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Reading School

Child Protection Policy

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Child Protection Policy

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Responsibilities

Job title	Responsible for;
Deputy Headteacher	Policy Owner
Headteacher	Policy Overview
EXPC	Committee Responsible

Policies Linked

Policy name
Whistleblowing policy
Behaviour policy
Safeguarding Staff Recruitment Policy
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
Attendance Policy
Low level concerns
Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers
SEND policy
Online safety policy
Attendance policy
Staff code of conduct

Child Protection Policy

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Aims

Child Protection Policy

The aim of this Policy is to ensure that the school safeguards and promotes the welfare of children effectively, in accordance with the duties arising from Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, and guidance issued by the Secretary of State. For instance, Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

Statement of Intent

Reading School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is essential that everybody working at Reading School understands their statutory responsibilities. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to focusing on what is in the best interests of the child. We want to prevent our day students and our boarders from maltreatment, provide safe and effective care and enable them to thrive and flourish.

The Headmaster and Governors of Reading School are aware of their responsibility for appointing appropriate teaching and associate staff, ensuring that all staff have commitment, capability and qualifications for the post and are proper and fit persons to be in charge of children and young people.

To assist in this the school adheres to the guidelines outlined in the school's Child Protection Policy, the recommendations of the Working Together to SafeguardChildrenand Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026 All staff and governors should be aware of:

- This child protection policy and procedures to deal with per on peer abuse
- Behaviour policy which should include measures to prevent bullying including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Staff code of conduct
- Safeguarding response to children who go missing in education
- Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead, including the identity of the DSL and deputies.

We believe that all students, regardless of age, special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief and sexual orientation have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse. This policy will operate in conjunction with other related policies and procedures, such as whole school policies on Anti- Bullying and Equal Opportunities.

Our approach to child protection is based on, and reflects the current principles recognised in UK legislation, including those around maintaining confidentiality and reporting concerns about students likely to suffer significant harm to the child protection agencies. We encourage the students in our care, both day and boarding, to raise any concerns that they might have and ensure that these are taken seriously so there is a confidence amongst the school community to report all level of concerns. Staff should always share any concerns they have about a child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, it should be remembered 'that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful'. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and should always pass concerns to the DSL.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents, child protection agencies and diverse communities, to continuously develop and improve the safeguarding culture within our school. Our robust approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our students aims to help keep students safe and importantly equip them to tackle the challenges and opportunities of daily life with renewed confidence and vigour. Central to this is the

relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum, tutor time curriculum and chapel services.

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training including online safety. We are committed to providing updates and provide them with relevant knowledge and skills. All staff are committed to a culture of safeguarding that seeks to protect students, staff and volunteers so that they feel a sense of belonging and wellbeing. A key aspect is that all staff understand what sexual violence and sexual harassment might look like so they know how to respond to all levels of incidents so there is clarity of what is acceptable in particular with child-on-child abuse. This also includes ensuring that safeguarding is considered a key element in all our practices and protocols for online safety, including in a remote learning/continuous learning environment and working from home. It is our shared responsibility and our shared commitment to promote the safety and welfare of all who study in and work for Reading School.

Crucially, it is our shared responsibility and our shared commitment to promote the safety and welfare of all who study in and work for Reading School. This collection of policies, statements and procedures demonstrate our commitment to nurturing a safeguarding culture as part of our ethos of providing an environment that puts people first and facilitates healthy high performance and relationships based on respect.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026 and Working together to safeguard children 2026 and the Governance Handbook. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners (LSP)(the local authority, the integrated care board for the area, and the chief officer of police for the area).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what „regulated activity" is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools" duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026

Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- **Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse

- Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Further information is found in the appendices.

Neglect

- Neglect is a form of abuse and is 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.

Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

- (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

Children

- Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA): Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire local authority areas have joined together to form the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership
- An integrated care board (previously known as the clinical commissioning group)for an area within the LA: the Nurse Director at Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area: Head of Protecting Vulnerable People at Thames Valley Police.

Victim

is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and perpetrator(s)

are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are LGBTQ+ children who need a safe space to speak or share
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

Principles

It is a basic right of every child to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being harmed through abuse or neglect.

Reading School recognises its legal and ethical duty to promote the well-being of students at the school, protect them from harm, and take appropriate action where we have concerns. We agree that we have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the students in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities, pastoral care and extended school activities.

The school seeks to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of their responsibility for pastoral care. The school hopes that parents and children will feel free to talk about any concerns and will see school as a safe place if there are any difficulties at home.

As a consequence, we:

- assert that teachers and other members of staff (including volunteers) in the schoolare an integral part of the child safeguarding process
- recognise that abuse and neglect are likely to have significant detrimental impacts on a child's learning, social and emotional well-being, behaviour and attendance
- accept totally that safeguarding children is an appropriate function for all members of staff in the school, and wholly compatible with their primary pedagogic responsibilities
- recognise that safeguarding children in this school is a responsibility for all staffincluding volunteers, and the Governing body
- will ensure through training and supervision that all staff and volunteers in the school are alert to the possibility that a child is at risk of suffering harm, and know how to report concerns or suspicions
- will designate a senior member of staff with knowledge and skills in recognising and acting on child protection concerns, who will act as a source of expertise and advice, and is responsible for co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies
- will ensure that all members of staff and volunteers who have suspicion that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, refer such concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will refer on to Children's Services in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) guidance, policies and procedures
- safeguard the welfare of children whilst in the school, through positive measures to address bullying, especially where this is aggravated by sexual or racial factors, disability or special educational needs
- will ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the child protection procedures established by the LSPs and, where appropriate, the Local Authority, and act on any guidance or advice given by them, which can be found at http://proceduresonline.com/berks/
- will ensure through our recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employee
- that all people who work in our school are suitable to work with children
- will act swiftly and make appropriate referrals where an allegation is made that a
- member of staff has committed an offence against a child, harmed a child, or acted in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, or acted in a way that calls into question their suitability for working with children

All members of staff (including volunteers and governors) in Reading School, in whatever capacity, will at all times act pro-actively in child welfare matters. Where any member of staff fails to act in accordance with this policy, this may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter. No special arrangements will be granted to VIPs; the same safeguarding procedures apply.

Safeguarding in School

As well as ensuring that we address child protection concerns, we will also ensure that children who attend the school are kept safe from harm whilst they are in our charge.

To this end, this policy must be seen in light of the school's policies on:

- Bullying; the school will also ensure that bullying is identified and dealt with so that any harm caused by other students can be minimised. We will pay particular attention to sexualised behaviour, or bullying that is homophobic in nature, or where there appear to be links to domestic abuse in the family home.
- Safer recruitment
- Whistleblowing
- Special Educational Needs

- Racist incidents
- Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalism
- Behaviour and the school rules
- Health & Safety
- Physical Intervention
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Medical Needs of Students
- e-Safety
- Attendance policy to include children who are absent from education
- Relationships and Sex Education

Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to co-curricular activities and off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing students for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
    - Healthy and respectful relationships
    - Boundaries and consent
    - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
    - Body confidence and self-esteem
    - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
    - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based abuse such as forced marriage (age of consent for marriage in England is 18) and FGM and how to access support
    - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable

All Staff

All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, must read and understand Part One of KCSIE 2026 and receive appropriate safeguarding training relevant to their role.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour policy, the online safety policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The early help process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime and radicalization.
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection

Designated members of staff (the safeguarding team)

1. The designated senior member of staff (designated person) is a member of the senior leadership team. The DSL for child protection in this school is:

   - Ms Lizzie Ayres, Deputy Headteacher
   layres@reading-school.co.uk

   During term time, the DSL is contactable via email and telephone during school hours. Outside of school hours, they are contactable via safeguarding@reading-school.co.ukor a Teams call.

2. In their absence, these matters will be dealt with by a Deputy DSL:

   - Mr A Lloyd, South House Boarding Housemaster and Head of Sixth Form
   alloyd@reading-school.co.uk
   - Mr D McGall, Head of Pastoral
   dmcgall@reading-school.co.uk
   - Miss A Stratford, Head of Sixth Form Pastoral
   astratford@reading-school.co.uk
   - Mr D Singh, Community Relations Manager
   dsing@reading-school.co.uk

3. The designated person(s) takes lead responsibility to ensure that proper procedures and policies are in place and are followed with regard to child protection and safeguarding issues, including online safety and understanding and monitoring the filtering processes on school devices and networks to keep students safe online. They will also act as a dedicated resource available for other staff, volunteers and governors to draw upon. They will take part in inter-agency meetings or support other staff to do so. They will contribute to the assessment of children and refer suspected cases as appropriate. They will have good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour and other forms of abuse and discrimination. The full responsibilities are set out in the DSL job description.

4. The school will ensure that:

   - All members of staff (including volunteers) will be made aware of who this person is and what their role is.
   - The DSL will liaise with other agencies and build good working relationships with colleagues from these agencies.
   - The DSL (and any deputy) has sufficient capacity to carry out their responsibilities and access to appropriate training and support. Further members of senior staff are also level 3 trained to help support.

5. The DSL is responsible for referring cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Local Authority in according to the procedures established by the LSPs.

6. The designated person is not responsible for dealing with allegations made againstmembers of staff. The Headmaster will lead with these allegations. Lessons will be learned even if allegations are found to be unsubstantiated.

   To be effective they will:

   - Act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the school and be responsible for coordinating action regarding referrals by liaising with Children's Services and other relevant agencies over suspicions that a child may be suffering harm
   - Help promote educational outcomes through sharing information about welfare
   - safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including those with a social worker, experience, with teachers and leadership staff
   - Cascade safeguarding advice and guidance issued by the LSPs and Local Authority
   - Where they have concerns that a referral has not been dealt with in accordance with the LSP‟s procedures, refer back to the Local Authority
   - Ensure each member of staff and volunteers at the school, and regular visitors are aware of and can access readily this policy
   - Ensure that this policy is updated and reviewed every 12 months and work with the designated governor for child protection regarding this
   - Keep detailed accurate secure written records of referrals/concerns, and ensure that these are held in a secure place
   - Ensure parents are aware of the child protection policy in order to alert them to the fact that the school may need to make referrals
   - Where students leave the school roll, ensure any child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, separately from the main file, and addressed to the Designated Person for child protection

- Where a child leaves and the new school is not known, ensure that the Local Authority is alerted so that the child's name can be included on the database for missing students.
- Where a child is subject of a Protection Plan, bring to the attention of the allocated social worker any concerns – including any absence from school, behavioural problems, or any exclusion
- Where a child has a social worker, hold and use this information so that decisionscan be made in the best interest of the child's safety, welfare and educationaloutcomes
- Where a child needs a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (eg. Responding to unauthorised absences where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (eg. Considering the provision of pastoral and / or academic support alongside action by statutory services)
- Ensure that staff understand that all safeguarding concerns should be passed to the designated safeguarding leads except in any cases of suspected FGM, whereby the police should be informed directly

The DSL also has an important role in ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training. They will:

- Have a working knowledge of how LSPs operates and the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these when required
- Attend training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case
- Ensure that any new or key messages are passed to other staff, volunteers and governors
- Make themselves (and any deputies) known to all staff, volunteers and governors (including new starters and supply teachers) and ensure those members of staff have had training in child protection. This should be relevant to their needs to enable them to identify and report any concerns to the designated teacher immediately.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
    - Are informed of our systems that support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
    - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this

Designated Governor

The Designated Governor for Child Protection at this school is;

- Mr B Kenwrick, Chair of Governors

The Governors will ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under inter-agency procedures.

All governors receive training about safeguarding at induction, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities. This is regularly updated.

As the chair of governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

The Governors will ensure that the designated member of staff for child protection is given sufficient time to carry out his or her duties, including accessing training.

The Governors will audit and review safeguarding practices in the school on a regular basis, and no less than annually, to ensure that:

- The school is carrying out its duties to safeguard the welfare of children at the school
- Members of staff and volunteers are aware of current practices in this matter, and that staff receive training where appropriate
- Child protection is integrated with induction procedures for all new members of staff and volunteers
- The school follows the procedures agreed by the LSPs and any supplementary guidance issued by the Local Authority
- Only persons suitable to work with children shall be employed in the school, or work here in a voluntary capacity
- Where safeguarding concerns about a member of staff are substantiated, take appropriate disciplinary action
- The school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness
- There is review of the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discuss with IT staff and service providers about what needs to be done to support the school to meet these standards
- The DSL takes lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place as part of their role
- All staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partner
- Staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training

Virtual Schools Head

Virtual school heads have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of students with a social worker.

They should also identify and engage with key professionals, e.g. DSLs, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), social workers, mental health leads and others.

Recruitment

In order to ensure that children are protected whilst at this school, we will ensure thatourstaff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. In order toachieve this, we will follow the guidance set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

We will ensure that the following checks are satisfactorily completed before a person takes up a position in the school:

- Mandatory DBS Checks for everyone in 'regulated activity'[1]
- Identity checks to establish that applicants are who they claim to be[2]
- Academic qualifications, to ensure that qualifications are genuine
- Professional and character references prior to offering employment
- Satisfy conditions as to health and physical capacity
- Previous employment history will be examined and any gaps accounted for.
- An online search, which the candidate is informed of.

At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures. See our Safeguarding Staff Recruitment Policy for more details.

Volunteers

We understand that some people otherwise unsuitable for working with children may use volunteering to gain access to children; for this reason, any volunteers in the school, in whatever capacity, will be given the same consideration as paid staff.

Where a parent or other volunteer helps on a one-off basis, he/she will only work under the direct supervision of a member of staff, and at no time have one to one contact with children. However, if a parent or other volunteer is to be in school regularly or frequently, we will treat them as if they were paid employees and check them to ensure their suitability to work with children.

Induction & Training

All new members of staff will receive a staff handbook and induction pack, which will give an overview of the organisation and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure, as well as identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality issues. Staff also receive the child protection policy, the behaviour policy and staff code of conduct at induction and copies are circulated every September to all staff. Every new member of staff meets with the DSL and all departments meet for a safeguarding refresher every September.

[1] e.g., through birth certificate, passport, new style driving licence, etc…

[2] e.g., through birth certificate, passport, new style driving licence, etc…

All new staff at the school (including volunteers) undertake safeguarding training prior to commencing employment.

All staff, including volunteers, will be expected to attend training on safeguarding children that will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of child protection effectively. The school will provide this training as through the designated person, or through commissioning training. All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will attend refresher training annually. DSLs update their training every two years.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually. Contractors engaged in regulated activity will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all students

Confidentiality

The school, and all members of staff at the school, will ensure that all data about students is handled in accordance with the requirements of the law, and any national and local guidance.

Any member of staff who has access to sensitive information about a child or the child's family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only disclosed to those people who need to know.

All child protection records will be kept separately from the child's main file; the Designated Person will restrict access to those people who have a role to play in protecting the child.

Child Protection information held electronically will be password protected.

Reading School recognises that:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- 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
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe

- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- The Government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy)
- If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
    - There is no definitive answer, because even if a victim does not consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
    - The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
    - The DSL should consider that:
        - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
        - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
        - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains
- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
    - Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
    - Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
    - Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is frequently at the hands of a person known to the child. There are several types of abuse – mental, physical, sexual and emotional abuse – all of which can form the basis of bullying. What needs to be remembered is that a high percentage of bullies have themselves been abused so that history is repeating itself. Harm can also include the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevantin relation to the impact

on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Some signs of abuse include:

- Unwillingness to come to school.
- Complaining about missing possessions.
- Unexplained bruising or time repeated bruising.
- Easily distressed and frightened.
- Odd drawing and sexually explicit language.
- Damaged or incomplete work.

This is not an exhaustive list and some symptoms are indicative of all the different forms of abuse. See the appendices for more details on the types of abuse.

All staff are expected to be able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and shall be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- Is a young carer
- Is bereaved
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Is suffering from mental ill health
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called ‘honour’-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- Is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education
- Has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Dealing with Concerns

Members of staff and volunteers must not investigate suspicions; if somebody has reason to consider that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, they must always discuss such concerns to the Designated Person, who will refer the matter to the relevant Local Authority.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.** Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

To this end, volunteers and staff will follow the procedures below;

- Upon the receipt of any information from a child, or if any person has suspicions that a child may be at risk of harm, or
- If anyone observes injuries that appear to be non-accidental, or
- where a child or young person makes a direct allegation or implies that they have
- been abused, or
- makes an allegation against a member of staff[3]

Record Keeping

Volunteers and staff must record what they have seen, heard or know accurately at the time the event occurs, and share their concerns with the DSL (or Headmaster if an allegation about a member of staff) and agree action to take. This will be logged on the child's safeguarding record.

We will ensure that all members of staff and employees are familiar with the procedures for keeping a confidential written record of any incidents and with the requirements of the LSP.

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme, etc. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school. If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main student file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or within
- **The first 5 days** of the start of a new term

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

Notifying parents or carers

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision(s)

Procedures for Safeguarding

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue or if abuse is suspected. At all times the best interest of the child will be at the forefront of decisions made. The DSL will listen to the voice of the child and will take into account the child's wishes.

If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

- Dial 999 to call the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger. Anyone can also make a referral but tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly. https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council

If a child makes a disclosure to you

Children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused. Staff should always seek to build positive and understanding relationships with all students. If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset.
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Explain what will happen next and that you have a duty of care to pass this information on.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it.
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. If suspected FGM call the police directly, and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so.

A child is also able to report abuse or disclose information to the DSL / safeguarding team via email: safeguarding@reading-school.co.uk

If you discover that FGM has taken place or a student is at risk of FGM

Whilst we appreciate that we are an all-boys' school, we regularly have female visitors on site for different activities. It is important that all staff recognise their statutory duty in these instances.

The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences.

It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Any teacher who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **student under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally, by making a report orally via 101 (unless there is risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, in which case dial 999). This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have good reason not to, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and inform them of the police crime reference number and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **student under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a student is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine students.

Any member of staff who suspects a student is at risk of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL.

If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Early help

If early help may be necessary, this should be accessed via Children's Social Care in the area where the child lives. In Reading this is the Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so. If you make a referral directly, you must tell the DSL as soon as possible. However, we encourage staff to make referrals via the DSL unless the member of staff does not trust the DSL or deputies.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

Escalation procedures can be found in the BWSCP Child Protection Procedures

If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to: Channel

or the local authority children's social care team, or the police.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a student or email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk.

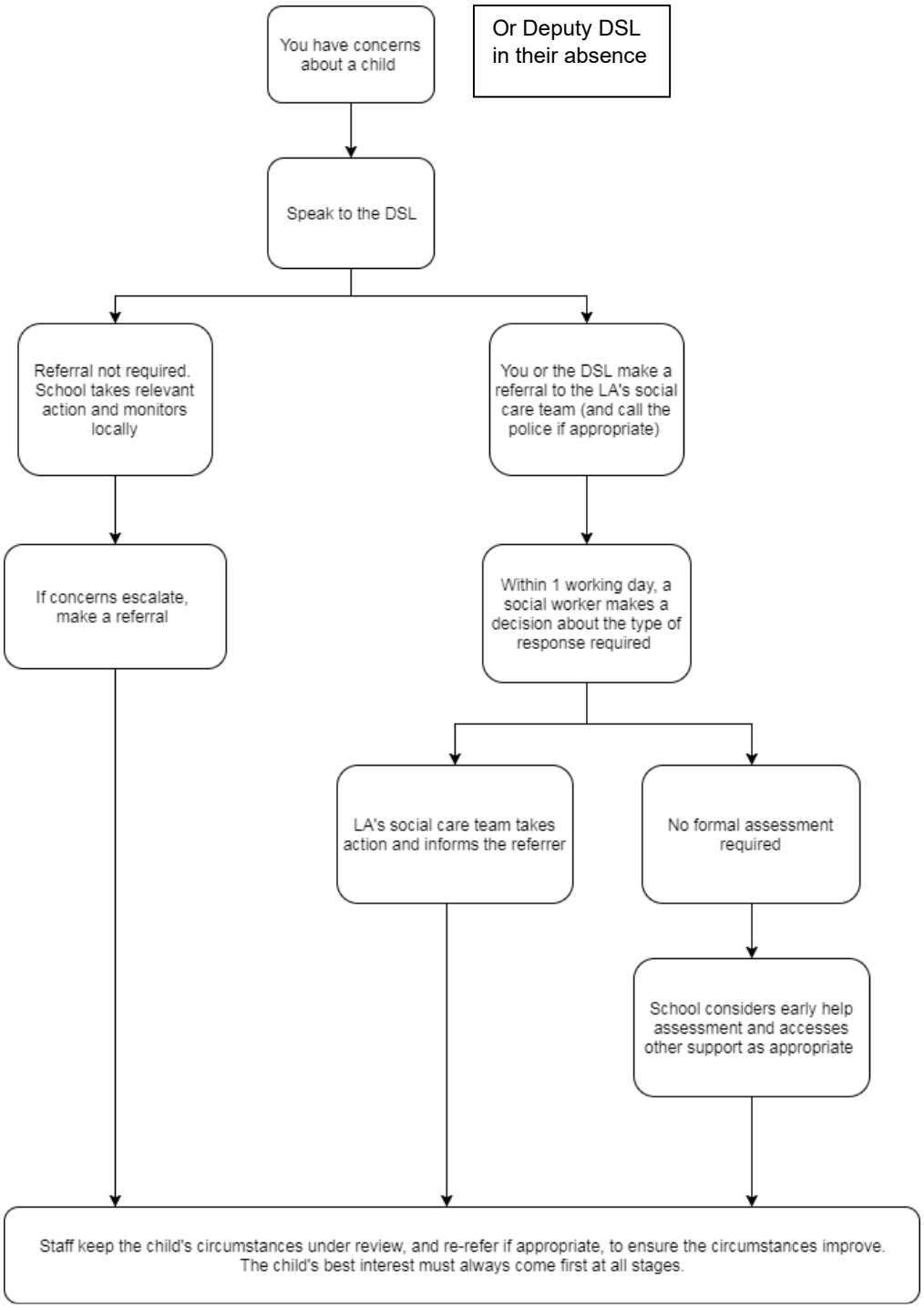
In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

If you have a concern about mental health

- 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.
- Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one (although staff are not expected to or are trained to diagnose mental health conditions).
- If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action to support and refer the child to necessary authorities.
- If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.
- Refer to the Department for Education guidance on mental health andbehaviour in schools for more information.

Procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)(Note –if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action.)



Concerns

About a staff member or volunteer

If you have concerns about a member of staff or volunteer, or an allegation is made about a member of staff or volunteer posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the Headteacher. If the concerns/allegations are about the Headteacher, speak to the Chair of Governors.

Where you believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) to the headteacher, report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, follow our school safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

If the school receives an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, Reading School follows this safeguarding policy and procedures and will inform the local authority designated officer (LADO), as with any safeguarding allegation.

Raising Concerns About Safeguarding Practices

If you have a concern about how a safeguarding issue is dealt with by:

- The DSL, speak to the Headmaster.
- The Headmaster, speak to the Chair of Governors.
- The Chair of Governors, refer to the local authority.

Specific Safeguarding Issues

Behaviour

Because of the link between abuse and some types of poor behaviour, where a student's behaviour is violent, bizarre or dangerous, including acts of vandalism or fire setting, staff will be alert to the possibility that this is an indicator of abuse.

Contextual Safeguarding

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school environments. All staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms that may include sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence. Reading School assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the safety and wellbeing of students.

Mental Health

Staff recognize that mental health problems can sometimes be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should recognise that children experiencing mental health difficulties may benefit from early help even where there is no immediate safeguarding concern. Whilst staff may notice indicators of mental health issues, only an appropriately trained professional will attempt to make a diagnosis. Staff will also take into account any indication of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the potential these have for a lasting impact on mental health. Staff will report concerns to the DSL or Mental Health Lead. Further information is found in Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Alternative Provision

The school remains responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students placed in alternative provision. Appropriate safeguarding checks, information sharing and ongoing monitoring arrangements will be established with the provider.

Safeguarding Separation Arrangements (Section 19 Education Act 1996)

Reading School recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to consider a temporary safeguarding separation of a student in order to protect the welfare and safety of one or more students whilst assessments, investigations, multi-agency discussions or risk management processes are undertaken.

Such arrangements are not disciplinary sanctions and do not imply guilt, wrongdoing or responsibility for any alleged behaviour. Decisions will always be made on the basis of safeguarding risk, proportionality and the best interests of all children involved.

Where a student is unable to attend their usual school provision because attendance may place themselves or others at risk of harm, the school may make alternative educational arrangements under its duties pursuant to **Section 19 of the Education Act 1996**, which requires suitable education to be provided for children who cannot attend school because of illness, exclusion or "otherwise".

The school recognises that the term "otherwise" may include circumstances where a temporary safeguarding separation is necessary to manage an identified risk to children whilst alternative arrangements are considered, risk assessments are reviewed, or investigations are ongoing.

Principles

Any safeguarding separation will:

- Be used only where necessary and proportionate.
- Follow an evidence-based risk assessment.
- Be authorised by the Headteacher or designated senior leader.
- Be reviewed regularly.
- Be supported by suitable educational provision.
- Be implemented in a manner that protects the welfare, dignity and educational progress of all children involved.
- Take account of the wishes, feelings and lived experiences of the child.

- Be informed by advice from relevant agencies where appropriate.

Decision-Making

Prior to implementing a safeguarding separation, the school will consider:

- The nature and severity of the safeguarding concern.
- Risks to victims, alleged victims, witnesses and other students.
- Concerns relating to child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, physical violence, coercive behaviour, harmful sexual behaviour or other safeguarding risks.
- Advice from children's social care, police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), health professionals or other relevant agencies.
- Whether reasonable adjustments are required under the Equality Act 2010.
- The educational impact upon any student affected.

The rationale for any decision will be clearly recorded.

Alternative Educational Provision

Where a student is subject to a safeguarding separation, the school will ensure that suitable education continues to be provided, taking account of the student's:

- Age.
- Ability and aptitude.
- Special educational needs and disabilities.
- Examination requirements.
- Welfare needs.

Provision may include:

- Alternative timetabling.
- Remote learning.
- Alternative Provision placements.
- Off-site education commissioned by the school.
- A combination of different educational arrangements.

Review Arrangements

Any safeguarding separation will be reviewed at appropriate intervals.

Reviews will consider:

- Updated risk assessments.
- Multi-agency advice.
- The welfare of all students involved.
- Educational progress and engagement.

- Whether the separation remains necessary and proportionate.

The school will seek to reintegrate students into their usual educational provision as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Recording and Oversight

The DSL will maintain records of:

- The safeguarding concerns which led to the separation.
- Risk assessments completed.
- Decisions made and their rationale.
- Educational arrangements provided.
- Review meetings and outcomes.
- Multi-agency involvement.

The Governing Body will receive anonymised information through safeguarding reports to provide assurance that such arrangements are being used appropriately, proportionately and in accordance with statutory responsibilities.

SEN

We recognise that students with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- Students being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other students
- The potential for students with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so

We offer extra pastoral support for these students. Any abuse involving students with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL (or deputy) and the SENCO. We will be alert to the extra vulnerabilities these students may face due to the residential nature of our setting.

Students with a social worker

Students may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a student has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the student's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

Looked-after and previously looked-after children

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements

The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads

Our appointed a designated teacher is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how student premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

The school recognises that children living in kinship care arrangements may experience vulnerabilities similar to children in care. The DSL and pastoral teams will consider any additional support that may be required and work with the Virtual School where appropriate.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services)

- psychological, emotional or other abuse

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives. The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their homelife where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Domestic abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional. Exposure through seeing, hearing or experiencing can have long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and their future relationships. Reading School work closely with the police and the local authority to support children in these circumstances. The National Domestic Abuse Helpline are ready to listen 08082000247.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

When the school receives information via Operation Encompass, we log the notification on the child's safeguarding record and liaise with staff involved in their care, as appropriate to monitor the child and provide tailored support. Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse via 0204 513 9990.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (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. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE training is included in the staff training schedule, and is also covered as part of the PSHE programme. Indicators of child sexual abuse are included in the appendices.

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines activity. County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery and missing persons. 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”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. 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.

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

Prejudice-Based Harm

The school recognises that prejudice-based harm, including racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, misogyny, disability discrimination, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other forms of discriminatory abuse can be safeguarding concerns. Such incidents may indicate wider vulnerabilities and will be recorded, monitored and addressed through both safeguarding and behavioural procedures where appropriate. Staff should report concerns to the DSL.

Child on Child Allegations

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. Even when there are no reported cases, such abuse may still be taking place and simply not reported. We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Particular information governing sexting is outlined below, this reflects The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) guidance.

Students are reminded through Chapel, PSHE, tutor time and assemblies that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up.” Age-appropriate understanding of intra-familial harms are also highlighted to students via these forums. All forms of “initiation” are prohibited and any participation will be investigated.

Students are encouraged to raise any concerns with their tutor or with a member of staff who they trust or feel supported by, for example in the SEND team, Heads of House, the School Matron, the safeguarding team or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Students are also advised that the law is in place to protect them, and not to criminalise them.

Procedures to minimise the risk of child on child abuse include student induction, daily contact with Form tutors, oversight of behavioural issues by the Heads of House and the Welfare Board and content covered in PSHCE. Staff are on duty during Break and Lunch times to monitor peer interactions. Regular guidance is offered to parents and students regarding e-safety. Staff are reminded to challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images, and are trained to understand that a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and is therefore a safeguarding concern.

Allegations of child on child abuse will be investigated by a Head of House. As with all investigations, these statements will be passed directly to members of the SLT and the DSL. Once an allegation is made, Tutors and Heads of House will ensure that victims of alleged child on child abuse are supported through a regular one to one conversation, and that their allegation is immediately recorded on safeguarding records. Where necessary the Welfare Board or the Designated Safeguarding Leads will involve other agencies and remain committed to understanding the importance of intra-familial harms and therefore involving other agencies in order to support siblings.

Most cases of students hurting other students will be dealt with as above, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put students in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting)

If a student makes an allegation of abuse against another student:

You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it

The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence

The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed

The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images

- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure students are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment

Ensure staff are trained to understand:

- How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
- That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
- That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
    - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
    - A friend may make a report
    - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
    - A child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
- That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
- That a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
- That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn't (in itself)

prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care to determine this

There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

Sexting (sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately. Reading School follows UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes and Child sexual abuse material generated by artificial intelligence (June 2025) (NCA/CEOP/IWF).

You must not:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a student to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL
- Delete the imagery or ask the student to delete it
- Ask the student(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the student(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the student(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment should include the time and location of the incident in order to create a risk assessment to make the location safer.

Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to student(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the students involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual

- Whether to contact parents or carers of the students involved (in most cases parents should be involved)
- If there are any siblings to consider who may require support
- A risk assessment for any areas of school site in order to make them safer

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What the DSL knows about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any student in the imagery is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a student is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the Headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care.

Further review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review.

They will hold interviews with the students involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Informing parents

The DSL will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process,unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the student at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through the policy school liaison officer, or via online reporting, or call 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Students are taught about the issues surrounding sexting as part of our PSHEeducation and computing programmes.

Recording Incidents

All incidents and the decisions responding to them will be recorded as per our safeguarding records.

Curriculum coverage

Students are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudesas part of our PSHE/RSHE and wider character education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation
- Students also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:
- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

This policy on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudesis also shared with students so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

Teaching follows best practice in delivering safe and effective education, including:

- Putting safeguarding first
- Approaching from the perspective of the child
- Promoting dialogue and understanding
- Empowering and enabling children and young people
- Never frightening or scare-mongering
- Challenging victim-blaming attitudes

Online Safety

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, Reading School aims to:

Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of students, staff, volunteers and governors

Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology

Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community

Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

The DSL maintains overall responsibility for online safety, including understandingthe filtering and monitoring processes in place.

Filtering and Monitoring

Filtering refers to the technology preventing access to harmful or inappropriate content,whilst monitoring refers to the practical steps staff take to ensure harmful or inappropriate access is not made. Monitoring can include:

- Physical monitoring

- Live software monitoring
- Monitoring user logs
- Monitoring individual devices

We make sure that any school devices used away from the school site are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures. Each year our designated safeguarding lead, along with our IT team and a governor, review our filtering and monitoring procedures to ensure that they effectively prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content. They also ensure that the systems we have in place to report any difficulties with the system are understood by all staff and reports are effectively managed. All our staff undertake training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring, and know how to share their concerns. All our staff have taken part in annual cybersecurity training.

The 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories may place children at risk of exploitation, radicalisation or other harms.

Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as child to child, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography and/or‘pseudo-images, which are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video’), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will:

- Educate students about online safety as part of our curriculum. Teaching follows best practice in delivering safe and effective PSHE education that is age-appropriate, whilst being sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of all groups of children. For example:
- The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
- Keeping personal information private
- How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
- How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring students are encouraged to do so, including where they’re a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents’ evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety

- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras
- Make all students, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a student is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, students and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search students' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly

Assessing adult-involved nude and semi-nude sharing incidents

This section is based on annex A of the UK Council of Internet Safety's advice for education settings.

All adult-involved nude and semi-nude image sharing incidents are child sexual abuse offences and must immediately be referred to police/social care. However, as adult-involved incidents can present as child-on-child nude/semi-nude sharing, it may be difficult to initially assess adult involvement. There are two types of common adult-involved incidents: sexually motivated incidents and financially motivated incidents.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

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

We recognise that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard students. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose students to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

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

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

The school will have regard to current DfE guidance on the use of generative artificial intelligence in education and will consider safeguarding risks as part of any implementation of new AI technologies.

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For full details about our school's policies in these areas, please refer to our online safety policy and mobile phone policies which can be found on our website

Preventing Radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our students to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period. Staff will be alert to changes in students' behaviour.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

Indicators of radicalisation are included in the appendices.

If staff are concerned about a student they should discuss their concerns with the DSL. Staff should always take action if they are worried.

Gay, Bisexual, Gender Questioning

We recognise that students who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children.

We also recognise that LGBTQ+ children are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

When families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning students, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children.

When supporting a gender questioning student, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a student may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a significant risk of harm to the student). We will also include any clinical advice

that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. We therefore aim to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where students can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Children who are absent from education

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children. We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always follow up with parents/carers when students are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change. In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) the school has:

- Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for students who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
- Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take students off-roll when they:
    - leave school to be home educated
    - move away from the school's location
    - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
    - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards);
    - are permanently excluded

We will ensure that students who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority. When a student leaves the school, we will record the name of the student's new school and their expected start date.

See our Attendance Policy for more details.

Privately Fostered Children

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins. Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence. Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery. Schools have a

mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility. School staff should notify the designated safeguarding lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements. On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

Photographing Children

We understand that parents like to take photos of or video record their children in the school play, or at sports day, or school presentations. This is a normal part of family life, and we will not discourage parents from celebrating their child's successes. However, if there are Health and Safety issues associated with this - i.e. the use of a flash when taking photos could distract or dazzle the child, and cause them to have an accident, we will encourage parents to use film or settings on their camera that do not require flash.

We will not allow others to photograph or film a student during a school activity without the parent's permission.

We will not allow images of students to be used on school websites, publicity, or pressreleases, without express permission from the parent.

The school cannot however be held accountable for photographs or video footage taken by parents or members of the public at school functions.

Conduct of Staff

The school has a duty to ensure that professional behaviour applies to relationships between staff and children, and that all members of staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries.

At all times, members of staff are required to work in a professional way with children. All staff should be aware of the dangers inherent in:

- working alone with a child
- physical interventions
- cultural and gender stereotyping
- dealing with sensitive information
- giving to and receiving gifts from children and parents
- contacting children through private telephones (including texting), e-mail, MSN, orsocial networking websites
- disclosing personal details inappropriately
- meeting students outside school hours or school duties

If any member of staff has reasonable suspicion that a child is suffering harm, and fails to act in accordance with this Policy and the LSPs procedures, we will view this as misconduct and take appropriate action.

Where any member of staff in the school believes that the Headmaster is failing to act in accordance with this Policy, they should bring it to the attention of the Chair of Governors.

Physical Contact & Restraint

Members of staff may have to make physical interventions with students; generally, this should be avoided unless

- It is necessary to protect the child, or another person, from immediate danger, or
- Where the member of staff has received suitable training.

Any such incident should be written up in full and details passed to the Headmaster or DSL.

Before and After School Activities

Where the Governing Body transfers control of use of school premises to bodies (such as sports clubs) to provide out of school hours activities, we will ensure that these bodies have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies.

Contracted Services

Where the Governing Body contracts its services to outside providers, we will ensure that these providers have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the provider.

Checking the Identity of Visitors

All visitors will be required to sign in at Reception, to receive a red lanyard, whereby they must indicate that they have read and understood our safeguarding for visitors leaflet. Visitors must verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit. If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification. Visitors are expected to sign the visitors book and wear a visitor's badge. Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an enhanced DBS check with barred list information has been carried out

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views. Content to be delivered by visitors will be checked for age-appropriateness.

Allegations

Whistle-Blowing

A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- an legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above has been concealed.

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government, the number is 0808 800 5000.

Please see the separate policy for details RS Whistle Blowing Policy

Allegations Against Members of Staff

If anyone makes an allegation that any member of staff (including any volunteer, supply teacher, any contracted staff or Governor) may have:

- Committed an offence against a child
- Placed a child at risk of significant harm
- Behaved in a way that calls into question their suitability to work with children

the allegation will be dealt with in accordance with national guidance and agreements, as implemented locally by the LSPs. All low level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers. Reading School will consult with the LADO if unsure whether low-level concerns shared about a member of staff meet the harm threshold. Please see the low level concerns policy.

The Headmaster will handle such allegations, unless the allegation is against theHeadmaster, when the Chair of Governors will handle the school's response.

The Headmaster (or Chair of Governors) will report without delay to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): laddo@brighterfuturesforchildren.orgtel: 0118 9373555 or 07841 253871.

See our policy on Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers for more information.

Low-level concerns: Definition

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a "nagging doubt", that a person working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the "Guidance for safer working practice" (May 2019), including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to make a referral to the LADO
- Staff do not need to be able to determine in each case whether their concern is a low-level concern, or if it is in fact serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO, or meets the threshold of an allegation. Once staff share what they believe to be a low-level concern, that determination should be made by the Safeguarding Lead or Headmaster.

Low-level concerns: Reporting

Where a low-level concern has been identified this will be reported as soon as possible to the Headmaster. However, it is never too late to share a low-level concern if this has not already happened. Where the Headmaster is not available, the information will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Low-level concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be reported to the Headmaster and those about the Headmaster of School will be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Where the low-level concern has been reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they will inform the Headmaster of the School as soon as possible.

Low-level concerns: Recording concerns

A summary of the low-level concern should be written down, signed, timed, dated and shared by the person bringing the information forward.

Where concerns are reported verbally to the Headmaster a record of the conversation will be made by the Headmaster which will be signed, timed, and dated.

Low-level concerns: Responding to

Where a low-level concern has been raised this will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The Headmaster will:

- Speak to the person reporting the concern to gather all the relevant information
- Speak to the individual about the concern raised to ascertain their response, unless advised not to do so by the LADO or Police (HR advice may also need to be taken).
- Where necessary further investigation will be carried out to gather all relevant information. This may involve speaking to any potential witnesses.
- The information reported and gathered will then be reviewed to determine whether the behaviour:

- is consistent with the "Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings" (May 2019): no further action will be required,
- constitutes a low-level concern: no further action is required, or additional training/guidance/support may be required to rectify the behaviour via normal day to day management processes. The employee should understand that failure to improve or a repeat of the behaviour may lead to further action being taken, e.g. either via the Performance Management Policy or Disciplinary Policy.
- is serious enough to consult with or refer to the LADO: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the school's Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.
- when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been raised about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO or Police: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the school's Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.
- Records will be made of, i) all internal conversations including any relevant witnesses, ii) all external conversations eg with the LADO iii) the decision and the rationale for it, iv) any action taken

Low-level concerns: Can the reporting person remain anonymous?

The person bringing forward the concern will be named in the written record. Where they request to remain anonymous this will be respected as far as possible. However, there may be circumstances where this is not possible e.g. where a fair disciplinary investigation is needed or where a later criminal investigation is required.

Low-level concerns: Should staff report concerns about themselves (i.e. self-report)?

It may be the case that a person finds themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or might appear compromising to others; or they may have behaved in a manner which on reflection they consider falls below the standard set out in the "Guidance for safer working practice". In these circumstances they should self-report. This will enable a potentially difficult situation to be addressed at an early opportunity if necessary.

Low-level concerns: Where behaviour is consistent with the "Guidance for safer working practice" (May 2019)

Feedback will be given to both parties to explain why the behaviour was consistent with the "Guidance for safer working practice".

Low-level concerns: Should the file be reviewed?

The records will be reviewed periodically, and whenever a new low-level concern is added, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and referred to the LADO if required. A record of these reviews will be retained.

Low-level concerns: References

Low-level concerns will not be included in references unless a low-level concern, or group of concerns, has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated.

Low-level concerns: What is the role of the Governing Body?

The headmaster will regularly inform the Governing Body about the implementation of the low-level concerns policy including any evidence of its effectiveness e.g. with relevant data. The Safeguarding Governor may also review an anonymised sample to ensure that these concerns have been handled appropriately.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation and day to day working of this policy will be monitored by the Designated Person, who will liaise with the Headmaster and Governors and bring to their attention any concerns that the Policy is not being adhered to, or any changes required arising from changes to statutory guidance or LSPs procedures

Complaints against staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff.

The Headmaster will report to the Governing Body annually:

- Numbers of child protection concerns brought to her/his attention by staff at the school
- Number of such concerns that were reported to the Local Authority, and response
- Number of requests for information by Local Authority and CAFCASS Social Workers
- Attendances at Child Protection Conferences and Core Group Meetings
- Number of staff (including volunteers) who have received safeguarding training within the last year and the number who are due to receive training within the coming year.

The Headmaster will report to the Governing Body annually:

- Incidence of bullying
- Racist Incidents
- Complaints by parents about bullying and racist incidents
- Numbers of allegations against any member of staff
- Number of such concerns that were reported to the Local Authority DesignatedOfficer, and response
- Any concerns raised by the School Council that are relevant to this Policy

Dissemination

The Designated Person will ensure that a copy of this Policy will be made available to all new members of staff and volunteers.

Child Protection Policy

Parents' attention will be drawn to the Policy through the normal school communication channels.

The name of the DSL (and any deputy) will be displayed around the school.

Useful Links

Berkshire Child Protection Procedures: http://proceduresonline.com/berks/

Working Together to Safeguard Children: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children

Keeping Children Safe in Education: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keepingchildren-safe-in-education

Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Useful Telephone Numbers

Children's Action Teams: 0118 937 6545

Children's Social Care, Access and Assessment: 0118 955 3641

Pan Berkshire Out of Hours Emergency Team: 01344 786543

Important Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Ms Lizzie Ayres layres@reading-school.co.uk01189015600

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Mr Alun Lloydalloyd@reading-school.co.uk

Mr Dave McGall dmcgall@reading-school.co.uk

Mr Dal Singh dsingh@reading-school.co.uk

Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site

Dr Chris Evans cevans@reading-school.co.uk

Mr Tom Evanstevans@reading-school.co.uk

Mr Greg Fairchild gfairchild@reading-school.co.uk

Headteacher

Dr Chris Evans **cevans@reading-school.co.uk**

Chair of Governors

Mr Bob Kenwrick bkenwrick@reading-school.co.uk

Key Contacts Within the Local Authority

Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Procedures: http://berks.proceduresonline.com/

Children's Single Point of Access Duty Social worker

Brighter Futures for Children,

Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU

0118 937 3641

Emergency Duty Team (outside of office hours)

Tel: 01344 786543

cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Prevent Officer Thames Valley Police

Prevent Officer Reading Police Station

Castle Street Reading RG1 7TH

07788 307 178

Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer

Brighter Futures for Children,

laddo@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU

07841 253871 ,0118 937 3555

Virtual School Headteacher - CLA

Clare Houlton

Brighter Futures for Children, The Avenue Centre,

Tilehurst, Reading

07803 760667, 0118 937 3504

Clare.houlton@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Virtual School Headteacher – Student and School Support

Appendices

Signs of abuse

Indicators of abuse and neglect See: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional 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 by another child or children. 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 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 the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a 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 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 from 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. Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 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 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 and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it. 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 substanceabuse. 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include: • Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation; • Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks; • Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work; • Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late; • Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls; • Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;• Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections; • Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault; • Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups; • Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers); • Frequenting areas known for sex work; • Concerning use of internet or other social media; • Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and • Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being. Potential vulnerabilities include: Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues. • Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse; • Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example); • Recent bereavement or loss; • Social isolation or social difficulties; • Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality; • Economic vulnerability; • Homelessness or insecure accommodation status; • Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited; • Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work; • Having a physical or learning disability;• Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and • Sexual identity. More information can be found in: Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

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.

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include: • showing sympathy for extremist causes • glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures • making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school • evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature • advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups • out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.) • secretive behaviour• online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles • intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality • graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes • attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others • verbalising anti-Western or anti British views • advocating violence towards others