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**Policy Number: E5**

# **Reading School**

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Responsibilities**

**Policy Owner:** Ashley Robson,  
Headteacher

**Governors Committee** EXPC Committee

### **Audit Control**

**Policy created:** 17/05/2021

**Date of next review** 01/09/2024

**Version:** 1.0

**Statutory policy** Yes

# Child Protection Policy

## Document Control and Approval

### Version Control

Version	Author	Summary of Changes	Reviewed By	Date
1.0	Dominic Taylor	Policy created		17/05/2021
	Lizzie Ayres	Updated according to KCSIE 2022		01/09/2022
	Lizzie Ayres	Updated according to KCSIE 2023		1/09/2023
	Lizzie Ayres	Updated according to external review		25/9/23
		Updated version approved by EXPC Cttee		02/10/2023

### Responsibilities

Job title	Responsible for;
Headteacher	Policy Owner
Chief Operating Officer	Policy Overview
EXPC	Committee Responsible

### Policies Linked

Policy name	File location
Whistleblowing policy	
Behaviour policy	
Safeguarding Staff Recruitment Policy	
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy	
Attendance Policy	
Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers	

### Forms Linked

Form name	Form location

### Staff that need to sign

Staff Group	Form location



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# Child Protection Policy

## Aims

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 (2022).

## 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 Safeguard Children](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021](#). All staff and governors should be aware of:

- [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 behaviour policy/code of conduct](#)
- Safeguarding response to children who go missing in education and
- 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.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents, students, 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.



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All staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training including online safety. We are committed to updating and providing 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 and with 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 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners (LSP).

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

## Definitions



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## Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:

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

## 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. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

## Sexting

- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) is the sharing of sexual imagery (photos or videos) by children

## 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. Many of our students are based out of this area and the school has connections and is ready to work with other local areas such as Hampshire and Oxfordshire.

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.

## 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





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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

## 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. Reading School has 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

- recognise that safeguarding children in this school is a responsibility for all staff,
- assert that teachers and other members of staff (including volunteers) in the school are 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.
- including volunteers, and the Governing body;



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- 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. They 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. These can be found at <http://proceduresonline.com/berks/> ;
- will ensure through our recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees;
- 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. The same safeguarding procedures apply.

## 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



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- 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 violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
  - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable

### All Staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping children safe in education 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk), and review this guidance at least annually.

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 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



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- 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 trans (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, Assistant Headteacher  
[layres@reading-school.co.uk](mailto: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.uk](mailto:safeguarding@reading-school.co.uk) or 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](mailto:alloyd@reading-school.co.uk)
- Mr D McGall, Head of Pastoral  
[dmcgall@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:dmcgall@reading-school.co.uk)
- Miss A Stratford, Head of Sixth Form Pastoral  
[astratford@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:astratford@reading-school.co.uk)
- Mr D Singh, Community Relations Manager  
[dsing@reading-school.co.uk](mailto: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:



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- 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 against members 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, or Child in Need plan, or is involved with a family worker, bring to the attention of the allocated social worker any concerns – including any absence from school, behavioural problems, or any exclusion.



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- Where a child has a social worker, hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interest of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.
- 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.

### Designated Governor

The Designated Governor for Child Protection at this school is;

- Mr B Kenwick, 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:



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- 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 on a regular basis
- 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

## Recruitment

In order to ensure that children are protected whilst at this school, we will ensure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. In order to achieve 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“<sup>1</sup>
- Identity checks to establish that applicants are who they claim to be<sup>2</sup>
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup>e.g., through birth certificate, passport, new style driving licence, etc...

<sup>2</sup>e.g., through birth certificate, passport, new style driving licence, etc...



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- 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.

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. Records of training will be held.

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.

## 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





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significant harm, they must always discuss such concerns to the Designated Person, who will review and refer the matter as appropriate to the relevant Local Authority.

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<sup>3</sup>

they 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.

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.

## Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is frequently at the hands of a person known to the child. There are several types of abuse – physical, sexual, emotional and neglect – 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.

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. Appendix 1 has more details on the types of abuse.

## 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**

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<sup>3</sup> Allegation that the member of staff has harmed a child, committed an offence against a child, or behaved in a way that questions their suitability to work with children.



## Child Protection Policy

- 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. Or offer the child the opportunity to write their own account.
- 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](mailto:safeguarding@reading-school.co.uk)

### If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil 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 and regularly work closely with other local schools. 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 **pupil under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally. 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 involve children's social care as appropriate.



## Child Protection Policy

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

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil 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 pupil 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 Deputy DSL team, or 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



## Child Protection Policy

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.

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 pupil or email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk).

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

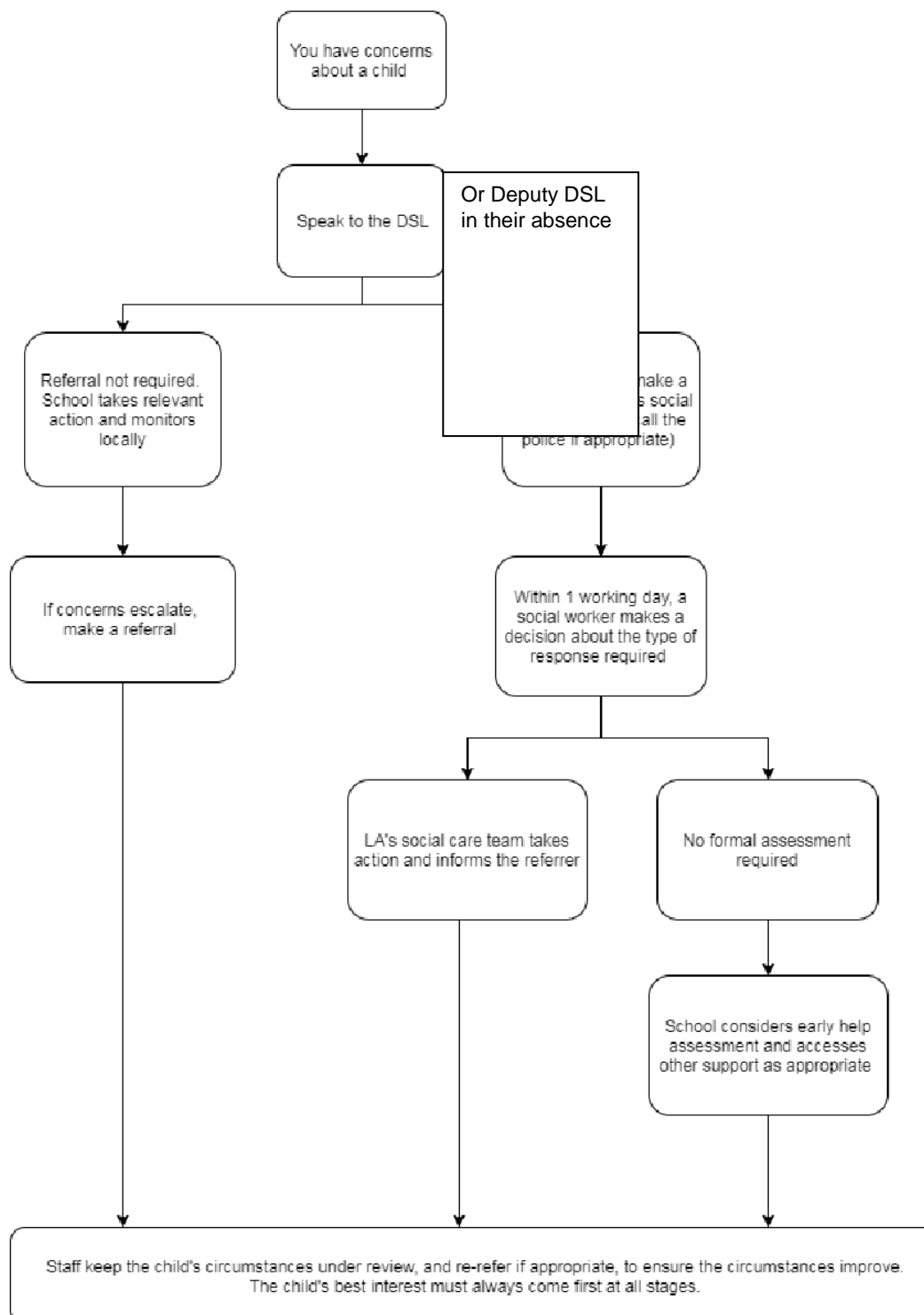
- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related



# Child Protection Policy

**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.)



# Child Protection Policy

## 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 pupil'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.

### 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. 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

### Domestic Abuse

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.

### 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



## Child Protection Policy

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.

### 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 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.

### 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”.

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 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 pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and is therefore a safeguarding concern.



## Child Protection Policy

Allegations of child on child abuse will be investigated by a Head of House or Head of Year. As with all investigations, these statements will be passed directly to members of the SLT. 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 the 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 pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:**

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

### **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.

Reading School has 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.





# Child Protection Policy

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.

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

## Sexting

### 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.

You must not:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil 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 pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(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 pupil(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 pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

### 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 pupil(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



# Child Protection Policy

- 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)

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 pupil in the imagery is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil 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 will follow appropriate safeguarding processes, such as [when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf \(npscc.police.uk\)](https://www.npscc.police.uk/when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf).

## 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 pupil 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 pupil 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 Reading School's PSHE education and computing programmes.



# Child Protection Policy

## 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, our 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 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

**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), 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. 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



## Child Protection Policy

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 pupil 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 regular reviews 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

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

### 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.



# Child Protection Policy

- 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

## 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 pupil during a school activity without the parent's permission.

We will not allow images of students to be used on school websites, publicity, or press releases, 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.

## 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



# Child Protection Policy

- 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)

## 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, or social 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



## Child Protection Policy

- 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.

### Whistle-Blowing

Please see the separate policy for RS Whistle Blowing Policy

### 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, in line with KCSIE 2023 p617.

### Contracted Services

Where the Governing Bodies 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 confirm 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.

### Missing students



# Child Protection Policy

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. See our Attendance Policy for more details.

## Allegations

### Introduction

This policy sets out a framework whereby staff are expected to report concerns, no matter how small, about their own behaviour or that of another member of staff, volunteer, supply teacher, contractor or other person working in school. Its purpose is to help create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour set out in the “Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings” (May 2019) (sometimes called the safeguarding code of conduct) are lived, monitored, and reinforced.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the current statutory guidance – “Keeping Children Safe in Education” Part 4, Section 2.

### Who the policy applies to

This policy applies to all staff and other individuals who work or volunteer in school. The purpose of the policy is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour which are set out in the Code of Conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

### Definition of a low-level concern

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.

### Reporting low-level concerns

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.





# Child Protection Policy

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.

## 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.

## Responding to low-level concerns

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

## 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



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be circumstances where this is not possible e.g. where a fair disciplinary investigation is needed or where a later criminal investigation is required.

### Should staff report concerns about themselves (i.e. selfreport)?

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 selfreport. This will enable a potentially difficult situation to be addressed at an early opportunity if necessary.

### 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”.

### Should the low-level concerns 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.

### 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.

### 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.

Approved by: EXPC Committee of the Governing Body, 29/11/2021

### 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).



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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.

### Allegations Against Members of Staff

If anyone makes an allegation that any member of staff (including any volunteer 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 level of harm threshold. Please see the low level concerns policy.

The Headmaster will handle such allegations, unless the allegation is against the Headmaster, 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.org](mailto:laddo@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) tel: 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



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- 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 Headmaster in consultation with the DSL

## 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.

### 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



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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



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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

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 Designated Officer, and response
- Any concerns raised by the School Council that are relevant to this Policy

## Dissemination

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

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

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>

## 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



# Child Protection Policy

## Important Contacts

### Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL)

Ms Lizzie Ayres, Ast Head [layres@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:layres@reading-school.co.uk) 01189015600

### Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Mr Alun Lloyd [alloyd@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:alloyd@reading-school.co.uk)

Mr Dave McGall, [dmcgall@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:dmcgall@reading-school.co.uk)

Miss Alice Stratford, [astratford@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:astratford@reading-school.co.uk)

Mr Dal Singh, [dsingh@reading-school.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:cevans@reading-school.co.uk)

Mr Tom Evans [tevens@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:tevens@reading-school.co.uk)

Mr Greg Fairchild [gfairchild@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:gfairchild@reading-school.co.uk)

### Headteacher

Mr Ashley Robson [arobson@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:arobson@reading-school.co.uk)

### Local authority designated officer (LADO)

0118 937 2684

### Chair of Governors

Mr Bob Kenwick [bkenwick@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:bkenwick@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](mailto:cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

Prevent Officer Thames Valley Police



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Prevent Officer Reading Police Station

Castle Street Reading RG1 7TH

07788 307 178

[Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

Community Safety Partnership

Anthony Brain

Reading Borough Council,

Civic Office's, Reading, RG1 2LU

0118 937 3179

[Anthony.brain@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Anthony.brain@reading.gov.uk)

Service Manager for Early Help and Prevention (including early years)

Coriene Dishington

Brighter Futures for Children,

Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU

0118 937 6012

[Corinne.dishington@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:Corinne.dishington@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

Education Welfare Service

Shirley Moneanu

Brighter Futures for Children, The Avenue Centre,

Tilehurst, Reading

0118 937 6554

[Shirley.moneanu@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:Shirley.moneanu@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

Local Authority Designated Officer

Jeremy Curtis

Brighter Futures for Children,

Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU

07841 253871 , 0118 937 3555

[Jeremy.curtis@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:Jeremy.curtis@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)





# Child Protection Policy

Virtual School Headteacher - CLA

Clare Houlton

Brighter Futures for Children, The Avenue Centre,

Tilehurst, Reading

07803 760667, 0118 937 3504

[Clare.houlton@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:Clare.houlton@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

Virtual School Headteacher – Pupil and School Support

Gill Dunlop

Brighter Futures for Children,

Civic Offices,

Reading, RG1 2LU

0118 937 4147

[Gill.dunlop@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:Gill.dunlop@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

Safeguarding and Children Missing Education Officer (including exclusions)

Fiona Hostler

Brighter Futures for Children,

Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU

0118 937 4336. 07811 422419

[Fiona.hostler@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:Fiona.hostler@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

