LIONHEART
EDUCATIONAL
TRUST

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy applies to all academies within
the Lionheart Educational Trust

Approved by the Trust

2026 – 2027

Name of Academy: Mercia Academy

Signature: …….. (Chair of Governors)

Print Name: ……

Policy statement and principles

Mercia Academy fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in academy. The aim of the policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive environment. We encourage children to talk about their worries and to report their concerns to us in a number of alternative ways. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance, and we are committed to keeping children safe. Policies such as our Staff Code of Conduct Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Complaints Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, and procedures are in place to support safeguarding and any actions linked to safeguarding will be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed by the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead – Marie Payne *on* a regular basis to ensure it remains current and incorporates all revisions made to local or national safeguarding guidance. This policy will as a minimum be fully reviewed once a year during the autumn term. The policy Template will be approved by the Trust Board. Academy specific policies created using the approved template will be approved by the Local Governing Body for approval at the first autumn term meeting.

Date of last review- 28th September 2026

Date of next review – October 2027

Role	Name	Contact Details
Principal/ Principal	Nick Holmes	Nick.Holmes@merciaacademy.org.uk
Senior Leader(s) available for contact in the absence of the DSLs	Aaron Black Kelly Lundman Farouk Gossiel	Aaron.Black@merciaacademy.org.uk Kelly.Lundman@merciaacademy.org.uk Farouk.Gossiel@merciaacademy.org.uk
Designated Governor for Child Protection / Safeguarding	Kerry Mace	Kerry.Mace@castlerock.org.uk
Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead	Marie Payne	Marie.payne@merciaacademy.org.uk
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Nick Holmes Gill Francis Aaron Black Kelly Lundman Clare Evenden	Nick.Holmes@merciaacademy.org.uk Gill.francis@merciaacademy.org.uk Aaron.Black@merciaacademy.org.uk Kelly.Lundman@merciaacademy.org.uk Claire.Evenden@merciaacademy.org.uk
Names of additional Safeguarding Officers	NA	
Chair of Governors	Dr Alan Jones	Alan.Jones@merciaacademy.org.uk
Welcome to the Online Procedures for the Derby and...	Starting Point contact and referral service - Derbyshire County Council	Starting Point contact and referral service - Derbyshire County Council
LA Safeguarding Children in Education Officer	Jane Taylor Safeguarding Practice Lead Children's Services (Starting Point)	Jane Taylor -01629532644 jane.taylor3@derbyshire.gov.uk
LA Child Protection Contact / LADO	Professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk	01629 531940 (available Mon-Thu 8.30am-5.00pm, Fri 8.30am-4.30pm) Link to LADO referral form: Professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk
Starting Point	For urgent concerns about a child who needs a social worker or police officer today	01629 533190

Police (to report a crime and immediate risk of harm or abuse to child)	Derbyshire Police 101	In an emergency 999 (only)
NSPCC help / whistleblowing line	Line is available 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday	0800 028 0285- email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Legislation and statutory guidance

- This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), and the www.gov.uk/guidance/-governance-inacademy-trusts We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent Academy Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent academy's to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the academy
- 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 academy's' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our Trustees and Principal should carefully consider how they are supporting their students with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our Academy/Academy to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting students (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled students.

For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment

- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve student outcomes. Some students may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- Working Together to Improve Academy Attendance, working together to improve academy attendance 2024.

1. Purpose and Aims

1.1 Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the Mercia Academy and takes into account statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education and local guidance issued by the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

1.2 We will ensure that all parents/carers are made aware of our responsibilities regarding child protection procedures and how we will safeguard and promote the welfare of their children through the publication of this Mercia Academy child protection policy. These duties and responsibilities, as set out within the Education Act 2002 sec175 and 157, DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 are incorporated into this policy.

1.3 The academy aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

2. Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement

2.1 We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We will endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We will be alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection, and justice.

2.2 The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, supply staff, volunteers, Trustees and Governors and are consistent with those Leicester and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

3. Maintaining a child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding:

3.1 Everyone who works at Mercia Academy understands they are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children and accepts safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all our staff, including supply staff and volunteers will ensure their approach is child-

centred and will be supported to consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child.

3.2 We recognise no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.

3.3 **Safeguarding children is defined as:** The actions we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm are everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

4. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

4.1 Defined as:

- 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 the 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.
- **NB Definition:** Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

5. Whole academy approach to safeguarding:

5.1 We understand the importance every member of our staff has through their contact with children in and outside of our academy environment and the particular importance of the roles and relationships they have which places them in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

5.2 As a academy we have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

5.3 We will make every effort to identify children who may benefit from early help and put in place support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life.

5.4 **Any staff member** who has **any** concerns about a child's welfare should follow the processes set out in this child protection policy and raise concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy without delay.

5.5 All our staff should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral, especially if they were involved in being alert to or receiving a disclosure of risk, harm or abuse or harassment from a child.

5.6 Our senior designated safeguarding lead will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care, police, family help, and health were required, as the designated safeguarding

lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

6. Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also relates to the broader aspects of care and education including:

- Pupils' health and safety and emotional well-being, and their mental and physical health or development.
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Meeting the legal duties on the academy under the Equality act: will not unlawfully, discriminate against pupils or students based protected characteristics; we will carefully consider how we support pupils/students regarding particular protected characteristics; we will take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students
- Where a child receives elective home education and has an EHCP, the LA should review the plan working with parents and carers.
- The use of reasonable force.
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions.
- Providing first aid.
- Educational visits and off- site education.
- Alternative Provision placements
- Intimate care and emotional wellbeing.
- On-line safety and associated issues including filtering and monitoring in accordance with DfE monitoring standards.
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure academy security, considering the local context.
- Keeping children safe from risks, harm, exploitation and sexual violence and sexual harassment between children: KCSiE 2026
- Ensuring there is an appropriate safeguarding curriculum.

7. Safeguarding can involve a range of potential issues

7.1 Such as:

- Neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and exploitation.
- Contextualised also known as extra-familial abuse.
- Bullying, including online bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, and prejudice-based bullying and being aware of the ease of access to mobile phone networks.
- The approach to online safety, including appropriate filtering and monitoring on academy devices and academy networks for home use.
- Going frequently missing and who are 'absent from education' going 'missing from care or home' and the risks this poses on repeat occasions and for prolonged periods.
- Domestic Abuse including teenage relationship abuse.
- Domestic Abuse including where they see, hear or experience its effects.
- Racist, disability- based, homophobic, bi-phobic, or transphobic abuse.
- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls.
- Risk of extremist behaviour and/or radicalisation and susceptible to being at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- Child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, modern slavery, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- A young carer.

- Has a mental health need and has an effect on academy attendance and progress.
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Privately fostered.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending.
- Child-on-Child Abuse (broadened by KCSiE 2026 to include children abusing other children, other varying form of bullying including online and sexually harmful behaviour, sexual violence, and sexual harassment (further defined in KCSiE 2026 Part Five).
- The impact of new technologies, including 'sexting' and accessing pornography.
- The impact of generative artificial intelligence
- Exposure to misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- Issues which may be specific to a local area or population, is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang activity or involvement and associations with organised crime groups or county lines.
- In possession of a knife and or involved in knife crime, youth violence, criminal child exploitation (CCE).
- Is in family circumstances which present challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse/harm.
- Is at risk of or from serious violence and violent crime.
- Persistent absence from education, including persistent absence for part of the academy day.
- At risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- Particular issues affecting children including domestic abuse and violence, female genital mutilation, and honour-based abuse.
- Being subject to any conduct where the purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages (Law change on Forced Marriage, February 2023).
- 'Upskirting'- The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as Up-skirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. Upskirting is a criminal offence and reportable by all teachers (KCSiE Annex A).
- Is pregnant or is a parent themselves
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is a privately fostered child
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care

7.2 All our staff and volunteers are aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and Modern slavery, know what to look for is vital for the early identification so that support can be put in place. Our staff and volunteers are also aware of the specific safeguarding issues that indicate or inform of concerns or

incidents linked to child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation and know to report concerns directly to the designated safeguarding or a member of the senior leadership team should the designated safeguarding lead not be available for children who may be in need of help or protection. Such as: Ensuring that children, where relevant, must be collected from academy by a suitable person authorised by the parent/carer. If the academy believes that the person collecting the academy is not suitable, this must be challenged.

7.3 Our staff recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, exploited or a victim of modern slavery they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may also feel embarrassed, humiliated, or could be being threatened not to tell, so not feel able to share what is happening to them. Alternatively, we recognise children may not want to make a disclosure or talk about what is happening due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child and agree a way forward to support the child and determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate good opportunities for communication.

7.4 All staff should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead, or deputy at the earliest opportunity.

7.5 As a academy we are aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore all staff should always be vigilant and always raise any concerns with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

7.6 All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the academy and/or can occur between children outside of our academy environment.

7.7 All our staff have received information and training regarding the risks that can take place outside the child's family. This is known as extra-familial harm which can take on a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines, financial exploitation and radicalisation.

7.8 Our staff are aware that technology offers many opportunities but is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

7.9 All our staff have 'an understanding of the expectations, applicable to their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring' of ICT systems and regular monitoring of academy's equipment and networks.

8. Online Safety

8.1 Our academy approach to online safety, including appropriate filtering and monitoring on academy devices and academy networks is reflected in the Online Safety Policy and the Trust IT Safeguarding and Content Filtering Strategy.

8.2 Our Trust safeguarding Lead has responsibility for this strategy. As part of this responsibility, they will consider the number of and age range of the children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm, and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks. This is overseen and regularly reviewed by the Trust Board to ensure that our approach meets the standard published by the Department for Education filtering and monitoring standards.

8.3 Our Trust will ensure they maintain oversight of the Online Safety Policy and the arrangements put in place to ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring on academy devices. Our approach to online safety is set out in the Online Safety Policy and the IT Safeguarding and Content Filtering Strategy.

8.4 Our Senior DSL and the DSL team will always act in the 'best interest of the child' and remain mindful of the importance with parents and carers about safeguarding concerns held for children and in particular children's access to online sites when away from academy.

8.5 We will support understanding of harmful online challenges and hoaxes and share information with parents and carers and where they can get help and support.

8.6 *All forms of abuse or harassment will be reported in accordance with national safeguarding guidance, and we will take a 'zero tolerance' approach to harassment and abuse as informed in KCSiE 2026.*

8.7 As a academy should an incident or disclosure be made by a child, our staff will always reassure the child (victim) that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe, but we recognise that not every victim will view themselves as such. We will also be mindful of the use of other terminology such as '**alleged perpetrator(s)**' or '**perpetrator(s)**' as in some cases, instead referring to the 'child who has been harmed' and the 'child who has caused harm' the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.

8.8 We will do our best to ensure children understand the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them rather than criminalise them. In doing this we will discuss with relevant statutory safeguarding agencies to ensure all concerns or incidents are addressed fully and where required different types of assessment and services are put in place where required.

9. Identifying Concerns

9.1 All members of staff, volunteers and governors will be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation know, will know how to identify pupils who may be being harmed and then how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse, or where others raise concerns about them. Our staff will be familiar with procedures to be followed and will receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates.

9.2 Staff understand that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition, and that in most cases multiple issues will overlap with each other. Staff who regularly come into contact with children are aware of the DfE guidance What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

9.3 The five main categories of child abuse are as follows:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect
5. Exploitation

10. Indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation:

10.1 **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. 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. 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.

10.2 **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.

10.3 **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 chid 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 expectation being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as 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 involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children 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.

10.4 **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 masturbations, kissing,

rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children to look at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their academy or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.

10.5 **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, because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to; provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (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.

10.6 **Child Criminal Exploitation:** occurs where an individual or an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group, takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.
Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation.
Child Criminal Exploitation is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms, to commit theft, shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

10.7 **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):** is a type of sexual abuse. It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection.

11. Safeguarding issues:

11.1 All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

11.2 Staff remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns and understand their responsibility to record and report any concerns promptly to the appropriate safeguarding lead, ensuring timely action is taken.

11.3 The Trust and its academys recognise that online abuse, exploitation, grooming, radicalisation, cyberbullying and exposure to harmful content can take place both within and outside of the academy environment. These risks may be heightened during periods of remote learning or when children are accessing online platforms away from academy and with reduced parental supervision. As such, academys provide pupils with age-appropriate online safety education and regularly reinforce safe online behaviours

through the curriculum, assemblies, safeguarding messages and pastoral support.
All staff receive safeguarding training that includes online safety, ensuring they understand current risks, reporting procedures, and the expectations surrounding filtering and monitoring systems.
The academy benefits from a Trust wide content filter that monitors and protects pupil devices both in and out of academy. The content filter provides an out-of-hours service that escalates concerns to senior leaders and the police as appropriate.
This supports a whole-academy approach to safeguarding and helps ensure children can access and benefit from online learning and digital media in a safe and secure manner.

11.4 Our academy ethos demonstrates that the effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of a system where we listen and hear what they say. Every individual within Mercia Academy will play their part, including working with professionals from other agencies, particularly social workers, to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and keep them safe. We will take opportunities to teach children about important safeguarding issues in a way that is age appropriate.

11.5 Mercia Academy places the child's voice at the centre of all safeguarding arrangements, ensuring that every child is listened to, heard, and supported. We actively encourage children to share their views, concerns, and experiences, and we take their wishes and feelings into account when making decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing.

11.6 Our aim is to provide a safe environment and vigilant culture where children and young people can learn and be safeguarded. If there are safeguarding concerns, we will respond with appropriate action in a timely manner for those children who may need help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

11.7 Where staff members have concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will decide what action to take in conjunction with the Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead. Although we advocate that any staff member can make a referral to children's social care or First Response, especially where a child is identified as being in immediate danger, they should however ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a member of the senior leadership team is informed as soon as possible.

11.8 We also ensure that all our staff are clear that whilst they should discuss and agree with the DSL any actions to be taken, they are able to escalate their concerns and contact First Response, Starting Point Consultation Line or social care to seek support for the child if despite the discussion with the DSL their concerns remain. Staff are also informed of the academy whistle blowing procedures and the contact details for the Local Authority LADO and NSPCC helpline.

12. Alternative providers and other agencies

12.1 Mercia Academy works closely with Derbyshire Children's Social Care and other statutory safeguarding partners to support vulnerable children and families. We maintain regular contact with social workers, attend multi-agency meetings, partnership forums, and safeguarding training provided by Derbyshire and Leicestershire Councils. Where appropriate, we facilitate meetings within school to enable children, parents, and carers

to access support from external agencies, helping to ensure coordinated and effective safeguarding arrangements.

12.2 Where a academy places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the academy continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider can meet the needs of the pupil.

12.3 Children who attend alternative education often have complex needs, it is important governing bodies/trusts and designated safeguarding leads ensure children are fully always supported, and the alternative setting is aware of any additional risks of harm that pupils may be vulnerable to. Information sharing for pupils who receive education provision outside of a mainstream setting is vital to support the child and ensure the learning environment where they are placed has all necessary information for the child before they access the provision. The working together principles are key to keep the child safe and understanding the vulnerabilities needing to be supported. This should include up to date contact details for the professionals working with the child and family.

12.4 Whilst the Local Authority may hold a register of approved alternative provision providers the academy is however, academys remain ultimately responsible for the provision they commission academys should also obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been conducted on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that the academy would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.

12.5 Mercia Academy follows all statutory guidance relating to the monitoring and review of pupils attending Alternative Provision (AP). The Designated Teacher visits AP students at least half-termly to review their progress, wellbeing, and safeguarding needs. In addition, regular contact is maintained with the AP lead, with attendance information shared daily to ensure that attendance, engagement, and any emerging concerns are monitored effectively and acted upon promptly.

12.6 The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Marie Payne or Principal Nick Holmes, who is familiar with national and local guidance, will share concerns, where appropriate, with the relevant agencies.

12.7 The Senior DSL and DSL team share safeguarding concerns promptly with Starting Point (01629 533190) and any agencies already supporting the child, including COMPASS, CAMHS, Youth Offending Services, Remedi, Young Carers, Derbyshire WISH, and the Public Health Team, ensuring a coordinated multi-agency approach to safeguarding.

12.8 Academy's should always know where a child is based during academy hours. This includes having records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend.

12.9 Where the academy premises are used by an external organisation, community group, sports club, service provider or any other individual to provide activities for children, any safeguarding concern or allegation arising from those activities will be treated in the same way as any other safeguarding allegation. The academy retains its safeguarding responsibilities and will ensure concerns are reported and managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026. Any allegation meeting the harm threshold will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay, and the academy will work with the hiring organisation and relevant agencies to ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken. External organisations hiring the

premises are expected to have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place and to cooperate fully with any safeguarding enquiries or investigations.

13. CPD, culture and ethos

13.1 All staff receive annual safeguarding training. Supply staff and volunteers are provided with an induction handbook that includes safeguarding procedures and clear guidance on how to record and report concerns or disclosures.

13.2 Mercia Academy ensures safe recruitment through staff trained in safer recruitment practices and robust pre-employment checks. Ongoing vigilance is maintained through regular safeguarding updates, with staff receiving guidance on professional conduct, personal safety online, and maintaining appropriate behaviour both within and outside of school, including their use of social media.

KCSiE 2026 broadened the requirements placed on academys/colleges to keep children safe and ensure children are able to thrive and take the maximum benefit from their education or learning experiences.

14. Responsibilities of the DSL/DSL Team

14.1 The Senior DSL and deputies (DSL team) maintains a key role in raising awareness amongst staff about the needs of children who have or who have had a social worker and the barriers that those children might experience in respect of attendance, engagement and achievement at academys or college. **This should include children under kinship care.**

14.2 The Senior DSL along with the Designated Teacher can inform the Governing body and Principal the number of children in their cohort who have or who have had a social worker and appropriate information is shared with teachers and staff on individual children's circumstances.

14.3 The Designated Teacher and Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead maintain data for children who have looked after status and for children who have been involved in the care system.

14.4 The Designated Teacher maintains good links with the Virtual Academy Head to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. The role of virtual academy heads was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker. The virtual academy head should identify and engage with key professionals, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children. This should include Designated Safeguarding Leads, social workers, headteachers, governors, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, mental health leads, other local authority officers.

14.5 Mercia Academy has a Designated Teacher for looked-after children who attends PEP and LAC meetings and works closely with the DSL to ensure the child's needs are met and appropriate support is in place.

14.6 The school recognises that children with SEND can face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and works closely with families and a range of specialist services to ensure that their needs are identified and supported effectively. Support is available through

the SEND Code of Practice, SENDIASS and local authority services, alongside specialist agencies working directly with the school. These include Autism Outreach, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Specialist Teaching Services, Early Help and Health Professionals. The school works collaboratively with these services to provide advice, assessment, intervention and family support, ensuring that children with SEND receive appropriate provision, their voices are heard and barriers to learning, wellbeing and safety are reduced.

15. The seven main elements of our Child Protection Policy

15.1 There are eight main elements to our policy in line with KCSIE 2026, paragraph 121:

- Providing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse in and outside of academy.
- Supporting pupils who have social care involvement in accordance with his/her child in need plan, child protection plan or are subject to Local Authority Care.
- Raising awareness of safeguarding children, child protection processes and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe in and outside of academy.
- Working in partnership with agencies and safeguarding partners in the 'best interest of the child.'
- Ensuring we have appropriate policies and procedures to deal with child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the academy or college premises and/or online, forms of harassment and harmful sexual behaviour. Filtering and monitoring arrangements for online safety and harms are set out in our Online safety Policy and the IT Safeguarding and Content Filtering Strategy
- Reflect the academy's approach to child-on-child abuse

16. Providing a safe environment

16.1 We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact our academy staff have with children they and we are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

16.2 The academy will therefore:

16.2.1 Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to and heard.

16.2.2 Ensure children know that there are trusted adults in the academy who they can approach if they are worried.

16.2.3 Ensure that every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and colleagues from other agencies.

16.2.4 Include opportunities in the Personal Development curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse by:

16.2.5 Recognise and managing risks including online safety, radicalisation and extremism, sexual exploitation, child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, the

sharing of nude and semi -nude images which has replaced what was termed as sexting.

16.2.6 Support the development of healthy relationships and awareness of domestic violence and abuse, recognising that Domestic Abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may involve a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional harm and children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

16.2.7 Recognise how pressure from others and safeguarding vulnerabilities can affect their behaviour.

16.2.8 Recognise the link between mental health, academy attendance and children 'absent from education' and the impact on learning, progress, and educational attainment.

16.2.9 Recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, signs of an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or suicide. They could be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

16.2.10 Act swiftly to address any concerns related to serious violence, gang and knife crime or child on child sexual violence or sexual harassment incidents.

16.2.11 Ensure that the Trust Behaviour policy is followed, this policy includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, harmful online challenges, hoaxes, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying and use of social media platforms and networks.

16.2.12 Ensure that the Trust Online Safety policy is followed, this policy addresses statutory filtering and monitoring standards, which consider remote learning, and use of mobile and smart technology and is reviewed regularly to take into account any new threats.

16.2.13 Address any 'harm outside the home' also known as 'extra familial harm.' Academys are a place of protection and where children and young people can share concerns and seek support and are place of safety and where children and young people can form safe and trusted relationships. Through creating a whole academy ethos and sharing excellent communication with safeguarding partners and services, children and young people can feel assured they will be listened to, heard, and offered support to enable them share sensitive information and strengthen their resilience.

16.2.14 Recognise the importance of our academy ethos of working together with parents, carers, and external services to form strong and trusted partnerships which can advocate trauma informed and trauma aware responses and where trusted relationships can be formed and go on to create safe places and spaces within the community, so children and young people know how to access a place of safety outside of the academy environment if needed.

16.3 Mercia Academy works closely with Derbyshire's safeguarding partners to address harm outside the home, including exploitation and peer-on-peer abuse. Support is available

through Derbyshire's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including the *Families First Multi-Agency Child Protection* Families First multi-agency child protection - Derbyshire County Council process, to ensure children and families receive appropriate support.

16.4 Mercia Academy works closely with safeguarding partners to tackle harm outside the home, liaising with relevant agencies to identify risks, share information, and provide appropriate support and interventions for children and their families.

16.5 Safeguarding is embedded throughout a concise and robust Personal Development (PD) curriculum, delivered weekly to all students throughout the academic year. The curriculum provides regular opportunities for students to develop their understanding of safeguarding, wellbeing, healthy relationships, online safety, and risk awareness, ensuring they are equipped to recognise concerns and seek support when needed.

16.6 We will take all reasonable measures to ensure any risk of harm to children's welfare is minimised inside and outside of the academy environment.

16.7 Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, working to local policies and procedures in full working partnership with agencies.

16.8 Ensure robust child protection arrangements are in place and embedded in the daily life and practice of the academy.

16.9 Promote pupil health and safety.

16.10 Promote safe practice and challenge unsafe practice.

16.11 Ensure that procedures are in place to deal with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff including trainee teachers, volunteers, supply staff and contractors. KCSiE Part Four has two sections, the second section addresses low-level concerns.

16.12 Provide first aid and meet the health needs of children with medical conditions.

16.13 Be aware that a child with medical conditions maybe at greater risk of being neglected, abused or exploited because of their medical condition.

16.14 Ensure academy site security.

16.15 Address drugs and substance misuse issues.

16.16 Support and plan for young people in custody and their resettlement back into the community.

16.17 Work with all agencies regarding missing children, anti-social behaviour/gang activity and violence in the community/knife crime and children at risk of sexual exploitation.

16.18 Everyone having a duty to safeguard children inside/outside the academy environment including academy trips, extended academy activities, vocational placements, and alternative education packages.

17. Additional measures

17.1 Mercia Academy ensures appropriate oversight of students receiving off-site education or alternative learning provision. Allocated staff visit students at least half-termly, attendance staff conduct welfare and attendance visits where required, and attendance

information is shared daily to monitor engagement, attendance, and any safeguarding concerns.

17.2 Staff are trained to recognise and respond to mental health concerns and indicators of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Support is accessed through external services including COMPASS, CAMHS, and Kooth where appropriate. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and have access to KCSIE guidance to help them identify risks, respond appropriately, and ensure children receive the support they need.

17.3 Mercia Academy is committed to providing an inclusive environment where all children feel safe, valued, and supported. Any form of discrimination, including homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic behaviour, is not tolerated. Students who may be LGBT are encouraged to access support from trusted adults within the academy. Where incidents occur, both the victim and the perpetrator are provided with appropriate support, guidance, and education to promote understanding, wellbeing, and positive relationships.

17.4 Mercia Academy remains vigilant to community safety incidents and potential child abduction risks. As students become more independent during their secondary education, they are provided with practical advice through the curriculum and safeguarding education on how to keep themselves safe in the community, online, when travelling independently, and when engaging with others. The academy works closely with the police and other relevant agencies to share information, assess risks, and respond appropriately to concerns, ensuring children are supported to make safe and informed choices.

18. Procedures for identifying and reporting cases

18.1 We will follow the procedures set out by the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) and take account of guidance issued by the DfE in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 to:

18.1.1 Ensure we have a Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is a member of the academy leadership team, and a Deputy Safeguarding Lead for child protection/safeguarding who has received appropriate training and support for this role.

18.1.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead role is written into their job description and clarifies the role and responsibilities including as defined in KCSiE 2026 Annex B.

18.1.3 The Leadership team will ensure that there are appropriate cover arrangements for periods when the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable due to illness, leave, or other circumstances. This will include confidential shared mailbox DSL@merciaacademy.org.uk to ensure that safeguarding concerns are received, monitored, and acted upon without delay.

18.1.4 Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding.

18.1.5 Ensure that we have a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC).

18.1.6 Ensure every member of staff (including temporary, supply staff, trainee teachers and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputies responsible for child protection, and their role.

18.1.7 Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or to children's social care/police if a child is in immediate danger.

18.1.8 Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the early help process and understand their role in making referrals or contributing to early help offers and arrangements.

18.1.9 Ensure that there is a whistleblowing policy and culture where staff can raise concerns about unsafe practice, and that these concerns will be taken seriously.

18.1.10 Ensure that there is a complaints system in place for children and families.

18.1.11 Ensure that parents understand the responsibility placed on the academy and staff for child protection and safeguarding by setting out its obligations in the academy prospectus and on the academy's website.

18.1.12 Notify Children's Social Care if there is an unexplained absence for a child who is subject to a child protection plan and where no contact can be established with the child, or a parent or appropriate adult linked to the child.

18.1.13 Develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at child protection conferences.

18.1.14 Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately; documenting and collating information on individual children to support early identification, referral, and actions to safeguard.

18.1.15 Ensure all records are kept securely; Student safeguarding records are maintained electronically through CPOMS, the school's secure safeguarding management and recording system. All safeguarding concerns, actions, and associated documentation are logged and stored securely within CPOMS, with access restricted to authorised staff only. Where historical paper safeguarding files exist, these are kept separate from pupil records and are stored securely in a locked cabinet within a restricted-access office area. This ensures the confidentiality, security, and appropriate management of all safeguarding and child protection records.

18.1.16 Ensure that we follow robust processes to respond when children are missing from education or missing from home or care.

18.1.17 Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

18.1.18 Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

18.1.19 Apply confidentiality appropriately.

18.1.20 Apply escalation procedures if there are any concerns about the actions or inaction of social care staff or staff from other agencies.

19. Supporting children and working in partnership

19.1 We recognise that children may 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. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a positive sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation, and some sense of blame. Academy may be the only stable, secure, and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at academy their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication We also recognise that there are children who are more vulnerable than others, which include children with special educational needs and or disabilities.

19.2 All staff including volunteers are advised to maintain the attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is a concern, and when concerned about the welfare of the child should always act in the **best** interests of the child.

19.3 Our academy will endeavour to support the pupil through:

19.3.1 Developing the content of the curriculum responding to identified needs as and when they become visible**.**

19.3.2 Maintaining a academy ethos which promotes a positive, supportive, and secure environment, and which gives pupils a sense of them being valued.

19.3.3 The academy behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy which is kept up to date with national and local guidance and which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in our *academy*.

19.3.4 Our academy will proactively ensure that all children know that some behaviours are unacceptable and will need to be addressed but as members of our academy they are valued and will be supported through the time required to deal with any abuse or harm that has occurred, or outcomes from incidents.

19.3.5 Where concerns are identified, pupils may receive support through the school's pastoral team, Internal Inclusion Unit, or Reflection Room. These provisions offer targeted intervention, mentoring, emotional support, and opportunities for reflection and self-regulation. The safeguarding team works closely with staff, families, and external agencies where appropriate to ensure pupils receive timely and appropriate support.

19.3.6 Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children's Social Care (in line with the Thresholds for access to services updated in September 2021); Derbyshire Inclusion Service and Education Psychology Service, and the Children and Family Wellbeing Service, etc.

19.3.7 Ensuring that, where a pupil leaves and is subject to a child protection plan, child in need plan or where there have been wider safeguarding concerns, their information is transferred to the new academy immediately or within **5 working days** and that the child's social worker is informed.

19.3.8 Ensuring that the vulnerability of children with special educational needs and or disabilities is recognised and fully supported by Mercia Academy staff overseen by the academy SENDCO and assistant SENDCO.

19.3.9 Where a child discloses a concern or informs of an incident that has involved them in an incident involving sexual violence and or sexual harassment the staff member will ensure the child (victim) is taken seriously, kept safe and never be made to feel like they are creating a problem for reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment.

20. Staff and Safer Recruitment

20.1 The leadership team and governing body of the academy will ensure that all safer working practices and recruitment procedures are followed in accordance with the guidance set out in KCSiE 2026 Part Three.

20.2 Academy leaders, staff and members of the governing body will be appropriately trained in safer working practices and access safer recruitment training.

20.3 Statutory pre-employment checks and references from previous employers are an essential part of the recruitment process. We will ensure we adopt the appropriate necessary procedures to carry out the checks required and where any concerns arise, we will seek advice and act in accordance with national guidance.

20.4 The academy has in place recruitment, selection, and vetting procedures in accordance with KCSiE 2026 Part Three and maintains a Single Central Record (SCR), which is reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with KCSiE 2026 Part Three paragraphs 345 to 349.

20.5 All volunteers working in regulated activity with have an enhanced DSB.

20.6 Staff will have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and will be aware of the Academy Employee Code of Conduct, which includes contact between staff and pupils outside the work context. Concerns regarding low-level concerns will be included in our Code of Conduct from 1 September 2026 in line with KCSiE Part Four Section two. Staff can access a copy of this through the staff L drive.

20.7 Newly appointed staff and volunteers will be informed of our arrangements for safer working practices by the DSL before beginning working and contact with pupils. All volunteers must now have a enhance DBS check before undertaking regulated activity in line with The Crime and Policing Act 2026.

20.8 In the event of any complaint or allegation against a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or trainee teacher, the Principal (or the Designated Safeguarding Lead) if the Principalis not present, will be notified immediately. If it relates to the headteacher, the Chair of Governors will be informed without delay. We will respond to all allegations robustly and appropriately in collaboration with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), LADO Allegation Officers or HR Service.

20.9 Staff may find some of the issues relating to child protection and the broader areas of safeguarding upsetting and may need support which should be provided by the academy and their Human Resources Team.

20.10 *Advice and support will be made available by the Safeguarding and Compliance Lead (SCL), LADO and LCC HR where appropriate to the leadership team.*

20.11 The academy and Trust ensure that all new staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and regular visitors receive appropriate safeguarding information as part of their induction and before working with children. Induction includes the Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, behaviour expectations, whistleblowing procedures, safeguarding reporting processes, and the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) team. All staff complete Trust-wide safeguarding training and assessment before commencing work and receive regular updates thereafter. Visitors are provided with a safeguarding induction leaflet and have safeguarding briefing from DSL on arrival, outlining key safeguarding information, expected conduct and procedures for reporting concerns. The academy maintains clear systems to ensure that all adults on site understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to respond to and report any concerns about a child's welfare.

Please Note: KCSiE 2026 Part Three: Alternative Provision – Where a academy places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the academy continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil.

20.12 Academys should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been conducted on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that the academy would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.

20.13 A letter of assurance is obtained from the alternative provision provider.

20.14 When placing a student in a work experience placement the academy will ensure the person providing the teaching/training/instruction or supervision of the student frequently or in more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight this is a regulated activity and therefore need the necessary checks.

20.15 If a student aged 16 plus on a work experience placement which takes place in a place such as a academy or nursery which provides opportunity to for the student to be in contact with children which is regulated activity the academy will consider if a DBS enhanced check is required.

21. Links to other Local Authority policies

21.1 The Governing Body's statutory responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond simply child protection. The duty is to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies, for instance

- Behaviour Policy (Secondary)
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Anti-bullying (Secondary) Policy
- Accessibility Action Plan and Disabilty Policy
- SEND (Secondary) Policy
- EVC Policy
- Careers Policy (Work Experience and Extended Work Placements)
- First Aid Policy

- Medical Needs Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Relationship Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy (KS1-5)
- Security Policy
- Equality Statement
- Intimate Care - Toilet Training and Nappy Changing Policy
- Online Safety Policy

The above list is not exhaustive but when undertaking development or planning of any kind the academy will consider the implications for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

22. Raising Awareness - Roles and Responsibilities

22.1 All staff and volunteers: Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone in our academy who comes into contact with children and their families have a role to play in safeguarding children. All staff in our academy consider, always, what is in the best interests of children.

22.2 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at Newhall Junior School. All staff, regardless of their role, have a duty to promote the welfare of children, maintain a culture of vigilance, and take immediate action if they have concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. Staff build positive relationships with pupils, model safe and respectful behaviour, identify potential signs of abuse, neglect or vulnerability, and report concerns promptly in line with school procedures. Teachers, support staff, pastoral staff, leaders, volunteers and governors each contribute to creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where children feel listened to, valued and protected. Through regular training, professional curiosity and effective communication with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) team, all adults play an active role in helping to safeguard children and promote positive outcomes.

22.3 All staff within our academy are particularly important as they are able to identify concerns early and provide help to children to prevent concerns from escalating.

22.4 All staff contribute to providing a safe environment in which children can learn by maintaining a pupil focused attitude where all feel listened to, valued and protected.

22.5 All staff share responsibility for maintaining a safe environment for children both on and off the school site. For educational visits, residential experiences and other extended learning opportunities, staff follow the school's educational visits procedures, undertake appropriate risk assessments and ensure that safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour and medical needs are carefully considered. Staff maintain appropriate levels of supervision, promote safe conduct, remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns and ensure that pupils know who they can speak to if they feel worried or unsafe. Through careful planning, effective communication and adherence to safeguarding procedures, staff help ensure that all off-site activities are safe, inclusive and support pupils' wellbeing and development.

22.6 All our staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in this. This includes being able to identify emerging problems to recognise children who may benefit from early help. Staff know in the first instance to discuss their concerns with the

Designated Safeguarding Lead and understand they may be required to support other agencies and professionals in assessments for early help.

22.7 A Pastoral team inc the Lead DSL and Attendance Team work outside of the classroom and engage with children, families, and partner agencies.

22.8 Parents/carers are invited into the school to seek support or advice. The main office communicates with parents via email/phone call to arrange meetings with the Principal of School, Pastoral Team, and Lead DSL, Attendance Lead and SENDCo.

22.9 It is important that children and social workers meet during the school day where required and that DSLs work with social care and safeguarding partners to ensure children subject to child protection, child in need and LAC plans are kept safe, and the child's needs are met.

22.10 Children, parents, and carers are signposted for support in school through the school website, posters, newsletters and during meetings, assemblies and PSHE lessons.

23. Safeguarding Training

23.1 All our staff are aware of systems within Mercia Academy and these are explained to them as part of staff induction, which include our child protection policy; the employee code of conduct and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

23.2 Our academy utilises an induction checklist when staff are inducted which includes the above, but also other policy and procedural information

23.3 All our staff receive safeguarding and child protection training which is updated every three years. In addition, to this training all staff members receive child protection and safeguarding updates when required, but at least annually.

23.4 The Trust and local safeguarding partners provide training to keep staff up to date with any local or national changes to safeguarding guidance. Staff briefings on safeguarding and local threats also take place fortnightly delivered by the lead DSL.

23.5 All our staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act (1989) and understand the role they may have in these assessments.

23.6 Half-termly training is delivered to help staff to understand their role and the opportunities available, including any partnership work especially with social care and the local arrangements put in place by Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

23.7 All our staff know what to do if a child is raising concerns or makes a disclosure of abuse and/or neglect. Staff will maintain a level of confidentiality whilst liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and children's social care. Our staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a disclosure or allegation, recognising this may not be in the best interest of the child.

24. Staff responsibilities

24.1 All staff have a key role to play in identifying concerns and provide early help for children. To achieve this, they will:

24.1.1 Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

24.1.2 Ensure children know that there are adults in the academy who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.

24.1.3 Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.

24.1.4 Follow the procedures set out in the Trust policies with regard to online safety.

24.1.5 Attend training to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse.

24.1.6 Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" with regards to safeguarding.

24.1.7 Record their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the DSL as soon as practical that day. If the DSL is not contactable immediately a Deputy DSL should be informed.

24.1.8 Be prepared to refer directly to social care, and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or their Deputy is not available.

24.1.9 Follow the allegations procedures if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff, volunteer, trainee teacher or an individual not directly employed by the academy; for example, supply teachers or sports coaches.

24.1.10 Follow the procedures set out by the DDSCP and take account of guidance issued by the DfE KCSiE 2026.

24.1.11 Support pupils in line with their child protection plan, child in need plan, LAC Care Plan.

24.1.12 Treat information with confidentiality but never promising to "keep a secret."

24.1.13 Notify the DSL or their Deputy of any child on a child protection plan or child in need plan who has unexplained absence.

24.1.14 Understand early help and be prepared to identify and support children who may benefit from early help, to include children who are frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care, has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from academy's and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit, has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending.

24.1.15 Liaise with other agencies that support pupils and provide early help.

24.1.16 Ensure they know who the DSL and Deputy DSLs are and know how to contact them.

24.1.17 Have an awareness of the Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Staff Behaviour Policy (or Code of Conduct), procedures relating to the safeguarding response for children who go missing from education and the role of the DSL.

The academy engages in learning from mental health services and external professionals, including PCSOs.

24.2 Be alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. Early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support, at the right

time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health services.

25. Senior Leadership/Management Team responsibilities:

25.1 Contribute to inter-agency working in line with HM Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance 2026.

25.2 Provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified.

25.3 Ensure all staff, supply staff and volunteers are alert to the definitions of abuse and indicators, and through access to regular training opportunities and updates.

25.4 Ensure staff are alert to the various factors that can increase the need for early help.

25.5 Working with Children's Social Care, support their assessment and planning processes including the academy's attendance at conference and core group meetings as appropriate.

25.6 Carry out tasks delegated by the Trust Board such as training of staff and volunteers, safer recruitment and maintaining a single central register.

25.7 Provide support and advice on all matters pertaining to safeguarding and child protection to all staff regardless of their position within the academy.

25.8 Treat any information shared by staff or pupils with respect and follow agreed policies and procedures.

25.9 Ensure that allegations or concerns against staff including low-level concerns are dealt with in accordance with guidance from Department for Education (DfE) KCSiE 2026 Part Four 'Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation teachers including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors in Sections One and Two.

25.10 Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP)-

Our school recognises that children who have, or have had, a social worker may be at greater risk of harm. We work closely with Children's Social Care and other safeguarding agencies to identify needs, share information appropriately, and provide timely support. The DSL leads multi-agency working to ensure effective safeguarding and positive outcomes for children. Through a child-centred approach, we aim to keep vulnerable children safe, supported, and able to thrive.

26. Teachers (including ECTs) and Headteachers – Professional Duty

26.1 The Teachers Standards 2012 (updated 13 December 2021) remind us that teachers, newly qualified teachers and headteachers should safeguard children and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of our professional duties.

26.2 The Children and Social Work Act of 2017, places responsibilities for Designated Teacher to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

26.3 The designated teacher will meet regularly with the Virtual School Officer and engage in PEP meetings to set targets for children in care. Children and young people are informed of the designated teacher who will support them.

27. Designated Safeguarding Lead

27.1 We have a Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding children and child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. The Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead is a senior member of the academy leadership team, and their responsibilities are explicit in their job description.

27.2 We also have at least two Deputy Safeguarding Lead, who will provide cover for the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead when they are not available. Our Deputy Safeguarding Lead has received the same training as our Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will provide additional support to ensure the responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding children are fully embedded within the academy ethos and that specific duties are discharged. They will assist the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead in managing referrals, attending child protection conferences, reviews, core group meetings and other meetings of a safeguarding and protection nature to support the child/children.

27.3 All DSL's have completed the required training and are overseen by the Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead, to ensure their fulfilment in their child protection responsibilities to meet the needs of the children/ young people on roll.

27.4 We acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure there is a structured procedure within the academy, which will be followed by all the members of the academy community in cases of suspected abuse.

28. The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is expected to:

28.1 Manage Referrals:

28.1.1 Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies.

28.1.2 Support staff who make referrals to children's social care and other referral pathways.

28.1.3 Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child and will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

28.2 Ensure arrangements are in place year-round for all staff and volunteers to seek advice, support and inform of safeguarding concerns, or incidents and disclosures that inform children are at risk of harm, or abuse, harm or bullying or sexual harm or harassment has occurred.

28.3 Ensure appropriate systems are in place to manage and address online safety, access to mobile phone networks, especially for those children who are potentially at greater risk of harm, abuse, and exploitation and refer concerns where required linked to the PREVENT duty.

28.4 The Senior DSL and DSL team to meet on a regular basis so each is fully informed and able to respond to the needs of children subject to safeguarding concerns.

28.5 The Senior DSL remains responsible for oversight children on placements or alternative education arrangements. From September 2022 Ofsted will inspect these arrangements as part of 'the child's journey' and form a judgement regarding the safeguards in place. Note: This section is under review waiting for the New Ofsted framework publication.

28.6 Work with others:

28.6.1 Liaise with the headteacher/principal (where the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead role is not carried out by the headteacher) to inform him/her of any issues and ongoing investigations.

28.6.2 As required, liaise with the 'case manager' (as per Part Four of KCSiE 2026) and the LADO where there are child protection concerns/allegations that relate to a member of staff.

28.6.3 Liaise with the case manager and the LADO/LADO Allegation Officer where there are concerns about a staff member.

28.6.4 Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and deciding when to make a referral by liaising with other agencies and acts as a source of support, advice, and expertise for other staff.

28.6.5 Take part in strategy discussions or attend inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so and to contribute to the assessment of children.

28.6.6 Liaise with the local authority and other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the local Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Childrens Partnership procedures and practice guidance.

28.6.7 The headteacher, designated safeguarding leads and governing body/trust are aware of the local arrangements put in place by Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) and know how to access the DDSCP website and training.

28.7 Regular staff meetings and briefings ensure that DSLS feedback information to other staff to help to raise awareness of emerging threats and risks.

The DSL/ staff team contributes to developing the curriculum and learning experiences for children and staff. Though staff meetings, bulletins, staff noticeboard, briefings, and arranging additional classroom learning opportunities.

28.8 The academy has links with agencies such as COMPASS, Police, Derbyshire Wish.

28.9 Undertake training:

28.9.1 Formal Designated Safeguarding Lead training will be undertaken at least every two years. Informal training and updating of knowledge and skills will be at regular intervals, undertaken at least annually.

28.9.2 The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for their own training and should obtain access to resources or any relevant refresher training.

28.9.3 The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is also responsible for ensuring all other staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities access up to date and timely safeguarding training and maintains a register or database to evidence the training.

28.10 Staff are signposted to mandatory courses through the National College and the Trust Virtual Learning Environment.

28.11 The training undertaken should enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead to:

28.11.1 Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention through the Thresholds to access to services.

28.11.2 Have a working knowledge of how the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership operates, the conduct of a child protection conference, and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.

28.11.3 Ensure that each member of staff has access to the child protection policy and procedures.

28.11.4 Understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes.

28.11.5 Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, including those with special educational needs and or disabilities and young carers.

28.11.6 Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns, decisions and referrals.

28.11.7 Understand the Prevent Duty and provide advice and support to staff on protecting and preventing children from the risk of radicalisation and being grooming into extremist behaviours and attitudes.

28.11.8 Understand the reporting requirements for FGM

28.11.9 Understand and support children to keep safe when online and when they are learning at *home [KCSiE 2026 Part Two – The Management of Safeguarding).*

28.11.10 Encourage a culture of protecting children, listening to children and their wishes and feelings.

28.12 Raise awareness:

28.12.1 Ensure that the child protection policies are known, understood, and used appropriately.

28.12.2 Ensure that the child protection policy is reviewed annually in consultation with staff members, and procedures are updated and reviewed regularly and implemented, and that the governing body is kept up to date and actively involved.

28.12.3 Work strategically to ensure policies and procedures are up to date and drive and support development work within the academy.

28.12.4 Ensure that the child protection policy is available to parents and carers and uploaded to the academy website and make parents/carers aware that referrals may be made about suspected abuse or neglect

28.12.5 Ensure all staff receive induction training covering child protection before working with children and can recognise and report any concerns immediately as they arise.

29. Child Protection file - The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible:

29.1 For ensuring that when a child leaves the academy or college their 'child protection,' 'child in need' file or 'confidential' file is transferred to the new academy or college at the same time the child goes on roll of its new academy or education provision.

29.2 For keeping a record of the number of children open and subject to CP, CiN and LAC concerns is maintained and shared with the governing body annually.

29.3 For keeping a record or data on the cohort of children having or have had a social worker and social care involvement will be maintained.

29.4 Our academy will maintain, keep and storing records, where a concern about a child has been identified in accordance with statutory guidance in KCSiE 2026.

29.5 The Senior DSL and DSL team ensure all concerns and incidents are reported, recorded, responded to through electronic management systems. The transfer of information and individual case files is carried out electronically should a child move academy or leave to go to either Elective Home Education, alternative education placement, or college.

29.6 Availability - During term time the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead *(or a Deputy)* will always be available (during academy or college hours) for staff in the academy or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Leads a member of the senior leadership team will be nominated to provide cover. The lead/deputy DSL can be contacted via phone number or DSL all year round for any out-of-school activities in line with the guidance contained in DfE KCSiE 2026 Part Two.

30. Principal

30.1 **The Principal of the academy will ensure that:**

30.1.1 All policies and procedures, (particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation), are understood, and followed by **all** staff.

30.1.2 The academy maintains an up-to-date Single Central Record (SCR) which is reviewed regularly and is compliant with statutory guidance.

30.1.3 Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children.

30.1.4 All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies.

30.1.5 The Principalwill ensure all staff including supply teachers and volunteers have access to and read and understand the requirements placed on them through: - the academy Child Protection Policy; the *Staff Code of Conduct Policy.*

30.1.6 The Principalwill ensure there are mechanisms in place to assist staff to fully understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in KCSiE 2026.

30.1.7 Where there is an allegation made against a member of staff (either paid or unpaid, including volunteers) that meets the criteria for a referral to the LADO, then the Principalor principal will discuss the allegation immediately with the LADO (within 24 hours) and ensure that cases are managed as per Part Four: Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, trainee teachers other staff, volunteers, and contractors in KCSiE 2026. If the allegation is against the Headteacher/Principal, then the Chair of the Governing Body will manage the allegation – see below.

31. Governing Body and Multi- Academy Trust

31.1 We recognise our Governing body has a strategic responsibility for our academy's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure they comply with their duties under legislation and must have regarding to KCSiE 2026, ensuring policies, procedures and training in our academy are effective and always comply with the law.

31.2 The Trust Board and local Governing body will be collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the academy's ethos and reflected in the academy's day to day safeguarding practices by:

31.2.1 Ensuring there is an individual member of the governing body to take responsibility for safeguarding in the academy.

31.2.2 Ensuring that the academy has effective policies and procedures in line with statutory guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026) as well as with local DDSCP guidance and monitors the academy's compliance with them.

31.2.3 Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to promote a child's welfare.

31.2.4 Recognising the importance of information sharing between agencies through the statutory guidance provided within KCSiE 2026 page 38, 138 to 150 and annex B pages 183.

31.2.5 Ensuring cooperation with the local authority and other safeguarding partners.

31.2.6 Ensuring that all staff, supply teachers and governors read and fully understand at least KCSiE 2026 Part One as a minimum and ensure that there are mechanisms in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as required within the guidance.

31.2.7 Ensuring that the governing body understands it is collectively responsible for the academy's safeguarding arrangements, even though a governor will be nominated as the 'Safeguarding Governor' and person who will champion all safeguarding requirements.'

31.2.8 Ensuring that all members of the governing body will undertake safeguarding training to ensure they have the knowledge and information needed to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of robust 'safeguarding arrangements and act as the 'critical friend'. This training must focus on their strategic role and not on operational procedures.

31.2.9 Ensuring that the Chair of Governors and named Safeguarding Governor will access role specific training to enable them to comply and discharge their child protection/ safeguarding responsibilities including should any allegations be made against the Headteacher/ Principal.

31.2.10 Ensuring that there is a training strategy in place for all staff, including the headteacher, so that child protection training is undertaken and refreshed in line with KCSiE 2026 and DDSCP guidance.

31.2.11 Ensuring that staff undergo safeguarding child protection training at induction and that there are arrangements in place for staff to be regularly updated to ensure that safeguarding remains a priority.

31.2.12 Ensuring that temporary staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the academy's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.

31.2.13 Ensuring there are procedures in place to manage allegations against staff and exercise disciplinary functions in respect of dealing with a complaint KCSiE 2026 Part Four.

31.2.14 Ensuring that arrangements/procedures are in place to manage and provide clarity on the process for sharing 'low level' concerns, which should be referred to within the academy Staff Code of Conduct, (Allegations and concerns about a staff member that after initial consideration by the 'case manager' do not meet the criteria for a referral to LADO).

31.2.15 Ensuring a response if there is an allegation against the principal by liaising with the LADO or other appropriate officers within the local authority.

31.2.16 Ensuring appropriate responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, including child sexual exploitation and going missing in future.

31.2.17 Being aware of the issues involving the complexity of serious violence and sexual violence and sexual harassment between children and ensure the academy has policy, procedures and staff are trained (including the DSL and Senior Leadership)

31.2.18 Being alert to the growing concerns involving knife crime and ensure the academy works closely with the police and safeguarding partners to raise awareness of the impact of such crime and adopt proactive practice to address concerns locally and within the community.

31.2.19 Ensuring appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children online and children are taught about keeping safe online through the curriculum.

31.2.20 Giving staff the opportunities to contribute and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.

31.2.21 Ensuring that when the academy's premises are used for non-academy activities assurances are received that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place. This will apply regardless of whether or not children who attend the provision are on the academy or college roll.

31.2.22 Ensuring any safeguarding concerns involving outside organisations will be addressed through our safeguarding policies and procedures.

31.2.23 Preventing people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, making decisions about additional checks and ensuring volunteers are supervised as required.

31.2.24 Ensuring at least one person on an interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.

31.2.25 Informing any new prospective employees' candidate that our academy will carry out online checks (KCSiE 2026 Part Three Safer Recruitment).

31.2.26 Recognising that certain children are more vulnerable than others, such as looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities.

31.2.27 Being open to accepting that child abuse and incidents can happen within the academy and be available to act decisively upon them.

32. Looked After Children – The Role of Designated Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead

32.1 A teacher is appointed who has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who are looked after. They have the appropriate training. The Designated Teacher will work with the Virtual Academy to ensure that the progress of the child is supported.

32.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also have details of the child's social worker and the name of the Head of the Virtual Academy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will

work closely with the Designated Teacher, as we recognise that children may have been abused or neglected before becoming looked after. We will ensure their ongoing safety and wellbeing as well as supporting their education, through linking with their social worker, carers, and parents where appropriate.

32.3 We also recognise those children who were previously Looked-After potentially remain vulnerable and all staff will be informed of the importance of maintaining support for them through our academy pastoral system. As an academy we will continue to recognise the importance of working with agencies and take prompt actions where necessary to safeguard these children, who may remain vulnerable.

32.4 The Head of the Virtual academy includes responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care. Therefore, academy's should recognise that these children may require additional support to be successful in academy. Any LAC children's needs will be responded to in accordance with local Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and KCSiE 2026 paragraph 233- 244).

33. Children with Special Educational Needs

33.1 We recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges on and offline. Children with SEN and or disabilities are especially vulnerable when identifying concerns due to their impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.

33.2 All staff are aware that additional barrier can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation for children with SEND and be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. They may not always show outward signs and may have communications barriers and difficulties in reporting challenges, especially involving exploitation or incidents involving child- on -child harm, abuse, or harassment and particularly where that harassment or harm is of a sexual nature. Our staff's vigilance will be a supporting factor to keeping all children safe.

33.3 Staff should consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place. Further information can be found in the DfE:

• SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, and Supporting Pupils at Academy with Medical Conditions.

33.4 Our policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect, and exploitation in this group of children which include:

33.4.1 assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.

33.4.2 these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children, the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs,

33.4.3 communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse,

33.4.4 the need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others,

33.4.5 that these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care, and

33.4.6 these children may have issues over cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in academys or the consequences of doing so.

33.5 Addressing individual behaviour concerns and incidents considering the child's SEN and disabilities.

33.5.1 Recognising and having in place additional support for example to teach, advise, mentor and support children with SEND from online harms, hoaxes, bullying, grooming and radicalisation and enable them to have confidence and the ability to stay safe online, either in academys or outside the academy environment.

33.6 For the safeguarding of children with SEND in our school, relevant policies and risk assessments are in place and are available to all staff. These include a Medical Needs Policy, a SEND Policy, an Intimate Care and Administration of Medication Risk Assessment.

34. Acting where concerns are identified.

34.1 Our staff recognise the difference between concerns about a child and a child in immediate danger.

34.2 If staff have concerns about a child, they will need to decide what action to take. A discussion should take place with the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead, to agree a course of action.

34.3 If a child is in immediate danger or risk of harm a referral will be made immediately to Starting Point and/or immediately to the police if at imminent risk of harm by the member of staff if required, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead being informed of the referral.

34.4 If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about alleged abuse, there are several actions that staff will undertake to support the child:

34.4.1 The key facts will be established in language that the child understands, and the child's words will be used in clarifying/expanding what has been said.

34.4.2 No promises will be made to the child, e.g., to keep secrets.

34.4.3 Staff will stay calm and be available to listen.

34.4.4 Staff will actively listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying.

34.4.5 Where questions are asked, this should be done without pressurising and only using open questions.

34.4.6 Leading questions should be avoided as much as possible.

34.4.7 Questioning should not be extensive or repetitive.

34.4.8 Staff will not/ should not put words in the child's mouth but will subsequently note the main points carefully.

34.4.9 A full written record will be kept by the staff duly signed and dated, including the time the conversation with the child took place, outline what was said, comment on the child's body language etc.

34.4.10 It is not appropriate for staff to make children write statements about abuse that may have happened to them or get them to sign the staff record.

34.4.11 Staff will reassure the child and let them know that they were right to inform them and inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on.

34.4.12 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be immediately informed unless the disclosure has been made to them.

34.4.13 Information should be shared with children's social care without delay, either to the child's own social worker or to Starting Point. Children's Social Care will liaise with the police where required, which will ensure an appropriate police officer response rather than a uniformed response.

34.4.14 The Police would only therefore be contacted directly in an emergency or if a child is in immediate risk of harm, abuse, or danger.

Staff <u>should never</u> attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected child abuse by interviewing the child or any others involved, especially if a criminal act is thought to have occurred. The only people who should investigate child abuse and harm are Social Care, Police, or the NSPCC.

35. Confidentiality

35.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential; however, a member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to children; children will not be given promises that any information about an allegation will not be shared.

35.2 Where there is a child protection concern it will be passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or to children's social care. When a child is in immediate danger children's social care/the police will be contacted.

35.3 The Principal or Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff, including the level of involvement of other agencies, only on a 'need to know' basis.

35.4 All staff are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. They are aware that the Data Protection Act 1998 should not be a barrier to sharing of information where failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Staff should refer to the DfE Data Protection guidance for academys (DfE, 2023 updated July 2026).

35.5 We acknowledge further guidance can be found by visiting Derby and Derbyshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership website: Welcome to the Online Procedures for the Derby and...

36. Information Sharing

36.1 Effective sharing of information between practitioners and local organisations and agencies is essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision to keep children safe. Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) now known as Rapid Reviews (RRs) have highlighted that missed opportunities to record and thereby understand the significance of sharing information in a timely manner can have severe consequences for the safety and welfare and well-being of children (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026).

36.2 We will adopt the information sharing principles detailed in statutory safeguarding guidance contained within:

36.2.1 DfE KCSiE 2026 has several sections which provide clarity on information sharing processes and GDPR including within Annex B which makes clear the powers to hold and use information when promoting children's welfare.

36.2.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 paragraphs 19 to 37 and on pages 17 - 20.

36.2.3 Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, and carers (which has been updated to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation (GPDR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

36.2.4 Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) Policy and Practice Guidance.

36.2.5 All staff, Governors and Trustees undertake annual Data Protection training

37. Records and Monitoring *[KCSiE 2026 paragraphs 72 to 73, Part Four, Part Five, Annex B]*

37.1 There are arrangements in school to maintain and monitor good quality records to ensure they are managed to reflect the child's journey through the safeguarding system and engagement with statutory agencies, including Social Care, Early Help, Police, CAMHS, Health and other services. An electronic system (CPOMS) is used to record and monitor safeguarding notes.

37.2 Any concerns about a child will be recorded in writing within 24 hours. All records will provide a factual and evidence-based account and there will be accurate recording of any actions. Records will be signed, dated and, where appropriate, witnessed. Where an opinion or professional judgement is recorded this should be clearly stated as such. As well as keeping records of concerns, discussions and decisions, designated safeguarding leads should keep record of the rationale for any decisions made.

37.3 At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or academy be asked to or consider taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person; this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being taken into managing allegations procedures. The body maps should be used in accordance with recording guidance and to support clarity for example of areas of injury, marks and bruising and or touching.

37.4 Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services e.g., Starting Point or the child's social worker if already an open case to social care.

37.5 A chronology will be kept in the main academy file prior to the commencement of a concern file. Staff, particularly pastoral staff, will record any minor concerns on the chronology and will take responsibility for alerting the Designated Safeguarding Lead should the number of concerns rise or, in their professional judgement, become significant. At the point at which a concern file (see below) is commenced then the chronology can be transferred to the concern file.

37.6 Our academy will ensure all our files will be available for external scrutiny for example by a regulatory agency or because of a serious case review or audit.

38. Why recording is important

38.1 Our staff will be encouraged to understand why it is important that recording is comprehensive and accurate and what the messages from serious case reviews are in terms of recording and sharing information. It is often when a chronology of information is pieced together that the level of concern escalates or the whole or wider picture becomes known.

38.2 Our academy Mercia Academy, uses CPOMs.

38.3 We acknowledge without information being recorded it can be lost. This could be crucial information, the importance of which is not always necessarily apparent at the time. On occasions, this information could be crucial evidence to safeguard a child or be evidence in future criminal prosecutions.

39. The Child Protection (CP), Child in Need (CiN) or Confidential file

39.1 A 'child protection' or 'confidential' file should be commenced in the event of:

- A referral to /Children's Social Care.
- A number of minor concerns on the child's main academy file.
- Any child open to social care.

39.2 All 'child protection' or 'confidential' file should contain the following

- A front sheet.
- A chronology.
- A record of concern in more detail and body map, where appropriate.
- A record of concerns and issues shared by others.

39.3 The academy will keep electronic records of concerns about children even where there is no need to refer the matter to Starting Point /Children's Social Care (or similar) immediately, but these records will be kept within the separate concerns file.

39.4 Records will be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead, to evidence and support actions taken by staff in discharging their safeguarding arrangements. Original notes will be retained (but clearly identified as such) as this is a contemporaneous account; they may be important in any criminal proceedings arising from current or historical allegations of abuse or neglect.

39.5 The 'confidential' file can be active or non-active in terms of monitoring i.e., a child is no longer LAC, subject to a child protection plan or EHAF and this level of activity can be recorded on the front sheet as a start and end date. If future concerns arise, they can be re-activated and indicated as such on the front sheet and on the chronology as new information arises.

40. Transfer of child's child protection file, child in need, LAC, or confidential file (statutory requirement):

40.1 Our academy will adopt the file transfer guidance contained in KCSiE 2026 and ensure when a child moves academy/education provision their child protection/confidential file is sent securely to their new educational setting when the child starts/leaves the academy.

40.2 For those children subject of social care and safeguarding agency involvement will ensure the file is able to evidence the child's journey and include key information as described in KCSiE 2026 should a child subject to social care involvement transfer academy's, college, or education provider we will ensure the child's child protection or confidential file move is transferred within 5 days as required by KCSiE.

40.3 Our Senior DSLs will liaise directly with the receiving academy, college or alternative placement and hold a discussion to share important information to support the child's transfer to ensure the child remains safeguarded, has any 'reasonable adjustments' agreed, and put in place and to ensure the changes experienced by the child are as smooth as possible to enable a positive integration experience and engagement with new staff and learning.

40.4 When a student moves to or from the academy, if there are issues or concerns, a conversation between DSLs from both settings is recommended as good practice.

40.5 In accordance with KCSiE 2026 we will maintain information on cohorts of children who have been open to social care, have had a social worker or who are closed to social care and may have returned to the family home. This information will only be considered for sharing 'if appropriate' with the new academy or provider in advance of the child leaving to allow for the new academy to continue supporting the children who have had a social worker or been victims of abuse, including those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme.

40.6 When a child attends Alternative Provision the safeguarding file will remain with the child's academy, the DSL must share relevant information to allow the Alternative Provision to safeguard the child. [KCSiE 2026 Annex B]

41. Recording Practice

41.1 Timely and accurate recording will take place when there are any issues regarding a child.

41.2 A recording of each and every incident or concern for the child will be made, including any telephone calls to other professionals. These will also be recorded on the chronology and kept within the child protection file for that child, as over time they are likely to help identify any patterns or emerging risks and needs. This will include any contact from other agencies who may wish to discuss concerns relating to a child. Actions will be agreed, and roles and responsibility of each agency will be clarified, and outcomes recorded.

41.3 Further detailed recording will be added to the record of concern and will be signed and dated. Records will include an analysis of the event or concerns and will take account of the holistic needs of the child, and any historical information held on the child's file.

41.4 Support and advice will be sought from social care, or early help whenever necessary. In this way a picture can emerge, and this will assist in promoting an evidence-based assessment and determining any action(s) that needs to be taken.

41.5 This may include no further action, whether an Early Help Assessment should be undertaken, or whether a referral should be made to Starting Point/Children's Social Care in-line with the Threshold for access to services published September 2021, or any later edition made available by Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

41.6 Such robust practice across child protection and in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will assist the academy and DSL team in the early identification of any concerns which may require addressing further and the prevention of future harm, risk, or abuse.

41.7 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm (through the concern file and through an ongoing dialogue with pastoral staff). They will ensure that we contribute to assessments of need and support multi-agency plans for those children.

42. Educating Young People – Opportunities to teach safeguarding

(KCSiE 2026 paragraphs 156 to 166)

42.1 As an academy we will teach children in an age-appropriate way about the four Cs of online safety, content, contact, conduct and commerce as outlined in KCSiE 2026 to include youth produced imagery, on-line risks associated with social networking to prevent harm by providing them with the skills, attributes, and knowledge to help them navigate risks, including covering online safety, remote learning, filters and monitoring, information security, cyber-crime, fake news, disinformation and conspiracy theories, reviewing online safety platforms and use of mobile technology. We will ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.

42.2 The education we provide for online safety will take into account the need for children to learn using online technologies to include generative artificial intelligence in a safe environment whether that be in academy, in the home or in a community environment. This will also be taught as part of a wider RSHE programme, as well as through other subject areas and ICT.

42.3 We will ensure a whole academy approach is in place to promote giving children the space to explore key issues in a sensitive way and the confidence to seek the support of adults should they encounter problems or online harms, hoaxes or harassment including involving incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children.

42.4 Our academy is a mobile free environment by default: this includes lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

42.5 Our arrangements will be regularly reviewed to address this additional area of safeguarding as technologies change on a regular basis and having access to smart technology could mean some children, whilst at academy, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

42.6 The academy RSHE policy is available to view on the school website. Our policy will have due regard for the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance and will conform to the statutory guidance applicable to schools from September 2026.

42.7 Information about keeping safe online is shared widely and children are regularly taught about online safety through a planned programme of education and communication. Pupils learn about online risks, including cyberbullying, online exploitation, inappropriate content, privacy, online relationships, misinformation, gaming, artificial intelligence, and the safe use of social media, through the Personal Development curriculum and through the Computing curriculum, assemblies, tutor time activities and through our Global Issues curriculum focusing on aspects such as misinformation and social media usage. Age-appropriate guidance is revisited regularly to ensure pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online both in and beyond academy.
Parents and carers are supported through newsletters, the academy's website, online safety guidance, information evenings and communications from safeguarding leaders. These provide practical advice on parental controls, screen use, social media platforms, online gaming, online fraud, and emerging digital risks.
Each academy ensures that clear reporting mechanisms are understood by all pupils and families. Children are taught to report concerns to a trusted adult, tutor, class teacher, pastoral leader or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the academy safeguarding team if they have concerns about a child's online activity or wellbeing.
Information about external sources of support is also widely shared. This may include organisations such as CEOP, Childline, the NSPCC, Internet Matters, the UK Safer Internet Centre and local safeguarding services. Contact details and links are available through the academy's website and safeguarding information pages.
The effectiveness of online safety education is monitored through trust wide safeguarding reviews inpupil voice, safeguarding records, curriculum review and engagement with parents to ensure that emerging risks are identified and addressed promptly.

42.8 Children unable to attend school due to a health need should receive suitable, flexible education tailored to their circumstances. The SENCo and/or Attendance/pastoral team will arrange appropriate support, which may include an adapted timetable, home learning, curriculum adjustments, or home visits. Provision will be planned in partnership with parents and relevant agencies, with regular review meetings to monitor and adjust support as needed.

43. Helplines and reporting

43.1 Children can talk to a Child Line counsellor 24 hours a day about anything that is worrying them by ringing 0800 11 11 or in an online chat at https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/

43.2 Where staff members feel unable to raise an issue with their employer or feel they have a genuine concern that is not being addressed we acknowledge they may wish to consider whistleblowing channels. Likewise, if parents and carers are concerned about their child,

they can contact the NSPCC Helpline by ringing 0800 028 028 0295, or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk

43.3 Advise and information for parents including weblinks can be found on our school website *https://www.merciaacademy.org.uk/about-us/general/safeguarding/*

44. Child on child sexual harassment and sexual violence

44.1 The academy has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence. Abuse will never be tolerated or seen as banter, just having a laugh or part of growing up.

44.2 All staff must have 'it could happen here approach'.

44.3 Forms of child-on-child abuse can be:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as
- teenage relationship abuse),
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair
- pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm,
- physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon,
- harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment –
- which may include misogyny/misandry.
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi nudes, including those generated using AI.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as
- forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in
- sexual activity with a third party,
- upskirting (which is a criminal offence44), which typically involves taking a
- picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the
- intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual
- gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

44.4 Disclosures or concerns about HSB must be reported immediately to the DSL following the reporting procedures. The Hackett continuum will be used to measure the behaviour.

44.5 Records will be recorded on CPOMS.

44.6 All children involved in an incident will be seen as victims.

44.7 The academy will, if necessary, seek advice from a safeguarding partner or refer to resources from the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.

44.8 In some cases, such as one of incidents or HSB or sexual harassment, it may be appropriate for the academy or college to manage the situation internally.

44.9 In some cases, the academy will have a statutory duty to refer the incident to the police and/or social care. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this should be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator(s) is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach. The following advice may help academy's and colleges decide when to engage the Police and what to expect of them when they do.

44.10 The academy will seek to protect children's anonymity.

44.11 Risk and needs assessments will be put in place.

45. Children who are questioning their gender

45.1 The academy recognises that some children and young people may question their gender. We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, respectful and inclusive environment for all pupils, while ensuring that safeguarding and the welfare of the child remain paramount.

45.2 In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the academy will adopt a safeguarding-led approach when responding to any child who is questioning their gender. Decisions will be made on an individual basis, taking account of the child's age, developmental stage, wishes and feelings, wider vulnerabilities, educational needs, mental health, neurodiversity, family circumstances and the rights and wellbeing of other children. The child's best interests will always be the primary consideration.

45.3 The academy will not initiate social transition. Where a child or parent/carer requests changes relating to social transition, including changes to name, pronouns, appearance or how a child is treated within the academy community, these matters will be considered through the academy's safeguarding procedures and under the leadership of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Any decisions will be carefully assessed, recorded and reviewed.

45.4 Parents and carers will be involved in the vast majority of cases. The academy will only consider delaying or limiting parental involvement where there is reasonable cause to believe that doing so is necessary to protect the child from a risk of significant harm. In such circumstances, the DSL will seek appropriate safeguarding advice and take action in accordance with child protection procedures.

45.5 The academy acknowledges that children who are questioning their gender may have additional vulnerabilities or complex needs and may benefit from appropriate health, social care or other professional involvement. The academy will work collaboratively with families and relevant agencies where appropriate to promote the child's welfare.

45.6 The academy will comply with all relevant legal duties, including safeguarding, equality, data protection and human rights legislation. Arrangements relating to toilets, changing facilities, residential accommodation, sport and the recording of pupil information will be managed in line with current statutory guidance and the academy's legal obligations.

45.7 All concerns, discussions, decisions and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in accordance with the academy's safeguarding and record-keeping procedures.

45.8 KCSiE 2026 paragraphs 95-98 confirms that academy's and colleges can lawfully separate children according to their biological sex for sport. In cases where a gender questioning child makes a request relating to how they participate, if "there are no safety concerns", settings should consider "whether supporting social transition is overall in the best interests of the child, as well as considering the impact on other children and the aim of creating safe and fair environments for children to participate in PE."

45.9 KCSiE 2026 Paragraphs 105-116 explain that when it comes to toilets, showers and changing facilities, children must not be allowed into the spaces "designated for the opposite biological sex." In instances where a child does not want to use these spaces, "academys and colleges should consider whether they can provide an alternative." Academys and colleges must keep a record of any such situations and "ensure they are communicated appropriately" and regularly reviewed.

45.10 Paragraphs 197-202 include new guidance that academys and colleges must not allow a child to share overnight accommodation with a child of the opposite biological sex. This must be considered when responding to a request for social transition, where the rule still applies. If a child doesn't want to share with a child of the same biological sex, alternative arrangements may be sought, but they "should not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of any child."

The following appendices are a part of this policy -

Appendix 1	Procedure to follow in cases of possible, alleged or suspected abuse, or serious cause for concern about a child
Appendix 2	Process for dealing with safeguarding concerns or allegations against staff (including headteachers), supply teachers, volunteers, contractors and individuals or organisations hiring the academy premises
Appendix 3	Low Level concern Policy
Appendix 4	DCC LA Flow Chart 2026-2027 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or at risk of harm, neglect, or online harm.

Appendix 1

PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IN CASES OF POSSIBLE, ALLEGED OR SUSPECTED ABUSE, OR SERIOUS CAUSE FOR CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

Contents

A	General
B	Individual Staff/Volunteers/Other Adults - main procedural steps
C	Designated Safeguarding Lead – main procedural steps

A. **General**

1) The Derby and Derbyshire Children Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures contain the inter-agency processes, protocols and expectations for safeguarding children. (Available on the website website) The Designated Safeguarding Lead is expected to be familiar with these, particularly the indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation and the referral processes.
2) It is important that all parties act swiftly and avoid delays.
3) Any person may seek advice and guidance from the Starting Point Children's Duty Professionals Consultation Line, particularly if there is doubt about how to proceed. Any adult, whatever their role, can take action in his/her own right to ensure that an allegation or concern is reported to the investigating agencies.
4) A record, dated (including the day and time) and signed, must be made as to what has been alleged, noticed and reported, and kept securely and confidentially.
5) In many cases of concern there will be an expectation that there have already been positive steps taken to work with parents and relevant parties to help alleviate the concerns and effect an improvement for the child. This is appropriate where it is thought a child may be in need in some way, and require assessment to see whether additional support and services are required. An example might be where it is suspected a child may be the subject of neglect. In most cases the parents' knowledge and consent to the referral are expected, unless there is reason for this not being in the child's interest. However, there will be circumstances when informing the parent/carer of a referral might put the child at risk and/or undermine Police enquiries, and in individual cases, advice from Children's Social Care will need to be taken.

B. **Individual Staff/Volunteers/Other Adults – main procedural steps**

1) When a child makes a disclosure, or when concerns are received from other sources, do not investigate, ask leading questions, examine or photograph children, or promise confidentiality. Children making disclosures should be reassured and if possible, at this stage should be informed what action will be taken next.
2) As soon as possible make a dated (including the day), timed and signed record of what has been disclosed or noticed, said or done and report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the academy.
3) If the concern involves the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer, a visitor, a governor, a trainee or other adult in academy, the Principal must be informed.
4) If the safeguarding concern or allegation is about the Principal, the information should normally be passed to the Chair of Governors or failing that to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
5) If this has not already been done, inform the child (or other party who has raised the concern) what action you have taken.

C. Designated Safeguarding Lead – main procedural steps

1) Begin an individual case record for each child involved which will hold a record of communications and actions to be stored securely (see section on Records, Monitoring and Transfer). Include a chronology of case activity.
2) Where initial enquiries do not justify a referral to the investigating agencies, inform the initiating adult and monitor the situation, offering support as required. If in doubt, seek advice from the Starting Point professional's consultation line.
3) Share information confidentially with those who need to know.
4) Where there is a child protection concern requiring immediate, same day, intervention from Children's Social Care, the Starting Point Children's Duty should be contacted by phone (contact the local authority Children's Services where the child lives). Written confirmation should be made within 24 hours on the Multi-Agency Referral Form to Children's Social Care. All other referrals should be made using the online form (see link link)
5) If the concern is about children using harmful sexual behaviour or causing child-on-child abuse, also refer to Part 5 of "Keeping Children Safe in Education" and the local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
6) If it appears that urgent medical attention is required arrange for the child to be taken to hospital (normally this means calling an ambulance) accompanied by a member of staff who must inform medical staff that non-accidental injury is suspected. Parents must be informed that the child has been taken to hospital.
7) Exceptional circumstances: if it is feared that the child might be at immediate risk on leaving academy, take advice from the Starting Point Professionals Consultation line (for instance about difficulties if the academy day has ended, or on whether to contact the police). Remain with the child until the Social Worker takes responsibility. If in these circumstances a parent arrives to collect the child, the member of staff has no right to withhold the child, unless there are current legal restrictions in force (eg a restraining order). If there are clear signs of physical risk or threat, Starting Point Children's Duty should be updated and the Police should be contacted immediately.

Appendix 3

Low-level Concerns Policy

1.0 **Purpose**

1.1 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 academy. 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" (Feb 2022) (sometimes called the safeguarding code of conduct) are lived, monitored, and reinforced.

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

2.0 **Who does the policy apply to?**

2.1 This policy applies to all staff and other individuals who work or volunteer in academy.

3.0 **Definition of a low-level concern**

3.1 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 academy may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the "Guidance for safer working practice" (Feb 2022), 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

4.0 **Reporting low-level concerns**

4.1 Where a low-level concern has been identified this will be reported as soon as possible to the headteacher. However, it is never too late to share a low-level concern if this has not already happened. Lionheart has an "Adult Concerns Form" for this purpose.

4.2 Where the Principal is not available, the information will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy (ie the most senior member of SLT acting in this role).

4.3 Low-level concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be reported to the Principal and those about the Principal will be reported to the Chair of Governors. A low-level concern about a supply teacher or contractor will be reported to their employer.

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

5.0 **Recording concerns**

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

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

6.0 **Responding to low-level concerns**

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

  i) is consistent with the "Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings" (Feb 2022): no further action will be required,

  ii) 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.

  iii) 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 academy's Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.

  iv) 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 academy'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

7.0 **Can the reporting person remain anonymous?**

7.1 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.

8.0 **Should staff report concerns about themselves (i.e. self-report)?**

8.1 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.

9.0 **Where behaviour is consistent with the "Guidance for safer working practice" (Feb 2022)**

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

10.0 **Should the low-level concerns file be reviewed?**

10.1 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.

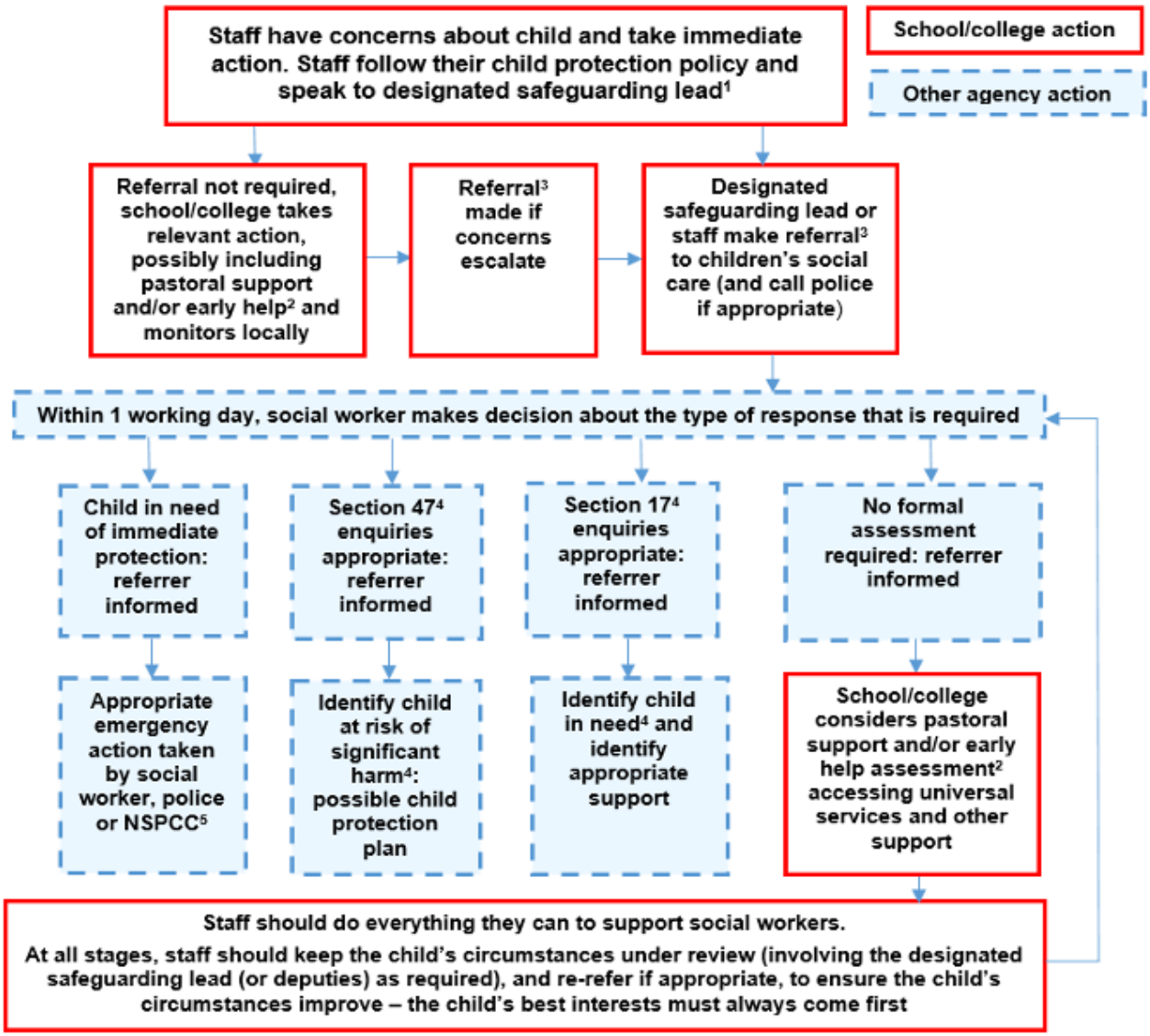
11.0 **References**

11.1 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.

12.0 **What is the role of the Governing Body?**

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

Appendix 4



[1] In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.

[2] Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated Family Help, a family help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides detailed guidance on the Family Help process.

[3] Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. See Working Together to Safeguard Children.

[4] Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

[5] This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).