy Trust Board (ATB) Safeguarding Procedures* (which itself incorporates the staff Code of Conduct), and other related policies and procedures. These cover areas including equal opportunities; Health and Safety; First Aid; educational visits; anti-bullying; behaviour management; drugs, alcohol and tobacco; information sharing, British Values and Preventing radicalisation and violent extremism, and online safety (including mobile technology and social media). Such statements and policies are available from the School on request.

The School takes seriously its responsibility to promote and nurture the mental health and wellbeing of all its pupils and staff. This is reflected in its policies and procedures for pastoral care and the School's PSHE programme.

1.2.2 'Safeguarding' is broader than 'child protection'. As well as protecting children from harm, 'safeguarding' widens the responsibility to preventing harm and promoting the welfare of children. It is recognised that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes:

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

Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action will be taken to protect that child. Action will also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm currently, or at immediate risk of harm. The school recognises the importance of children receiving the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating, the importance of acting on and referring the early signs of abuse and neglect, keeping contemporaneous, detailed and accurate records, listening to the views of the child, reassessing concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information quickly and challenging inaction.

1.2.3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. Everyone who works with our pupils should make sure that their approach is child centred (that is, that they consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child).

1.2.4 As well as ensuring the School's policies and procedures support its safeguarding responsibilities, the School will work with pupils and their families, and contribute to inter-agency working, in line with the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help where additional needs of children are identified, and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers, Children's Social Services and diverse communities, to continuously develop and improve the safeguarding culture within our School.

1.2.5 Having these safeguards in place not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but also it enhances the confidence of our staff, volunteers, parents/carers and the general public.

1.2.6 The School has systems to:

- Prevent unsuitable people working with pupils;
- Identify pupils who are at risk of and/or are likely to suffer significant harm and take appropriate action, and promote the welfare of pupils in need of additional support;
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice;
- Protect students and staff from online risks; these include online safety education and training, policies and procedures governing the use of IT, and procedures to manage any incidents that occur;
- Block access to websites deemed to be inappropriate or dangerous, and log all internet access on GDST devices. Logged access can be reported on for monitoring purposes, and flagged terms also trigger alerts which the DSL may investigate. Additionally, email messages between staff and students are scanned for inappropriate language and behaviour;
- Deal with issues of confidentiality, information sharing and consent;
- Ensure that staff do not, through their actions, place **pupils** at risk of harm, or place themselves at risk from an allegation of harm (e.g. by providing guidance on areas such as 1:1 tuition, sports coaching, conveying by car, inappropriate electronic communication). Relevant guidance can be found in the *ATB Safeguarding Procedures (Part A Section 3: Code of Conduct)*.

1.2.7 The School encourages the pupils in its care to raise any concerns that they might have and ensure that these are taken seriously. The School also encourages pupils to contribute their own ideas, appropriate to their age and understanding, about how their safety and welfare could be further improved.

1.2.8 All staff are required to adhere to the *ICT Acceptable Use Agreement*, and specifically to ensure that any images taken of pupils are appropriate and stored and managed safely.

1.3 Implementation Procedures

The School has implementation procedures to assist staff and volunteers when handling safeguarding concerns.

Information on these procedures is available to all staff and volunteers at the School and the procedures must be followed at all times.

1.4 Early Years Foundation Setting

1.4.1 This Policy applies to the School's provision for the Early Years Foundation Setting ('EYFS'). The identity of and contact details for the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) with responsibility for safeguarding within this setting are set out at the head of this policy and in para 11.1 below.

1.4.2 Throughout the setting all persons in the EYFS are required to adhere to the *ICT Acceptable Use Agreement* on the use of mobile phones and cameras; that is, that images of pupils may not be stored on personal devices. Any images taken on personal devices will be transferred to school or GDST systems as soon as reasonably possible and the personal copy permanently removed.

1.4.3 Safeguarding training for staff in the EYFS will include guidance on identifying signs of possible abuse and neglect (such as significant changes in a pupil's behaviour, deterioration in wellbeing, physical indications, comments which give cause for concern, or any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting), and on how to respond in a timely and appropriate way to such signs or to inappropriate behaviour in other members of staff or any other person working with children (EYFS Statutory Framework 3.6).

1.5 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or Physical Health Issues

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges, including particular vulnerability to peer-on-peer abuse. Staff must be alert to the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These may include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further explanation;
- 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 to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, children with SEND may require extra pastoral support and attention, alongside any appropriate support for communication. Their additional vulnerabilities should also be particularly carefully considered in situations where the use of reasonable force may be needed.

1.6 Children potentially at greater risk of harm

Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans): the DSL should be informed by the local authority if a child has a social worker, and should hold and use this information

so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children: The school will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep safe any children on roll who are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the local authority. This includes ensuring that a designated member of staff has responsibility for their welfare and progress, and has up-to-date assessment information from the local authority, the most recent care plan and contact arrangements with parents, and delegated authority carers.

1.7 Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by someone to whom they are not related in that person's home. If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they should raise this in the first instance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The School will then notify the local authority of the circumstances.

2. **Aims**

2.1 Our aims are to:

2.1.1 Create an environment in the School which is safe and secure for all pupils.

2.1.2 Encourage our pupils to establish satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults.

2.1.3 Encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.

2.1.4 Work with parents/carers to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all pupils.

2.2 In order to fulfil these aims the Principal will take the necessary steps to ensure that:

2.2.1 All staff (including supply and temporary staff) and volunteers receive training in Safeguarding Children as part of their induction. This includes:

- the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (which includes whistleblowing procedures) and ATB Safeguarding Procedures (which incorporates the staff *Code of Conduct*)
- Part 1 and Annex A of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- The School's behaviour policy
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)
- Online safety
- *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings* May 2019 and relevant updates

2.2.2 All staff, volunteers and the Principal are trained in safeguarding (including Prevent awareness online training, the local early help process and how to manage a report of child on child sexual violence or sexual harassment) regularly (in line with local safeguarding partner regulations), and receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually. Safeguarding training must be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and staff training programme. The Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) must receive the

required updated child protection and Prevent training at least every two years (as set out in Annex C of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*).

2.2.3 The school has a recruitment policy and operates safer recruitment procedures. These include ensuring that at least one member of any recruitment panel involved in all stages of the recruitment process has undertaken the appropriate training in Safer Recruitment, and carrying out all required checks on the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children and young people in accordance with the guidance and regulations set out at paragraphs 1.1.2 and the ATB recruitment and selection procedures. Appropriate supervision arrangements are put in place if staff start work before their DBS disclosure has been obtained, and in all cases a Barred List Check and Prohibition Order check (if applicable) will have been undertaken. [Relevant staff are also asked to confirm that they do not meet the criteria for disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 and the 2018 Regulations.

2.2.4 The school obtains assurance that appropriate child protection checks are carried out and procedures apply to any staff or volunteer of another organisation who work with the School's pupils on another site (for example, in a separate institution).

2.2.5 Appropriate checks are carried out on external visitors coming onto the school site, depending on their business with the school and level of contact with children. Where relevant, this will include an assessment of the suitability, educational value and age appropriateness of any activities or material to be delivered. Further details can be found in the school's Visiting Speakers Protocol.

2.2.6 The school carries out the mandated checks on the suitability of all people who serve on our Local Governing Body in accordance with the guidance and regulations set out at paragraphs 1.1.2 and in accordance with ATB policy. The required checks on ATB members (as the proprietors) are carried out centrally by the GDST.

2.2.7 The school will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child where:

- The harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual;
- the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a relevant offence; and
- the individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed if they had not left (this includes suspension or deployment to another area of work that is not regulated activity)

The referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation, removal or redeployment of the individual in accordance with the procedural guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs>. In cases involving teaching staff, the School will also consider whether it would be appropriate to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) who may decide to prohibit the individual from teaching.

2.2.8 All School staff are alert to signs of abuse and neglect, and all staff know to whom they should report concerns or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

2.2.9 All school staff keep themselves updated on safeguarding issues and child protection procedures by accessing advice, guidance and training as appropriate to their role.

2.3 This Policy is compatible with and meets all applicable requirements of Wirral local safeguarding partners and Wirral Children's Social Services. The School ensures that it has positive communication with them to ensure compliance with local protocol and access to relevant support. Children's Social Services can be contacted through the Wirral Integrated Front Door. Contact details are set out in paragraph 11.3 below.

3. Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

3.1 Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. School staff have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

3.2 Any concern, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. Staff should not assume that a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about sharing information or recording requirements, staff should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.

3.3 If staff have concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger or at risk of harm – see para 3.5 below) they will need to decide what action to take. All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from **early help**, that is, support as soon as a problem emerges. Such problems should be discussed in the first instance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The early help process may also involve sharing information with other professionals and contributing to an early help assessment.

3.4 Any child may benefit from early help, but staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is a privately fostered child

3.5 If a child is **in immediate danger or at risk of harm**, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will make a referral to children's social services and/or the police immediately (see section 5.12). It is not the role of the School to investigate suspected or alleged abuse; this is the role of the Police and Social Services.

3.6 What is Child Abuse?

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 by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. 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 with one another.

The categories listed below are drawn from *Keeping Children Safe in Education*:

3.6.1 Physical abuse – a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

3.6.2 Emotional abuse – the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or unvalued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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.

3.6.3 Sexual abuse - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or 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 can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline 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.

3.6.4 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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

3.6.5 Child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE) and forms of so-called ‘honour based’ abuse including female genital mutilation (FGM) are child abuse, and domestic abuse and attempts to draw children into violent extremism or serious violent crime should also be treated as safeguarding issues. Further information on these areas can be found in *Academy Safeguarding Procedures*. If a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the teacher must report this to the police.

3.6.6 Sharing nude and semi-nude images is a child protection issue. Even if explicit material is sent or elicited without malicious intent the consequences are serious and put those involved at risk of serious harm. Having or sending explicit material on digital devices is also a criminal offence for those under 18. Pupils are taught about this as part of their online safety education. The School takes incidences of sharing nude and semi-nude images extremely seriously, and deals with them in accordance with child protection procedures, including reporting to the police.

3.6.7 Who are the abusers? - abusers can be parents/carers, siblings or members of the extended family, neighbours, teachers, strangers or other pupils; in short, an abuser could be anyone.

3.6.8 Peer abuse: all staff should also recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers, and that this can happen both inside and outside school. Even if there are no reports, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. For this reason, it is important that staff are alert to the signs of peer abuse and that pupils feel able to report incidents, knowing they will be treated seriously. Peer abuse is most likely to include, but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyber, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery), and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse, or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

It is more likely that girls will be the victims of peer abuse and boys perpetrators, but all peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Peer abuse should be recognised as abuse and challenged as such. It should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' which can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and at worst children accepting this as normal and not coming forward to report it. The school seeks to minimise the risk of such abuse by ensuring that it is clear to all members of the school community that it is not tolerated, and by educating pupils as part of the PSHE programme about healthy and respectful relationships, the wider societal factors (such as sexist stereotypes and language), and how to recognise, report and respond to peer abuse.

Any allegation of such abuse will be promptly and thoroughly investigated, recorded and treated according to its gravity, in line with the anti-bullying or behaviour policy. The threshold for dealing with an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying under the safeguarding procedure is, subject to local specifics as in any other case, when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. In such cases the school's response will include referral to children's social services or the police. Victims, perpetrators and any other child affected will be supported within the pastoral care structure, taking account of their views and feelings, and support may include counselling where appropriate. All children involved will be treated as 'at risk'. Further information can be found in the *Academy Safeguarding Procedures*.

3.6.9 Contextual safeguarding: safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and can occur between children outside the School. All staff should consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. It is important to provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

3.7 Signs of abuse

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

The following may help staff to be aware of possible signs of abuse - There are further sources of information such as the *Academy Safeguarding Procedures*, *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* the NSPCC website. However, such lists are not exhaustive - if staff members are unsure, they should always seek advice and report concerns even where signs/indicators are not present. Staff should also be alert to behaviours or circumstances that put children in danger, such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, self-harm, truanting, cyber bullying and sexting.

(There may be other signs of abuse specific to female genital mutilation, and to radicalisation of young people. These are described in the *Academy Safeguarding Procedures*.)

3.7.1 Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries/burns
- Untreated injuries
- Bruises/abrasion around the face
- Bi-lateral injuries e.g. two bruised eyes
- Bite marks
- Bruising abrasions to lips, cheeks, outer ear

3.7.2 Emotional Abuse

- Excessive overreaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Excessive rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting
- Extreme compliance/aggression
- Drug, alcohol and substance misuse
- Significant peer relationship difficulties

3.7.3 Sexual Abuse

- Sexual awareness inappropriate to child's age, including provocative sexual behaviour
- Self-harm
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- Fear of undressing for gym
- Depression/withdrawal
- Drug, alcohol, substance abuse

3.7.4 Neglect

- Constant hunger, tiredness and/or poor personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Social isolation
- Poor self-esteem and/or relationship with peers
- Excessive rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking

3.7.5 Missing Children

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Staff should treat prolonged or repeated absence, or particular patterns of absence, with no satisfactory explanation, as a potential safeguarding issue and take action accordingly. Procedures are detailed in the *Academy Safeguarding Procedures*.

3.7.6 Mental Health

All 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. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff are however well placed to observe children and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one, and it is also important that staff are aware how adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact on children's mental health, behaviour and education. If staff have a concern about a child which is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken following the procedures in this Policy.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

4.1 The School has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead and key safeguarding staff to contact in their absence. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a member of the School's Senior Leadership Team with the necessary status and authority to take responsibility for child protection matters (including online safety). This responsibility cannot be delegated. The School will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is given the time/cover, funding, training, resources and support to fulfil their role.

During term time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or a deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Adequate and appropriate cover will be arranged for any out of hours/out of term activities. The Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will ensure that arrangements for cover are communicated clearly to staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads will:

4.1.1 be responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual child protection concerns are dealt with in accordance with the guidance and regulations set out at paragraphs 1.1.2;

4.1.2 refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the local Children's Social Services Department and/or the Police in accordance with local safeguarding partner procedures, and work with other agencies in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children*;

4.1.3 receive *Prevent* awareness training; provide advice and support, and make appropriate referrals through the *Channel* programme;

4.1.4 ensure that they are aware of the latest national and local guidance and requirements and will keep the Principal, staff and volunteers informed as appropriate;

4.1.5 receive appropriate training in child protection matters and interagency working, to include both national and local bodies, at least every two years, and in addition to formal training, update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually, in order to keep up with developments relevant to the role;

4.1.6 ensure that the Principal, staff and volunteers have access to and understand their role as appropriate in the child protection procedures, including but not limited to part-time staff, supply staff, peripatetic staff, newly appointed staff, newly qualified staff, before/after school care staff, boarding staff, gap year students, volunteers, catering staff, cleaning staff and caretakers;

4.1.7 act as a source of advice and support within the School and co-ordinate action regarding referrals in relation to both children and allegations against staff.

5. Responding to Disclosures of Abuse

5.1 Children are more likely to be abused by someone they know and trust than by a stranger. Staff members are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.

5.2 Staff and volunteers should make themselves available to reassure the pupil that what they are saying is being taken seriously and without criticism and should respond in a supportive, calm manner, avoiding asking detailed questions. The role of the staff member or volunteer is to listen, record and report; not to investigate. A pupil should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. No pupil should ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Staff and volunteers should also take care to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm.

5.3 If a pupil reports abuse from another pupil or pupils, staff should follow the procedures in this section. All children involved, whether a potential perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being 'at risk'. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with local agencies in relation to handling any such cases which arise. Further guidance can be found in the *Academy Safeguarding Procedures (Part A Section 1)*. A bullying incident will be regarded as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. See the Anti Bullying Policy.

5.4 Immediate Response

If a disclosure is made, the member of staff or volunteer **should**:

5.4.1 allow the pace of the conversation to be dictated by the pupil;

5.4.2 ask open questions which encourage the pupil to talk such as "can you tell me what happened?"

5.4.3 accept what the pupil says and not ask for further detail;

5.4.4 acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you and show by voice tone and/or facial expression that you are taking their concerns seriously;

5.4.5 note carefully any clearly visible external signs of possible injury or neglect (but note paragraph 5.5.4 below);

5.4.6 reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing, that they are not at fault, and explain whom you will have to tell (the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and why.

5.5 The member of staff or volunteer should not:

5.5.1 burden the pupil with guilt by asking questions such as "why didn't you tell me before?"

5.5.2 interrogate or pressure the pupil to provide information;

5.5.3 ask any potentially leading questions as this may impact on any potential case brought to court;

- 5.5.4 undress the child or examine clothed parts of the child's body in an attempt to determine the nature of any such injuries/neglect;
- 5.5.5 criticise the alleged perpetrator, this may be someone they love;
- 5.5.6 promise confidentiality (see paragraph 5.6 and 5.7);
- 5.5.7 make promises that they cannot keep such as "I'll stay with you all the time" or "it will be alright now";
- 5.5.8 put words in the child's mouth (i.e. finish their sentences);
- 5.5.9 jump to conclusions or speculate about what happened or might have happened, or make accusations;
- 5.5.10 show an overly emotional reaction, such as expressing disgust, shock or disbelief;
- 5.5.11 attempt to investigate the allegations.

5.6 If a pupil confides in a member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, staff/volunteers **must not make promises about confidentiality**. Staff must tell the pupil sensitively that they have a responsibility to tell the named Designated Safeguarding Lead so that the child can be helped to stay safe and feel better.

5.7 In every case, the member of staff/volunteer should consider whether the pupil is able to provide consent for the information to be shared and if so, seek to obtain that consent in accordance with the *Academy Safeguarding Procedures* relating to information sharing and consent. If the pupil does not consent, the member of staff/volunteer should explain that they need to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and reassure them that the information will *only be disclosed* to other people who *need to know*. The member of staff/volunteer should refer to the *Academy Safeguarding Procedures* for further information and guidance.

5.8 The School recognises that a child who is abused may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We recognise that the School may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. The School has age appropriate systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback so that their wishes or feelings will be taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. However, the child's wishes or feelings cannot override the duty to refer suspected abuse to the Integrated Front Door/Careline or police.

5.9 The School will provide continuing support to a pupil who has disclosed abuse through promoting a caring and safe environment within the School and encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum and through relationships. In doing so, the School will act in accordance with guidance from the relevant authorities to ensure that, for example, legal proceedings are not compromised.

5.10 All allegations will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours for advice before any investigation takes place. In borderline cases, these discussions can be held informally and without naming the individual.

In case of serious harm, the police and/or Careline shall be informed at the outset.

5.11 Recording Information
Staff/volunteers should:

- 5.11.1 make a record of the disclosure or concern, including the date, time, place and context, and what has actually been said (wherever possible using the child's exact words, even if they seem childish, rude or inappropriate), not assumption or interpretation;
- 5.11.2 clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion;
- 5.11.3 record any observed injuries and bruises;
- 5.11.4 note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil (do not translate into "proper terms");
- 5.11.5 alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- 5.11.6 appreciate that their records may be used in criminal proceedings or disciplinary investigations.

5.12 Reporting Concerns

5.12.1 Any concerns about pupils must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or in their absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) as soon as possible and at latest by the end of the school day.

5.12.2 Where the disclosure identifies a safeguarding issue, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will report the disclosure to Careline within 24 hours, and complete a Multi-Agency Referral Form. Whilst generally the consent of parents will be obtained before making a formal referral, **parental consent is not a requirement for referrals to statutory agencies**. In the most serious cases, and if there is suspicion that a crime has been committed, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the police.

5.12.3 The school's procedures differentiate between safeguarding children who have suffered significant harm and those who are in need of support from one or more agencies. In cases where a child is not suffering or at risk of suffering serious harm, but rather in need of additional support, an inter-agency assessment will be undertaken to determine the most appropriate action.

5.12.4 Whilst the Designated Safeguarding Lead will usually decide whether to make a referral, **in exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, any staff member can refer their concerns to Careline directly** (see section 9 below). If a member of staff makes a referral independently, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible thereafter.

5.12.5 **If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made immediately. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the Designated Safeguarding Lead should press for the case to be escalated following local safeguarding partner procedures. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.**

6 **Allegations against staff or volunteers**

6.1 Schools must follow the procedures for handling allegations made against staff, supply staff and/or volunteers set out in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. The aim is to deal with any allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way which provides effective protection for the child and at the same time provides appropriate support for the person who is the subject of the allegation.

6.2 Where a safeguarding-related allegation or cause for concern is made against any member of staff, supply staff or volunteer (including the Designated Safeguarding Lead), the matter should be reported immediately to **the Principal** (unless the allegation relates to the Principal). The Principal

should **not speak** to the member of staff who is the subject of the allegation at this point. In the absence of the Principal the allegation should be reported to the Director of Legal and Risk Assurance at Trust Office (or in their absence the Chief Executive).

6.3 Where a safeguarding related allegation or cause for concern is made against the Principal, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of the Academy Trust Board and the Chair of the Local Governing Body. The Chair of the Academy Trust Board should obtain details of the allegation, in writing, signed by the person who received the allegation, not the pupil who is the subject of the allegation. The account of the allegation should be countersigned and dated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must **not** notify the Principal.

6.4 Where a safeguarding related allegation or cause for concern is made against a member of Trust Office staff, the matter should be reported immediately to the Director of Legal and Risk Assurance at Trust Office (or in their absence the Chief Executive).

6.5 **In all cases immediate contact should be made with the LADO** to discuss the allegation. The Legal Department at Trust Office must also be notified. A decision as to how to proceed and eventually whether or not to suspend a member of staff or volunteer will be taken by the Principal following consultation with the LADO (and, in the most serious cases, the police) and the ATB. In borderline cases discussions with the LADO can be held informally and without naming the school or individual. Discussions should be recorded in writing, and any communication with both the individual and the parents of the child/children agreed. Suspension is not an automatic response and the decision will be taken according to the circumstances of each particular case, giving due weight to the views of the LADO, and guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. The decision as to whether or not to suspend the Principal is taken by the ATB alone (having consulted the LADO).

6.6 In considering the available options, including redeployment of the member of staff, supply staff or volunteer, the LADO, ATB and the Principal will ensure that their primary concerns are the safety and wellbeing of the pupils, together with the need for a full and fair investigation which will be led by the LADO or the police.

6.7 The school will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, as outlined in para 2.2.6 above. The referral will be made as soon as possible, and ordinarily on conclusion of investigation, when the individual is removed from regulated activity. In cases involving teaching staff, the LADO will also consider whether it would be appropriate to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) who may decide to prohibit the individual from teaching.

6.8 Where required to do so, we will provide information to the LADO, the DBS or TRA in respect of a member of staff or volunteer in accordance with our legal duty.

6.9 Communications with the School community about safeguarding-related allegations shall only be made following consultation with the LADO and any investigating authorities. There are restrictions on the reporting or publishing of allegations against teachers (which apply up to the point where the accused person is charged with an offence, or the DfE/TRA publish information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case). Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity. The Legal Department will advise on the statutory reporting restrictions on publication of details of allegations.

6.10 If there has been a substantiated allegation against a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer, the School will work with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the School's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

6.11 Low level concerns

6.11.1 A low level concern about the behaviour of a member of staff is one where such behaviour does not meet the 'harms threshold' and yet appears to be inconsistent with the staff code of conduct or professional boundaries.

6.11.2 It is crucial that any such concerns should be shared. This will maintain an open and transparent culture within the school, reinforcing its ethos and values; ensure that adults working in the school act within professional boundaries; and enable concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour to be identified and addressed early, minimising the risk of abuse.

6.11.3 Low level concerns about a member of staff should be reported to the DSL. A low-level concern about the DSL should be reported to the Head. Staff are also encouraged to self-refer where, for instance, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or on reflection feel they may have compromised the school's expected professional standards.

6.11.4 Further guidance on low level concerns and the 'harms threshold' can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct and *Safeguarding Procedures*.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The ATB has separate procedures which detail the roles and responsibilities of all staff, volunteers and governors in relation to safeguarding. In summary every member of staff, members of the Local Governing Body, and every volunteer who assists the School should:

7.1.1 protect pupils from abuse

7.1.2 follow the School's safeguarding policy and procedures, and sections of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* appropriate to their role, including subsequent updates to this guidance

7.1.3 know how to access and implement the procedures

7.1.4 know the identity of the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and who to speak to in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

7.1.5 report all safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (subject to paragraphs 5.12.4, 6.2 and 6.3 of this Policy)

7.1.7 keep a record of any safeguarding concern, conversation or incident (in accordance with paragraphs 3.2 and 5.11 of this Policy)

7.1.8 undertake appropriate training as detailed in 2.2.2 above.

8. Referring Concerns to Children's Social Services

8.1 The decision to make a referral is a serious matter and requires careful judgement. Such decisions should usually only be taken by the Head or by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will liaise with the Head as appropriate, following consultation with Social Services. In cases of serious harm, or if a crime may have been committed, the police will be informed from the outset. However, anyone can refer their concerns to children's social care directly (see section 9 below).

8.1 Children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that schools provide as much information as possible as

part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

8.2 Parental consent is not a requirement for referrals to statutory agencies. However, schools should aim to gain consent of individuals or their parents, depending on age and the circumstances, to share information about them with Social Services and other agencies. Schools should be mindful of situations where to do so would place a child at increased risk of harm. Schools may share information without consent, if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a school will gain consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk. Advice to determine the nature of any discussions to have with parents should be sought from Social Services in advance of making a referral. Advice can also be obtained from the Legal Department at Trust Office.

8.4 In the case of concerns about a pupil being at risk of radicalisation, school staff should follow safeguarding guidelines by reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This may lead to a referral through the *Channel* programme.

8.5 In accordance with paragraph 5.12.2 of this Policy, where the disclosure relates to actual abuse or the suspicion of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will report the disclosure to Children's Social Services within 24 hours.

8.6 In the event of the School making a referral to Children's Social Services, they should agree with the recipient of the referral what exactly the child and parents/carers will be told, by whom and when. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should ask to be kept informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between Children's Social Services and the police, which will decide whether and how to investigate. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion.

8.7 The local authority should make a decision, within one working day of a referral being made, about the type of response that is required and should let the referrer know the outcome. The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming. A record of each contact with Children's Social Services, including the name of the officer with whom the School has spoken, and the date and time of the call, should be kept. If after a referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures.

9. Duty to report concerns about the management of safeguarding

9.1 The School recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. Staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime, and feel confident that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team. The duty to report concerns about the management of safeguarding is part of the Code of Conduct, and will also be reflected in staff training.

9.2 Where staff or volunteers reasonably believe that safeguarding concerns exist, or where they have concerns regarding the management of safeguarding issues, it is their duty to raise concerns.

9.3 The member of staff or volunteer should bring their concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in a case where the concerns relate to the actions or inaction of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to the Principal.

9.4 However, where a member of staff or volunteer reasonably believes these reporting routes to be inappropriate, or has reported concerns and no action has been taken, they should contact the

GDST Director of Legal and Risk Assurance, refer their concerns to children’s social services directly or use the NSPCC whistleblowing helplines (see section 11 below for contact details).

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 The working of this Policy will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the School who will report as required to the Principal.

10.2 The GDST/ATB, as proprietor of the School, will undertake an annual audit visit and other periodic checks in order to monitor the effectiveness of the School’s implementation of these policies and procedures, together with a review of the safeguarding incidents that have arisen and how they were managed.

10.3 The annual review will be reported back to the ATB’s Audit Committee, which will monitor compliance. A member of the Audit Committee is nominated as ‘Safeguarding Lead’ to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding at organisational level, delegating where appropriate to members of the Senior Leadership Team. The Health and Safety Committee will also consider the processes in place for promoting the welfare of GDST pupils.

10.4 The Girls’ Day School Trust acknowledges its overall responsibility in ensuring that this Policy is effective in its implementation and meets all current regulatory requirements. An annual review of this Policy and associated procedures, and the efficiency with which associated duties have been discharged, will be undertaken so that any deficiencies or weaknesses can be remedied without delay.

10.5 This policy was last reviewed 2 August 2021 and will be reviewed again in the event of any significant changes or by September 2022 at the latest. The school’s most recent safeguarding audit visit took place on 17th March.

11. Key Contacts

11.1

Key Contacts:

Role:	Name/ Details:	Contact:
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Klaire Costello	0151 652 5777 k.costello@birkhs.gdst.net
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Gwen Saccheri	g.saccheri@birkhs.gdst.net
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Juniors & EYFS	Maryanne Ramsbottom	m.ramsbottom@birkhs.gdst.net
EYFS Lead teacher (Safeguarding)	Cath Smith	c.smith@birkhs.gdst.net
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding / Child Protection	Peter Barlow	p.barlow@birkhs.gdst.net
Chair of Governors	Kathy Anstey	k.anstey@birkhs.gdst.net

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Anne King	0151 666 4442/5525 anneking1@wirral.gov.uk and kerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk
Head of Service Quality & Safeguarding Children	Joe Banham	0151 666 4371
Prevent Co-ordinator	Alison Burnett	Alison.Burnett@Liverpool.gov.uk 07394559106 Alison.Burnett@liverpool.gov.uk
Prevent Team Merseyside Police	Prevent Team	0151 777 8125
Director of Children's Services	Simone White	0151 606 2000
Integrated Front Door	Mon-Fri, 9am – 5pm Outside of these hours	Tel: 0151 606 2008 ifd@wirral.gov.uk Tel: 0151 677 6557
Police	In an emergency For non-emergency but possible crime	999 101
NHS Cheshire & Wirral helpline	for URGENT help, including for children and young people	0800 145 6485
Wirral CAMHS		0300 303 3157
NSPCC NSPCC Whistleblowing		help@nspcc.org.uk 0808 800 5000
NSPCC sexual abuse in school helpline		help@nspcc.org.uk 0800 136 663
CEOP (Online safety)		www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
DfE helpline and mailbox	non emergency advice for staff and governors re extremism	020 7340 7264 counterextremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
Family coaches	Free and immediate help for families on Wirral	https://www.wirralfamilycoaches.com/

Safeguarding Helpline for children/YP Wirral	"Do you feel unsafe? Phone the helpline."	0808 196 4147
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11.2 Ofsted

Tel: 0300-123-1231

11.3 Multi-agency contacts

(See table above)

11.4 Girls' Day School Trust Office

Tel:020 7393 6666

Fax:020 7393 6789

David Boyd (GDST Head of Legal and Risk Assurance)

Tel: 020 7393 6649

d.boyd@wes.gdst.net