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Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2022-2023



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Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Emma Hart	0161 287 8000 eha@osfc.ac.uk
Student Welfare and Additional Learning Support Mgr	Jenny King (DDSL)	0161 287 8000 jkg@osfc.ac.uk
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Colette Morris	colette.morris@oldham.gov.uk 0161 770 8870 / 07583101863 lscb.group@oldham.gov.uk
Chair of governors	Christine Horrocks	c.horrocks@mmu.ac.uk
Channel helpline	Darren Howarth- Counter Terrorism Unit	07827979113 darren.howarth@gmp.police.uk

1. Aims

The College aims to ensure that:

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

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping young people Safe in Education \(2022\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard young people \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). 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 \(Independent college Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the college.
- [The Young People Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of young people.
- 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 young people.
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to young people.
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains colleges' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Young people Safe in Education and will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local young people, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The Oldham local authority (LA)
- A clinical commissioning group for an area within Oldham LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area within the Oldham LA

This policy applies to staff, students, governors and visitors to the College.

This document has been written to inform staff, students and visitors about the College's commitment to safeguarding and the gravity with which it attends to allegations of abuse and other safeguarding risks.

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people means:

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

Child protection: A part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific young people, who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

A **Child in Need** is defined under the Young people Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve and maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a young person, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

Sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos (no longer referred to as sexting) is the sharing of sexual imagery (photos or videos) by young people.

Up skirting typically when a photograph is taken under a person's clothing without them knowing, for sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Duty of Care: The duty which rests upon the College and every employee, volunteer and contractor to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult in our care. Any person in charge of, or working with young people, young people or vulnerable adults, in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care.

Vulnerable Adult: A person who may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against harm or exploitation.

Children and young people: Those who have not reached their 18th birthday.

4. Equality statement

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

We give special consideration to young people who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (see section 9)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic abuse.
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after

5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school. It must underpin all relevant processes and policies and be understood easily by staff and students. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended college and off-site activities. We encourage 'professional curiosity' and for staff to act on any concerns immediately, rather than waiting to be told. Staff must maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

5.1 All staff

All staff will read and understand Part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually. **A**

signed record of completion is kept for all staff.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, all staff related policies, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL, the behaviour statement, and the safeguarding response to young people who go missing from education (Appendix 3)
- The early help process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems and liaising with the DSL/deputy DSL
- The process for making referrals to local authority young people's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play supporting the DSL/deputy DSL
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation
- That mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are well placed to observe students day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where abuse and neglect have been suffered, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACES), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- That safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. (Contextual safeguarding)
- The importance of maintaining appropriate staff/student boundaries in line with Teachers' Standards and the Code of Conduct (Appendix 3, page 33)
- The importance of following remote working/teaching guidelines to ensure they take the necessary steps to keep themselves and students safe (Appendix 3, page 36)
- The fact that students may not feel ready, or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, but this shouldn't stop staff from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Section 13 and Appendix 3 of this policy outline in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

5.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL will be available during College hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Out-of-school hours, the DSL can be contacted via email (including Operation Encompass alerts) and phone number on page 2.

Out-of-hours, non-emergency safeguarding queries can be sent to: support@osfc.ac.uk

When the DSL is absent, Deputy DSLs will act as cover.

If the DSL and deputies are not available, the Principal will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/ out-of-term activities).

The DSL is given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters

- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
Contribute to the assessment of young people
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority young people’s social care, Channel programme and/or police)

The DSL also keeps the Principal informed of any issues and liaises with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns, as appropriate.

The DSL is aware that children/young people must have an ‘appropriate adult’ with police officers.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputy are set out in their job description.

The safeguarding team reads and familiarises themselves with the whole of the KCSiE document with particular reference to the changes outlined in Part 5 for 2021.

5.3 The Local governing body (LGB)

The LGB will approve this policy annually to ensure it complies with the law and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

A Safeguarding lead governor has been appointed to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the LGB.

The Chair of the Trust Board will act as the ‘case manager’ in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Principal, where appropriate.

All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education. Please also refer to section 13.

All governors and trustees should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction, which is regularly updated, to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge.

5.4 The Principal and SLT

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

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of the systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly
- Acting as the ‘case manager’ in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate
- Senior leaders read and are familiar with the KSCiE guidance and are fully aware of the summary of changes.

5.5 The appropriate adult (AA)

How the Police conduct themselves when a person is questioned is covered by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) Code C. In paragraph 1.7 the PACE guidance advises that “The role of the appropriate adult is to safeguard the rights, entitlements and welfare of juveniles and vulnerable persons. It is expected that the AA will support the student to understand what is being said to them, allowing them to participate fully in the process. Where this is a member of staff, this will be reported to the DSL and recorded. In some cases, the AA may be a parent/carer.

6. Confidentiality

Oldham Sixth Form College has the following principles with regards to sharing information within the College/Pinnacle Learning Trust, our 3 safeguarding partners and other educational providers:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding including making necessary arrangements to ensure that the college is best placed to liaise effectively with schools to ensure college staff know who these students are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; thus supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that students in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these students.
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of young people and young people
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping young people safe
- Staff should never promise a young person that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- The government's 'Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners' includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support the DSL/deputy DSL who have to make decisions about sharing information
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or team)

Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 16.

7. Recognising abuse and taking action

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

Covid-19 Update 2021: The Coronavirus crisis led to the lockdown of schools and colleges and resulted in a loss of routine, structure, social interaction and friendships, opportunities and freedom for many young people and their families. The ability of schools, colleges and social services to identify abuses or safeguarding concerns during this time was limited by remote working and the loss of face-to-face contact. From September 2020, as young people returned to full time education, there has been a requirement for all staff to be vigilant and prepared as a surge in disclosures and abuse referrals was likely. Staff continue to be vigilant to this. Staff are also fully updated on the impact of isolation during covid on radicalisation risk and how extremists have targeted young people. **The actions outlined in 7.1 to 7.8 are critical in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our young people.**

A risk assessment for students who returned, were new to college with EHC plans/High Needs, are in care, are subject to child protection orders or are on the edge of care was carried out routinely to ensure appropriate support was and still is in place. Additionally, this applies to students that are an ongoing source of concern to college welfare and support practitioners, but where external involvement is not required, has ended or has been withdrawn. The Student Welfare and Additional Support Team are prepared for this

7.1 If a young person is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

Tell the DSL/deputy DSL immediately. The DSL/deputy DSL will then make a referral to young people's social care and/or the police if they believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger.

7.2 If a young person makes a disclosure to you

If a young person discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the young person that they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not

promise to keep it a secret

- Type up your conversation as soon as possible in the young person's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it. Typed accounts should be documented on CPOMs.

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

The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a student has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a student may be at risk, are set out in appendix 3.

Any teacher who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **student under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally. **This is a statutory duty**, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. The DSL will be present and act as support. Staff should not examine students.

Any member of staff who suspects a student is at risk of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL and document these concerns in the usual way. The DSL/deputy DSL who will then involve young people's social care as appropriate. The member of staff to whom the disclosure has been made must be present when social care/the police are contacted..

7.4 If you have concerns about a young person

Figure 1 on page 12 illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child/ young person's welfare.

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

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL/deputy DSL or member of the safeguarding team is not available, do not delay and speak to a member of the senior leadership team for advice.

Early help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL/deputy DSL will lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Family Connect or Positive Steps may be involved, depending on the appropriate level of support.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the College will consider a referral to local authority social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Students aged 16-18 Years

It must be stressed that this age range is covered in law by the Children's Act 1989 and so any suspicion or allegation of abuse should be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively. Staff who have concerns about apparent injuries or who have been given information by a student which raises their concern, must report their concerns to the designated person, even if the student's stated wishes are to the contrary. Therefore, staff must ensure that they do not guarantee absolute confidentiality, as these concerns may lead to a subsequent referral to the appropriate agencies.

As a general guideline, the following points should be considered:

1. Is life at risk?
2. Is a criminal act being committed?
3. Are any younger young people involved?
4. What does the young adult want to happen?

The College would encourage, but not force, all young adults under the age of 18 years to make a consensual report of abuse. Under no circumstances should staff take any steps which would be considered as forcing the person to make a disclosure. However, by disclosing information, the young person has already indicated that they need support in dealing with the matter. College's role will be to support them should they need us to do so. If younger young people are at risk, the DSL will take a decision to report concerns to external agencies, against a young person's wishes. Support would be in place and a safeguarding action plan would be discussed with the appropriate external provider.

Students over the Age of 18

If the young person is over 18, we are not subject to the same statutory responsibilities. They are considered adults, but it is nevertheless extremely important to listen to them carefully and with respect. It is important to recognise the professional relationship and position of trust between staff and all students, irrespective of their age. Students with special needs and/or learning disabilities are, however, covered by the act until the age of 21. If a student reveals past abuse or the fact that there are other young people under 18, in the home, who are at risk, the DSL will again follow guidelines and discuss with social care.

In situations which do not fit neatly into the above categories and when staff find themselves uneasy and confused about what action, if any, to take, they should discuss the situation with the Designated person(s) or a member of SLT, who will advise and help them to decide on a course of action. In all cases, there must be an opportunity for the young person's wishes to be heard and considered in decision making.

The child's best interests should be at the heart of everything.

Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to the local authority's social care or the police, the DSL/deputy DSL will make the referral.

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

Colleges, as relevant agencies, should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree to the levels for the different types of assessment as part of local arrangements (e.g. Strategy Group meetings). See appendix 4.

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

The LSCB threshold document to guide professional decision making about safeguarding concerns will be consulted.

The College will work collaboratively with the LA/ LSCB to attend and contribute to safeguarding forums. The College DSL completes an LSCB safeguarding audit bi-annually.

Using the LSCB escalation policy, the College can challenge a safeguarding decision made at conference or by another agency, or professional practice of another agency/worker.

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/lscb/downloads/file/97/resolving_professional_disagreements

7.5 If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL/deputy is not available, do not delay and speak to the Principal/Acting Principal, or another member of the safeguarding team.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of

being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which the

DSL/deputy DSL and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. An email may also be sent to counter.extremism@education.gov.uk, for emergencies only. Call 999 if you:

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

7.6 If you have a mental health concern

- Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Staff are alert to the behavioural signs that suggest a young person may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- If staff have a mental health concern about a young person that is also a safeguarding concern, they are advised to take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4.
- If you have a mental health concern that is not also a safeguarding concern, staff are advised to speak to the DSL in order to agree a course of action.
- OSFC will always refer to the Department for Education guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools where more guidance is required.

7.7 Reporting systems for our students

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the young person's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring students feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put systems in place for students to confidently report abuse
- Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for students
- Make it clear to students that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback

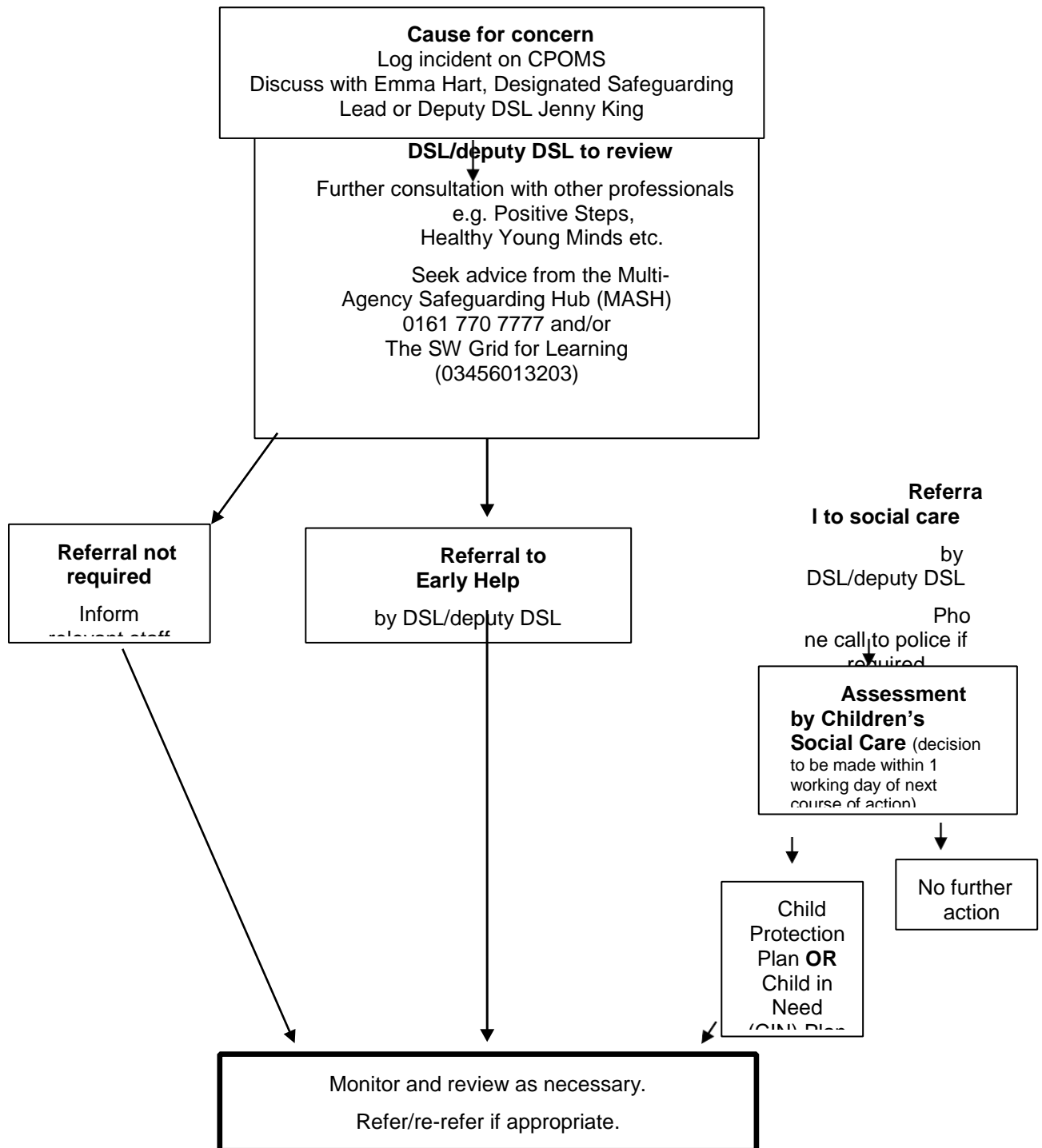
Our reporting systems for students include reporting issues via support@osfc.ac.uk and face to face via their progress tutors, directly to the safeguarding team or through any member of staff they feel comfortable with.

Students are aware of the reporting systems and processes through, for example, discussion in tutorial sessions and through several different permanent displays around the College.

Our students feel safe in submitting any concerns, as reassurances are always provided to them following any disclosures.

Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a young persons’s welfare

(Note – if the DSL/deputy DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action! The additional support team or another member of SLT should be contacted. Staff would directly contact MASH if the concern is urgent and they cannot locate anyone from the team).



NOTE: If staff have any concerns about a child’s welfare they should act on it. They should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action.

7.8 Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

If you have concerns about a member of staff or volunteer, or an allegation is made about a member of staff or volunteer posing a risk of harm to young people, speak to the Principal, HR or the DSL. If the concerns/allegations are about the Principal, speak to the Executive Principal. Concerns about the Executive Principal are directed to the Chair of the trust board.

Staff should report even 'a sense of unease or a nagging doubt' about other staff. Examples could include being 'over friendly' with young people, using inappropriate sexualised or intimidating or offensive language, engaging with a young person on a one-to-one basis behind closed doors, taking photographs of young people on mobile phones. Any such concerns should be 'shared responsibly'.

The Principal/chair of governors will then follow the procedures set out in our Complaints Policy, if appropriate. False allegations or misunderstandings are dealt with by HR appropriately and may be removed from staff records.

7.9 Allegations of abuse made against other students

We recognise that young people are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". A culture is promoted in which victims feel they can come forward and know who to talk to.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child/young person-on-child/young person abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators). However, all child/young person-on-child/young person abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

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

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put students in the College at risk
- Is violent
- Involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, up skirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sharing of nude and semi-nude videos and images)

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

- You must record the allegation and inform the DSL/deputy DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL/deputy DSL will contact the local authority's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL/deputy DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all those involved (including the victim(s), the young person against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL/deputy DSL will contact Healthy Young Minds (formerly CAMHS), if appropriate

We will minimise the risk of child/young person-on-child/young person abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence,

particularly with respect to boys

- Ensuring our pastoral curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensuring students know they can talk to staff confidentially and can report via online systems (e.g. CEOP)
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a student harming a peer could be a sign that the young person is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- Having a visible presence of staff on duty at break times, lunchtimes and before/after College

The College considers disciplining those behind deliberately invented or malicious claims, but also considers whether unfounded claims are a 'cry for help'. Those making reports could have been abused themselves and may need support and referral to social care services. The DSL will decide on appropriate action.

It is clear to all victims that the law on child/young person-on-child/young person abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them.

7.10 Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos

The College's e-safety guidance and the Acceptable Use of ICT policy are based on the '4 Cs' of Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce and staff are provided with examples of the dangers of each.

Staff responsibilities when responding to an incident:

If staff are made aware of an incident involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images or video, you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must not:

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

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

Review of incident

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to student(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or social care
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services

- Any relevant facts about the students involved which would influence risk assessment If there is a need to contact another college, school setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the students involved (in most cases parents should be involved)

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

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

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

Further review of incident

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or social care, the DSL will conduct a further review holding interviews with the students involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

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

Informing parents

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

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through dialling 101 and/or reporting this crime online. The log number is to be recorded.

Recording incidents

All incidents relating to the sharing of nude/semi-nude images and videos and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 12 of this policy also apply to recording these incidents. A separate category for reporting this on CPOMs has been created.

Curriculum coverage

Students are taught about the issues surrounding sharing of nude or semi-nude images and videos as part of our tutorial programme. Teaching covers the following in relation to sexting:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Students also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images
- This policy on sexting is also shared with students so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

8. Online safety and the use of mobile technology

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

To address this, OSFC aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of students, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole College community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole College community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

The 4 key categories of risk

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

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

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

Educate students about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:

- The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
- Keeping personal information private
- How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
- How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring students are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year.
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- A focus on reinforcing the importance of online safety, including making parents aware of what you ask young people to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online).
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
- Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to College for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when students are not present
- Staff will not take pictures or recordings of students on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all students, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in College, use of the College's ICT systems

and use of their mobile and smart technology

- Explain the sanctions we will use if a student is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, students and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search students' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit student's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the College's IT systems. The Hathershaw College uses NetSupport.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our College community

9. Preventative education

Colleges play a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-college approach to preparing students for life in modern Britain and a culture of zero tolerance to sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. This is underpinned by:

- Our behaviour policy
- Our pastoral support system
- Our planned programme of RSHE/Citizenship delivered regularly through tutorial, tackling issues such as: boundaries; consent; body confidence; stereotyping; and sexual harassment

10. Notifying parents

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a young person with parents. The DSL/Deputy DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the young person, we will discuss this with the local authority social care team before doing so.

In the case of all allegations of abuse made against other young people, the DSL/Deputy DSL will notify the parents of all the young people involved as appropriate.

11. Students with special educational needs and disabilities

We recognise that students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the young person's disability without further exploration
- Students being more prone to peer group isolation than other students
- The potential for students with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

We offer extra pastoral support for students with SEN and disabilities including specialist work with our additional support team and progress tutors.

12. Students with a social worker

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

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

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

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

13. Looked After Young people

For Looked After Young people, the College should ensure that all staff have the necessary information to ensure that a looked after child can be kept safe. This may involve information with regards to a child's looked after status being shared with staff. The DSL should have details of the young person's social worker and external agencies working with them and ensure attendance at meetings of professionals and that an appropriate follow up takes place. Any suspected cases of abuse would be immediately reported to the attached social worker and follow the usual procedures.

For care leavers, information should also be passed on to the local authority advisor attached to the young person.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will be responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked after young people in line with [statutory guidance](#).

14. Mobile phones and cameras

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to College for their own use, but these remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with students unless used specifically for educational purposes or for college business.

Oldham Sixth Form College follows the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the College.

Use of mobile phones by students in classrooms is strongly discouraged and, again, should only occur if instructed to do so for specific tasks.

15. Complaints and concerns about College safeguarding policies

15.1 Low-level concerns

The College will follow the Trust low level concerns process, as outlined in the appendix.

Transferable risk

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold can also relate to incidents and/or behaviour that happens outside of College/work. This includes behaviour that may have happened outside of school or college, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as **transferable risk**.

Where appropriate, an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt, advice would be sought from the local authority designated officer (LADO).

It is important that policies and procedures make clear to whom allegations should be reported and that this should be done without delay. A “case manager” will lead any investigation. This will be either the principal, or, where the principal is the subject of an allegation, the chair of governors.

15.2 Complaints against staff

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

Whilst schools and colleges are not the employer of supply teachers, at Oldham Sixth Form College we will ensure all allegations are dealt with properly.

15.3 Other complaints

Safeguarding-related complaints regarding students will be handled by the Principal and/or DSL, who will in turn involve any other College staff or external agencies where relevant.

Complaints relating to our premises will be handled by the Principal with the involvement/support of the Pinnacle Trust Estates Team.

15.4 Whistle-blowing

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the DSL or Principal, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, external whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school’s or college’s safeguarding regime, and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

16. Record Keeping

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing and using our online recording system CEDAR/CPOMS**

**CPOMS is the new safeguarding software package that has been used to report and manage safeguarding cases from week beginning 21st September 2020. Prior to this date, CEDAR was used for reporting and recording safeguarding issues

CPOMS allows us to report current safeguarding concerns. Separate categories have been created to track bullying, sexual harassment, violence and online incidents, so we are fully aware of patterns and concerns.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely on CEDAR/CPOMS and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual young people will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the college, typically six years. However in some circumstances longer i.e. for sexual abuse the recommendation is that they are kept for 10 years from the date of the allegation or until the accused reaches pension age (whichever is the longer period) - Department of Education 2020 and NSPCC guidance.

If a young person for whom the College has, or has had, safeguarding concerns transfers to another College, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main student file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving College and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the young person.

Oldham Sixth Form College shares information with other agencies when this is appropriate, in line with our local safeguarding procedures. Information shared via email is done so using the encryption service EGRESS.

In addition:

- Appendix 2 sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre employment checks.

17. Training

17.1 All staff

All staff members undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including information about the whistle-blowing policy, to ensure they understand the College's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be updated annually.

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify young people at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails and staff briefing) as required, plus sessions on contextual safeguarding concerns. The online safeguarding modules are completed every three years.

Contractors and visitors will also receive a safeguarding information document on arrival to the College. Safeguarding requirements are set out in contracts between contractors and the College. Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable to their role.

17.2 The DSL and deputy DSL

The DSL/deputy DSL will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through LSCB meetings/email group, Safeguarding and Wellbeing forum groups and keeping up-to-date with the latest safeguarding developments).

They will also undertake Prevent Awareness training.

17.3 Governors

All governors receive appropriate training about safeguarding, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities.

17.4 Recruitment : Interview Panels

At least one person conducting an interview for a post at the College has undertaken safer recruitment training. This ensures that as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance and Keeping Young people Safe in Education is covered and is in line with local safeguarding procedures. This should be updated every three years.

18. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team. After every review, it will be approved by the Local Governing Body (LGB).

19. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour statement and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Emotional and Mental Wellbeing strategy
- Equality and Diversity statement
- Forced Marriage Policy
- Trust Staff code of conduct
- Trust Disciplinary Policy
- Health and safety Policy
- Trust Student ICT and Internet Acceptable use (For information on our Smoothwall monitoring and filtering system)
- Lockdown Procedure
- Trips and visits policy
- E-safety guidance document
- Whistle blowing policy
- Trust Complaints Policy
- Trust Policy and procedure Recruitment and Selection
- Trust Low Level Concerns procedures

These appendices are based on the Department for Education’s statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022). Appendix 3 contains additional information on appropriate staff-student boundaries and safety when delivering lessons remotely.

APPENDIX 1: TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

Physical abuse 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 young person.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a young person such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the young person’s emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a young person, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a young person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the young person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on young people. These may include interactions that are beyond a young person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of young people

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a young person in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other young people.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the young person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a young person's basic emotional needs.

APPENDIX 2 : SAFER RECRUITMENT AND DBS CHECKS - POLICY AND PROCEDURES

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the College's single central record (SCR). We follow legal requirements and best practice as set out below.

New staff

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any issues that are publicly available online
- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below).
- Obtain a separate children's barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available and carry out a risk assessment.

- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years after the employment has ceased. We aim to follow the guidance provided on the gov.uk website
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent
- Check that candidates taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

We will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, where possible before the interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with young people.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising young people; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with young people; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

- If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with young people, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.
- We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:
- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

We carry out DBS checks every three years, and have a rolling programme for existing staff.

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the College has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with young people

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

Trainee/student

teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with young people.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment

Governors

All governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity. The chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state. All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008).
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

Staff working in alternative/Collaborative provision settings

Where we place a pupil with an alternative/Collaborative provision provider, Positive Steps Oldham will liaise with the provider(s) to ensure they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there. This information will be shared with The Oldham Sixth Form College.

Adults who supervise students on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect young people from harm. See our work experience guidance.

APPENDIX 3 : SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Young People missing from education

A young person going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a young person may become missing from education, but some young people are particularly at risk. These include young people who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a College
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with young people who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a young person is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority young people's social care team, and the police, if the young person is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

All children and young people can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Young people who witness domestic abuse are also victims. Witnessing domestic abuse can have a lasting impact on children. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child or young person may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Older children may also experience domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass operates in the majority of police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children and young people. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children or young people in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child/children or young person/people arrive at school/college the following day. This ensures that the school/college has up to date relevant information about the child's/young person's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child /young person according to their needs. Police forces not signed up to operation encompass will have their own arrangements in place.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

This can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, but does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam.

Young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL/deputy DSL. The DSL/deputy DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's young people's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Indicators of sexual exploitation can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and/or alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time, or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing education, or not taking part in education

County Lines and CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation)

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual

violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special

educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

CCE is common in county lines and occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity is consensual. CCE does not have to involve physical contact; it can also occur through use of technology. CCE is broader than county lines and may include, for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

Indicators of CCE can include:

- Persistently going missing from home
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts, phone calls or having multiple handsets
- Relationships with controlling/older individuals or groups
- Leaving home/care without explanation
- Unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in College performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a young person's welfare.

The DSL/deputy DSL will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL/deputy DSL will also make a referral to young people's social care.

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBV are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to young people affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A student confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/student already being known to social services in relation to other

Safeguarding A Girl:

- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
- Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
- Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a student may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider) FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues

A girl:

- Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
- Having limited level of integration within UK society
- Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"

- Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
- Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other young people about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
- Being unexpectedly absent from school
- Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them. If a member of staff suspects that a student is being forced into marriage, they will immediately report this to the DSL/deputy DSL.

The DSL/deputy DSL will:

- Speak to the student about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer (LADO) and/or MASH
- Seek advice from Project Choice and/or the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fm@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the student to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

Serious violent crime

Key indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime include:

- Unexplained gifts or new possessions - these can indicate that children have been approached by or involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs
- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendship or relationships with others or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries

Staff should also be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage them. Sexual violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way.

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another

person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- sexual "jokes" or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos
 - sexualised online bullying
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats and
 - up skirting

The College will 'respond appropriately' even if abuse takes place outside of the site. The safeguarding team will consider the victim's wishes, ongoing risks and potential criminality in deciding what action to take.

The College maintains an attitude of 'it could happen here', a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment, abuse and violence and the scale of incidents or impact of linked behaviours is never downplayed.

Colleges should consider intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment.

Up skirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Up-skirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Up skirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear)

to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

Preventing radicalisation

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

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

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

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

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in students' behaviour.

The government website 'Educate Against Hate' and charity 'NSPCC' say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities, they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

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

If staff are concerned about a student, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL/deputy DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools’ and colleges’ wider safeguarding obligations.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment.

An individual’s engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff.

- If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the College. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.
- Visitors are expected to sign the visitors’ book and wear a visitor’s lanyard/badge. All other staff wear a different coloured lanyard in the College to differentiate between visitors.
- All visiting speakers will be accompanied by a member of staff and receive the new visitors’ email containing safeguarding information.
- We will not invite into the College any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using College facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise students or staff.

Missing students

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing student is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a student goes missing, parents/carers will be contacted immediately and efforts will be made to contact the child through the use of their mobile phone/online social media accounts if possible. When it is deemed reasonable given an appropriate timescale, the college will contact 101 to report the child as missing from college, obtaining a log/reference number.

Maintaining appropriate staff/student boundaries and relationships

This section looks briefly at the expectations of staff at the College in relation to appropriate professional boundaries. Adults in positions of authority have a duty to ensure that when working with young people they are aware of their duty to ensure the safety of both themselves and those they work with.

The Teachers’ Standards explicitly reference the requirement for teachers to ‘uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school’.
Specifically:

- A teacher must maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary
- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position

The Trust Code of Conduct is also explicit in relation to boundaries. Specifically, the following sections:

- **Professional boundaries and relationships**
- **Professional conduct and personal integrity**

Staff should also be mindful of the above in respect of former students who they have worked with in a professional context. Whilst there may not be a criminal element to any such relationship, this could be considered inappropriate given the previous 'position of trust' factor.

Professional Boundaries – RAISING YOUR AWARENESS

Professional boundaries are breached when a staff member misuses their authority or control in their relationship with a student. Conduct that breaches those boundaries is often easily recognisable. However, there may be some conduct where the boundary breach is less obvious and it is your responsibility to establish and maintain professional boundaries with students.

When interacting with students, think carefully about the implications and potential consequences. For example, where a staff member may become a confidante or counsellor of a student (where it is not part of their role) a relationship is created which can blur the staff–student relationship and the roles are less defined.

Sometimes, students can intentionally or unintentionally cross boundaries with staff, such as in the way they speak or by initiating inappropriate contact, perhaps via social media. In such circumstances it is important for the staff member to remove themselves from any inappropriate contact or conversation. Outside of the workplace a staff member may have to manage a private or professional relationship with a student, such as in extra-curricular activities or as a sports coach. You are always in a position of trust and authority with students and your conduct should remain professional, no matter what the setting.

REMOTE WORKING - KEEPING STAFF AND STUDENTS SAFE WHEN WORKING REMOTELY

DO	DON'T
Support students during normal college hours	Share any personal details inc phone numbers, email addresses, home addresses etc.
Communicate with students via OSFC official channels only i.e. Classroom, Cedar, email etc	Join or create any unofficial OSFC social media groups with students
Be aware of what is visible to students when making video recordings or streaming live	Arrange to meet with students off site
Give clear instructions at the beginning of each lesson in forming students about the use of video	Open emails that look suspicious
Notify students when you are recording any live stream meetings/ lessons	Join any live conference using personal email accounts
Agree rules with students prior to live streaming in line with college policy i.e. 3Rs	Share confidential student information with non-OSFC members of staff
Communicate any behaviour or safeguarding concerns following normal college procedures	Ignore unacceptable behaviour

APPENDIX 4 : STUDENTS WHO ARE SUBJECT TO CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

The college understands the power of education in improving the life chances of all young people, including those who may have been involved in early criminal activity.

Procedures for Students Enrolled at College in Process of Criminal Proceedings

Where a student is subject to a criminal investigation, College may suspend the student until the criminal investigation and legal proceedings have concluded. However, this does not automatically preclude College from progressing with its own disciplinary action. Parents/carers will be kept informed verbally and in writing of any action taken and they will be included in all meetings/risk assessments, where appropriate.

The student and parents/carers should be reminded that, whilst criminal investigations are underway, they are obliged to keep the College informed of any progress and/or change in status regarding his/her case.

Where the nature of the alleged offence suggests that there may be risk to the safety of others or, where the student accused of the offence may be at risk of harm, Assistant Principal: Inclusion will undertake a risk assessment. This may result in action as follows:

- As a first step, the student may be required to comply with specific conditions, for example, agreeing not to contact another student or students.
- The student may be suspended or excluded, until such a time as any criminal proceedings have concluded. A precautionary suspension or exclusion should not be regarded as a penalty, and does not indicate that the student is presumed guilty of any offence. Suspensions will normally be carried out by a member of SLT.
- The decision to temporarily suspend and/or exclude the student and the why this action is being taken may be communicated verbally in the first instance and followed up in writing within one working day.
- During the suspension, continuation of learning will be supported by the provision and marking of work. The Assistant Principal: Inclusion will be the designated contact.
- The student may appeal against the decision to suspend and/or exclude in writing in accordance with the College's Disciplinary policy.

Where criminal proceedings (including bail conditions, period of time spent on remand, period of time served in custody following conviction) result in a student being absent from his/her study for a period of less than 4 weeks, it will normally be the case, that the student's place at College will be suspended for this period.

Where criminal proceedings (including bail conditions, period of time spent on remand, period of time served in custody following conviction) result in a student being absent from his/her study for a period in excess of 4 weeks, the student will be deemed withdrawn from the College. The student may then reapply for admission and, as part of the standard admissions process, will be required to declare criminal convictions to be considered prior to a decision regarding an offer of a place.

A conviction in a criminal court shall be taken as conclusive evidence that the alleged offence has occurred.

Where a criminal conviction has been made, the focus of the disciplinary proceedings may include an assessment of the risk posed to staff or students and an assessment of the impact caused by reputational damage to the College.

Where, following initial investigation, a decision has been taken not to proceed to a criminal trial, this does not preclude the College from conducting further investigations and/or instigating disciplinary proceedings in respect of outstanding matters of concern that have not been addressed through criminal proceedings.

Admission Procedure for Student in Process of Criminal Proceedings

All applicants are asked on the application form if they have a criminal record or are involved in ongoing criminal proceedings. Those answering 'yes' are asked to provide supplementary details.

The supplementary details are screened by the Associate Principal for Transition and Skills, who makes an initial assessment of whether the record is relevant or not.

Where the criminal record is considered a risk, the Associate Principal for Inclusion undertakes an initial risk assessment and informs the Principal.

The College may seek advice and information from other agencies involved with the applicant, or arrange for the student and parents/carers to be interviewed to collect further information or to clarify or confirm information. The Assistant Principal: Inclusion will inform the applicant of the outcome.

The Assistant Principal: Inclusion will inform any staff, who need to know, if a student is admitted to the course with conditions for managing risk or particular support needs. Otherwise, information on the criminal record is not passed on.

Failure to Declare Criminal Proceedings

Where it is revealed that a student has not disclosed criminal proceedings or an unspent criminal conviction, the College will consider appropriate disciplinary action, depending on the severity and impact of the disclosure.

Failing to disclose a minor issue, which does not pose any risk to the College community or impact on the student's ability to complete the course successfully, will be deemed serious misconduct and will result in a Written Warning.

Failing to disclose a significant issue, which might pose a risk to the College community or impact on the student's ability to

complete the course, will be deemed gross misconduct and the student's place at College may be withdrawn following investigation and a formal disciplinary hearing. College may suspend the student, until a thorough investigation and risk assessment has been conducted.

Confidentiality

The College will deal with all matters relating to declarations of convictions or criminal proceedings in a confidential manner and details will be held securely, alongside other information the College holds.

Information will only be shared with colleagues or other organisations on a 'need to know' basis and only to ensure the safety of all members of the College.

Absence procedure

Where a student has been absent and not authorised this appropriately, procedures are in place for progress/personal tutors and subject teachers to call home. Texts are also sent to alert parents.

If a student has taken a holiday/trip, they are seen on their return to check for signs of any safeguarding concern, including the influence of any extremist views. **Staff guidance on specific safeguarding issues:**
[Keeping Children Safe in education 2022 Doc](#)

APPENDIX 5 : INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENT (Oldham LA)

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM	Risk Assessment Ref Number
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TO BE VALID THIS RISK ASSESSMENT MUST BE MADE SITE / PERSON / TASK / EQUIPMENT SPECIFIC AS APPROPRIATE **Oldham Council**

Establishment:	Assessment by:	Date:
Task / Process / Environment / Equipment Being Assessed:	Approved by:	Date:

What are the hazards to health, safety and the environment? (eg heavy box, fuel delivery)	Who or what might be harmed and how? (eg staff, visitors, etc)	Likelihood (1 – 5)	Severity (1 – 5)	Risk Rating (L x S)	What is already in place?	Is there any further action required?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Date Completed

REVIEWS:

DATE OF REVIEW:	REVIEWED BY:	COMMENTS:
DATE OF REVIEW:	REVIEWED BY:	COMMENTS:
DATE OF REVIEW:	REVIEWED BY:	COMMENTS:

RISK MATRIX

The matrix below is used to calculate risk based on likelihood x severity (higher scores indicating higher levels of risk). The resulting score is used to calculate risk ratings and to determine whether additional safety management measures are required to further reduce remaining risk to an acceptable level.

Any risk rating in the red area indicates significant risk which would need to be further controlled before proceeding

	SEVERITY				
LIKELIHOOD	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Very unlikely	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very likely	5	10	15	20	25

KEY: SEVERITY OF HARM			
	Severity	Description	Persons at risk
1	Insignificant	Non or insignificant injury / illness / loss	1
2	Minor	Minor injury / illness / loss minor first aid required	up to 5
3	Moderate	Injury / illness / loss – reportable to the HSE	up to 10
4	Major	Major injuries / severe incapacity – reportable to the HSE	up to 25
5	Catastrophic	Fatality / severe incapacity	25 or more

IMPORTANT
When calculating the risk, the number of persons exposed and the frequency of exposure to risk must be taken into account
Risks that calculate as high MUST have further control measures put into place that reduce the risk BEFORE the activity is carried out
Medium risk factors should have more control measures introduced where possible to reduce the risk to the lowest possible risk
Staff MUST be prohibited from undertaking medium to high risk activities for which they have not received appropriate training
The risk assessment must be signed by the risk assessor or the person in authority managing the activity concerned

APPENDIX 6 : TRUST LOW LEVEL CONCERNS PROCEDURES

Reporting Low Level Concerns as part of Keeping Children Safe in Education

1. INTRODUCTION

The Pinnacle Learning Trust believes that creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.

Implemented correctly, this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable the Trust to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; and minimise the risk of abuse. A culture of vigilance will help to ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the Trust are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

Any behaviours that fall short of the guiding principles outlined in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance must be shared responsibly and with the right person. All concerns that do not meet the harm threshold must be recorded and dealt with appropriately as a low-level concern.

Reference to 'child' or 'children' in this document, includes students regardless of their age, including those over 18.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 What is a Low-level concern? (Taken from KCSIE)

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 338.

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

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see Part Four - Section one of KCIS), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings

2.2 What Academy staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the Academy

Low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor should be reported. Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

All staff and volunteers should raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Academy's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

The Trust Whistleblowing procedures should be followed where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed.

2.3 Reporting the concern

If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation is made to them about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) posing a risk of harm to children, then this should be referred to the Academy Principal.

Where there are concerns/allegations about the Principal, this should be referred to the Executive Principal. Where there are concerns/allegations about the Executive Principal, this should be referred to the Chair of the Trust Board.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Principal should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- To the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help them to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken.

2.4 How to respond to the concern

The Principal, or designated alternative, will respond to any low-level concerns by completing a Low-Level Concerns Form (Appendix A). Sections 1-4 of the form should be completed with the person who is raising the concern, in order to gather all of the information. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted. If the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Once the information has been gathered, the Principal will need to determine if the concern meets the harms threshold as outlined in Section 1 of Part 4 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education

(KCSIE). If the Principal reaches a decision that the concern does not meet the harms threshold, this will be treated as a 'low level concern' and the following process will be followed:

Meet the individual about whom concerns have been raised and any witnesses

As part of the investigation, the Principal should speak to the individual concerned about the concerns that have been raised and will allow them the opportunity to respond. Sections 5-9 of the Low-Level Concerns Form (Appendix A) will be completed.

It may be necessary as part of the investigation to speak to any relevant witnesses. Witnesses can give important evidence that might help decide the outcome. Details of any witness statements should also be recorded in section 5 of the Low-Level Concerns Form.

Outcome of the investigation

To reach a decision, it is important the Principal considers the initial concern and the response provided by the individual about whom the concern was raised, together with any information provided by witnesses, if appropriate. Consideration should also be given to whether a low-level concern or other safeguarding concerns have been raised about the individual previously. Once the Principal has considered all of the information, they should determine if the concern is still deemed to be low level or if it should now be treated as an allegation against staff and managed in accordance with KCSIE Section 1 of Part 4. The reasons for reaching the conclusion, including the advice provided by any discussions with the Safeguarding Lead, HR and the LADO, should be recorded in Section 7 of the Low-Level Concerns Form.

Once the investigation and conclusion has been determined, details of any further action that is required will be outlined in section 9 of the Low-Level Concerns Form. The individual concerned will receive, in writing, the outcome and any further actions determined by the Principal. A copy of the letter and the Low-Level Concerns Form will be kept in the Academy Central Safeguarding Confidential File, and a reference to the record should be kept on the individual's HR file.

2.5 Duration of keeping a record of a Low-Level Concern

Records will only be kept for the duration of employment.

2.6 Review of concerns raised

The Low-Level Concerns file should be reviewed by the Principal at least annually, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the Principal should decide on a course of action, which could be managed through its disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, a referral to the LADO will be made. HR advice should be sought for the correct guidance and process.

Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the Academy that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies should be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

2.7 References

In Part three of the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance it outlines that references should include substantiated safeguarding allegations. Low level concerns must not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPLIANCE

The Executive Principal has overall responsibility for maintaining the safeguarding provision across the Trust.

The Academy Principals have overall organisation, control and management within their Academy.

They are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding concerns are investigated in accordance with the Academy Safeguarding Policy and low-level concerns procedures.

The Academy Safeguarding Leads will review the appendix annually when updating the Academy Safeguarding Policy and will agree any amendments with the Trust Head of HR. The procedures may be updated at other times when legislation or Trust/Academy practice requires changes to be made.

Appendix A – Low-Level Concerns Form

This document should be used when ‘low level’ concerns as defined in Section 2 of Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 are reported. This document does not replace suspension/formal disciplinary investigations in the event that concerns are either categorised as more serious than low level or when formal disciplinary procedures are required in relation to the low-level concern.

1. Name of individual raising the concern Leave blank if concern was raised anonymously or the individual Wishes to remain anonymous	
2. Date the concern was raised	
3. Name and role of individual about whom concern has been raised	

<p>4. Details of the concern(s) reported (give description and context)</p> <p>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 an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct but does not meet the allegations threshold set out in Section 1 of Part 4.</p>	
<p>5. Details of steps that have been taken to investigate this concern</p> <p>Steps should include speaking to the individual who raised the concern, the individual about whom the concern is raised and any witnesses. Review the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policies to determine if there has been a breach.</p>	
<p>6. Set out the response to the concern</p>	
<p>7. Is this concern 'low level' or should it be treated as an allegation against staff and managed in accordance with Section 1 of Part 4?</p> <p>To reach this decision, consider the information set out in 5 and 6 above. If you are unsure, seek advice from the Safeguarding Lead, HR or discuss the matter with the LADO. Set out the reasons for reaching the conclusion, including the advice provided by the advisors and any discussions with the LADO</p>	
<p>8. Have 'low level' or other concerns been raised about this individual previously?</p> <p>If so, please provide dates, brief details and relevant file/document reference for the concern(s). Also consider whether previous concern(s) raised coupled with this new concern meet the threshold set out in Section 1 of Part 4.</p>	<p>Yes [] No []</p>

9. Details of further action required	
Action could range from no action or a conversation to discuss the concern, to being clear why the behaviour is concerning and formal disciplinary action.	
Completed by:	Name:
	Position:
Date:	
Signature:	

This record will be held securely in accordance with the PLT Low Level Concerns Appendix as part of the Academy Safeguarding Policy. Please note that low-level concerns will be treated in confidence as far as possible, but The Pinnacle Learning Trust may in certain circumstances be subject to legal reporting requirements or other legal obligations to share information with appropriate persons, including legal claims and formal investigations.

A copy will be retained in a central safeguarding confidential file and also reference made to the individual having a record on their HR file. Records will only be kept for the duration of employment.