

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

“Safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility.”

This policy has been updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)



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DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), September 2023.

Child Protection refers to the situation where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, and action is required to protect that child.

Welfare - Our welfare practice ensures the safety and wellbeing of all individual children within our School, we deliver this through our safeguarding, child protection and inclusive practices using a whole child approach.

Inclusion - all children/young people are equally valued and are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant academic and social curriculum, which is accessible, and inclusive. This is achieved by eliminating discrimination and prejudice, training staff to the highest standards and encouraging community stakeholders within and around our school to be heard.

Child - anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

For the purpose of this policy, reference to '**staff**' covers all employees, governors, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers, trainees and agency workers.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Gradually Developing Futures, we recognise that everyone who comes into contact with children and their families or carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. We expect all staff, volunteers, visitors, families, community members and pupils to understand and share this commitment and this policy therefore applies to all.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We particularly recognise that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are more vulnerable to experiencing abuse and neglect for many reasons including:

- Being more dependent on others to meet personal and intimate care needs.
- Not being aware that what is happening to them is even wrong.
- Communication difficulties that prevent the child from expressing concerns about what is happening to them.
- Interaction difficulties

Therefore, our approach to safeguarding must be an example of best practice not just minimum standards.

In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. This includes protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health/development, ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

In addition, we understand the importance of capturing the voice of the child through our safeguarding work. Studies have shown that children and young people are aware of their needs and are able to communicate the support they would like to receive. They often have strong opinions and are able to express these if professionals create the right atmosphere. Children of sufficient age and understanding often have a clear perception of what needs to be done to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

"Spending time with children, talking to them, and making sure that you are actively listening and taking seriously what they say is an essential safeguarding activity." NCB Communicating with Children 2006

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies, procedures and guidance listed in *Appendix A*

AIMS AND PURPOSE

The aims of this policy are prevention, protection and support in line with safeguarding guidelines. We will implement our safeguarding practice by ensuring:

- Our Culture of Vigilance is embedded and understood by all members of our school community.
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe and their development is supported in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- The school protects pupils from bullying, racist abuse, homophobic abuse, harassment or discrimination, child on child abuse (including sexual violence and harassment and serious violence) and promotes good behaviour.
- Appropriate support is in place for children with SEND or additional medical needs
- The effectiveness of the school health and safety policies and procedures
- The effectiveness of arrangements to provide a safe environment and secure the school site
- Child welfare and child protection concerns are identified and responded to by all staff within the school.
- The school works with key agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- That adults working with children are appropriately recruited and vetted by following our Safer Recruitment Policy, and receive appropriate training, guidance, support and supervision to undertake the effective safeguarding of pupils.
- That we promote positive mental health and respond to mental ill health in a supportive and non-stigmatising way.
- We raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- Regular staff training in child protection procedures is carried out (including training on a yearly cycle for all staff employed by the School who come into regular contact with children and young people in order to update all staff on safeguarding requirements. Training to cover the need to recognise the four different types of child abuse). Training will be annual with updates throughout the year.
- A systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- The emphasis of the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- The School local governing Body has undertaken safeguarding training in the four key areas, with the named Governor for Safeguarding accessing additional training.
- We promote strong relationships between staff, children and young people and their parents/ carers.
- We create a positive educational setting, culture and climate that fosters connection, respect and values all members of the community.
- We aim to embed our School values in all we do.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We recognise that all staff and governors have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

Graduately Developing Futures has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, will be part of the school's senior leadership team and will be supported by at least one Deputy DSL.

The DSL and their team will hold responsibility for implementing the safeguarding policies, practice and procedures to keep the whole school community safe and protected. *See Appendix B for an overview of the DSL role.*

Named DSL roles at Graduately Developing Futures	
DSL	Lisa O'Connor
Deputy DSLs	Sandra Pay

Designated Safeguarding Governor	Thinus Delpont
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The Principal will ensure;

- All relevant staff are aware of this policy, receive appropriate training annually and are aware of the School's systems to support safeguarding and follow this policy and procedures.
- Safer recruitment practices are always followed.
- Effective reporting to the LGB termly (3 times per year) and as and when required.
- Appropriate duty of care to employees and minimise the stress inherent in the investigation process.

Our governing body will have a designated safeguarding governor who will offer supportive challenge regarding safeguarding procedures and practices within the school. They will be responsible for ensuring safeguarding information is reported to the governing body as a whole. *See Appendix C for an overview of the role of Governors.*

Our DSL and named safeguarding governor will be clearly identified to the school community through notices in the school and on the school website.

All action taken by Gradually Developing Futures will be in accordance with:

Current legislation: Children Act 1989 and 2004; Education Act 2002 and 2011 and Education and Inspection Act 2006

Statutory guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), which sets out the multiagency working arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm; in addition, it sets out the statutory roles and responsibilities of schools.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated September 2023) is statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education which all schools and colleges must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Teacher Standards 2012 state that teachers, including head teachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

The National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers 2015 states that Headteachers and senior leaders in schools should provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all pupils and staff, focus on safeguarding pupils and developing their exemplary behaviour in school and in the wider society.

All staff in our school have a role and responsibility to safeguard children and young people attending our school, irrespective of their role within the school by:

- Identifying concerns early and providing help for children and young people, to prevent concerns from escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989. These concerns should be discussed with our Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Being aware of the process and principles for sharing information within the school.
- Considering whether sharing information is likely to safeguard and protect a child.

Mental Capacity and Decision Making

GDF takes into account the Mental Capacity Act 2005. We make many decisions every day, often without realising. UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they can't. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise.

We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted. The Law says that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate our decision

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health. Most adults have the ability to make their own decisions given the right support however, some adults with care and support needs have the experience of other people making decisions about them and for them.

Some people can only make simple decisions like which colour T-shirt to wear or can only make decisions if a lot of time is spent supporting them to understand the options. If someone has a disability that means they need support to understand or make a decision this must be provided. A small number of people cannot make any decisions. Being unable to make a decision is called "lacking mental capacity".

Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time that decision is needed. A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe/possible to wait until they are able to be involved in decision making or to make the decision themselves. For example:

- A person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure
- Someone who is anxious may not be able to make a decision at that point
- A person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Mental Capacity is important for safeguarding for several reasons.

Not being allowed to make decisions one is capable of making is abuse. For example, a disabled adult may want to take part in an activity but their parent who is their carer won't allow them to and will not provide the support they would need. Conversely the adult may not seem to be benefiting from an activity other people are insisting they do.

Another situation is where an adult is being abused and they are scared of the consequences of going against the views of the person abusing them. It is recognised in the law as coercion and a person can be seen not to have mental capacity because they cannot make 'free and informed decisions'.

Mental Capacity must also be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an 'adult at risk' has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened, however, in some situations the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views or give informed consent.

Each home nation has legislation that describes when and how we can make decisions for people who are unable to make decisions for themselves. The principles are the same.

- We can only make decisions for other people if they cannot do that for themselves at the time the decision is needed
- If the decision can wait, wait – e.g. to get help to help the person make their decision or until they can make it themselves
- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we must make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account what we know about their preferences and wishes
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe will restrict them then we must think of the way to do that which restricts to their freedom and rights as little as possible.

Many potential difficulties with making decisions can be overcome with preparation. A person needing support to help them make decisions will ordinarily be accompanied by someone e.g. a family member or formal carer whose role includes supporting them to make decisions. If the family member or formal carer is deemed not to support the person in making a decision due to their own mental capacity, advice should be sought from the local authority safeguarding team or social care team.

It is good practice to get as much information about the person as possible. Some people with care and support needs will have a 'One page profile' or a 'This is me' document that describes important things about them. Some of those things will be about how to support the person, their routines, food and drink choices etc. but will also include things they like and don't like doing. It's also important to have an agreement with the person who has enrolled the adult about how different types of decisions will be made on a day to day basis.

If a person who has a lot of difficulty making their own decisions is thought to be being abused or neglected you will need to refer the situation to the Local Authority, and this should result in health or social care professionals making an assessment of mental capacity and/or getting the person the support they need to make decisions.

There may be times when an organisation needs to make decisions on behalf of an individual in an emergency, where they cannot give informed consent. Decisions taken in order to safeguard an adult who cannot make the decision for themselves could include:

- Sharing information about safeguarding concerns with people that can help protect them
- Stopping them being in contact with the person causing harm.

EXPECTATIONS

All staff will:

- Be familiar with this safeguarding policy;
- Know who the DSL and the governor responsible for safeguarding in the school is;
- Be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers etc;
- Actively engage in safeguarding training and updates to practice;
- Be involved, where appropriate, in the implementation of pupil profiles and targets, integrated support plans, child in need plans and interagency child protection plans;
- Be aware of extra support needed for pupils within their sphere of responsibility e.g. EHCPs, support plans, behaviour plans.
- Be alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse or neglect, including issues such as Female Genital Mutilation, Childhood Sexual or Criminal Exploitation, child on child abuse etc; and understand that these can happen both inside and outside of the family home (extra familial harm) and online.
- Be aware that harm can include ill treatment that is not physical, but be caused by the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others, this is particularly relevant to impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.
- Be aware of the school's procedures in order to identify those pupils in need of early intervention and take appropriate action;
- Ensure their approach is child-centred and will actively listen to children and their concerns;
- Ensure any child or young person disclosing potential abuse or neglect will not be made to feel as if they are causing a problem
- Record concerns and share the record with the DSL, where disclosure happens the report to the DSL will be completed immediately or as soon as is practically possible and the DSL advised that there is a child protection, risk of harm report;
- Be aware that children and young people may not be ready or know how to tell someone they are experiencing harm, so all staff will work to develop professional curiosity and discuss any concerns they may have with the DSL or members of the safeguarding team.
- Be aware of the School whistleblowing procedures to follow if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school;
- Take responsibility for ensuring the school is a safe environment for all who use it.
- Promote strong relationships between children and young people and their parents/carers.
- Support social workers and other agencies following any referral where appropriate and challenging decisions made where necessary and appropriate.

Our School acknowledges that any child may benefit from early intervention, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early intervention for a child who:

- has specific additional needs;
- Is on our SEND register
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- Is in care or who has returned home to their family from care;

- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is a privately fostered child.

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children’s social care and/or the police immediately. Anyone can make a referral and all staff will be aware of the referral processes to First Response (CHAD/MASH). Where referrals are not made by the DSL, they should be informed, as soon as possible, that a referral has been made.

Regulated professionals have a mandatory reporting duty to report cases of known Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Teachers are considered regulated professionals. The duty requires that they themselves report apparent incidents to the police via 101. This cannot be delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. For further information about preventing and responding to incidents of FGM, the KBSP have issued FGM Safeguarding Guidance 2017-2020.

PREVENTION

We recognise that our school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils and will therefore;

- Raise awareness of all safeguarding and child protection issues with pupils through Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education sessions, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, pastoral support, appropriate notices and signposting to support.
- Establish an attachment aware ethos and maintain a culture where pupils feel safe and positive
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and young people, taking account of their wishes and feelings
- Develop pupil emotional health and wellbeing including self-esteem, resilience and confidence
- Ensure staff recognise the increased vulnerabilities of children with SEND and medical conditions and the increased support and vigilance needed.
- Ensure pupils are aware of where to go for support within, and outside of, their school
- Monitor pupil data to identify areas of concern before implementing pastoral interventions
- Discuss specific concerns during appropriate staff meetings and liaise with external agencies to develop a holistic understanding of the current situation for a pupil
- Provide targeted support where and when needed
- Support parents/carers to ensure pupils are provided with safe and effective care
- Report concerns to the DSL if it is thought a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism.
- Work to ensure all staff working across the School are safe and suitable to do so, that they are easily identifiable by their identity cards and any visitors to the school site are accompanied and remain under supervision at all times.
- Monitor attendance of all learners, respond to concerns regarding low attendance or repeated unauthorised absences and work to prevent children and young people becoming pupils missing education or children missing education.
- Work to become a non-excluding school
- Ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place across our IT networks and that pupils and students understand how to keep themselves safe online in school, out of school and when home learning

SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Gradually Developing Futures is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We require all staff and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work. There is a School wide Safer Recruitment policy, with procedures in place to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to working with them.

We pay full regard to the safer recruitment practices detailed in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (Updated 2023) including scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional

and character references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. All staff will require an enhanced DBS. Overseas checks will also be completed for staff members that have lived or worked outside the UK and prohibition checks will be completed for staff that meet the criteria specified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated 2023).

We will maintain our own Single Central Record detailing pre-appointment checks for all staff as specified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated 2023), as well as other checks and information deemed relevant by the School.

All recruitment materials will include reference to Gradually Developing Futures commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils.

Information regarding the recruitment and employment of all staff is held on the Single Central Record for our school to evidence appropriate checks have been completed. The single central record is regularly checked by members of School staff in line with the SCR guidance document.

Staff understand there is a need for vigilance in practice within our school and if there are concerns have procedures to follow within the whistleblowing policy, escalation policy, School code of conduct and School staff handbook.

Any requests for references from members of staff will be handled in accordance with the latest guidance.

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process we will consider carrying out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the setting might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

We require that any agencies, contractors or consultants that we use conduct their own safeguarding checks on any staff that provide services to us, including enhanced DBS checks. They will need to have their own safeguarding policy, train and update their staff regularly in safeguarding issues and have clear processes for their staff to follow. Evidence that these are in place will be required before the school will commission services from any such organisation.

Full details of our safer recruitment processes are contained in the Gradually Developing Futures Safer Recruitment Policy.

TRAINING

In addition to this policy, **all** staff will read and sign to say they understand Part One of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE Updated September 2023)**. This will form part of staff induction, and their annual safeguarding update training.

All staff members will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which is regularly updated. In addition, **all** staff will receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Whistle blowing procedures will be covered in whole school training so that staff know what to do if they have concerns relating to safeguarding practice within the school.

We will also ensure that our staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others.

The designated safeguarding lead, School Lead and any deputies will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years.

On the rare occasions where it is necessary to carry out a physical intervention with a pupil, staff will have an understanding of the use of reasonable force. Staff needing to support behaviour and maintain a safe environment in this way will be trained in the techniques needed to do this safely, ensuring intervention is reasonable and

proportionate, but all staff will be supported to understand how to intervene safely and appropriately for both themselves and the pupils and students in their care.

The DSL or nominated Prevent Lead will undertake Prevent awareness training and in turn will provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation. All staff will undertake Prevent awareness training every 2 years so that they are able to comply with the legal expectations under the Prevent duty.

Online safety training for staff will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the overarching safeguarding approach.

SUPPORTING STAFF

Gradually Developing Futures recognises the stressful and potentially traumatic nature of safeguarding and child protection work. We will support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to seek further support, as appropriate.

All of our staff have the right to work in an environment that is safe and free from risk for them to be able to support and teach our pupils. We will achieve this safe working environment by encouraging pupils to conduct themselves in ways that will not cause harm to any staff member working in our school. We will also strive to create a working environment free from aggression, violence, physical or verbal abuse or bullying behaviours from other staff members or visitors to the school. Where this cannot be achieved and incidents happen, the staff member/s will receive full support from the school leadership team.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

All staff, including volunteers and supply staff, should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. Where possible, it is always advisable for work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

It is the responsibility of all staff to report any potential safeguarding concerns about an individual's behaviour towards children and young people immediately (including supply staff and volunteers). Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Principal/Head Teacher, if appropriate they will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and decide on any action required.

If any concern relates to the Principal/Head Teacher it should be reported to the Chair of Governors, who will liaise with the LADO and they will decide on any action required.

These safeguarding concerns could involve 'low level' concerns. Staff will be clear on what low level concerns may be through this policy and through the code of conduct for staff. 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 for harm but is a concern – no matter how small - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school 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.

Although 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 are shared responsibly and with the right person (for staff members this is the Principal/Head of School), and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Gradually Developing Futures will follow statutory responsibilities set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated September 2023): Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff.

CHILD ON CHILD ALLEGATIONS

It is important to recognise that child on child abuse can take many forms (*see Appendix G for types of abuse*) but can also include sexting, sexual violence and harassment, upskirting, on-line and face to face bullying (physical and emotional abuse), and persistent inappropriate and demeaning comments (often disguised as ‘banter’). We recognise that abuse is abuse and as such, Gradually Developing Futures will take a zero tolerance approach to any form of child on child abuse.

We recognise the gendered nature of child on child abuse and whilst it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys’ perpetrators, this form of abuse between any gender is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

If staff witness such incidents they will inform the DSL through the appropriate reporting channels, or, if a pupil discloses to a member of staff, then staff should follow the advice in *Appendix I ‘responding to a disclosure of abuse’*.

We will ensure that reporting mechanisms are in place for pupils/students attending Gradually Developing Futures, including ensuring the children and their families know who safe adults are, who they can talk to in school and signposting to external support services.

When investigating incidents and allegations, we will have regard for the advice contained in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated September 2023).

Gradually Developing Futures acknowledges it is important to remember that, as a child, any alleged perpetrator is entitled to, deserving of, and should be provided with, a different level of support to that which might be provided to an adult who is alleged to have abused a child, however, we acknowledge that taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. If necessary, these actions can, and will, occur at the same time to safeguard all involved.

Where Gradually Developing Futures is supporting children with autism who may be abusive or cause harm to others we will follow the National Autistic Society (NAS) Guidance regarding specific safeguarding issues. We acknowledge that some of the behaviours that a child with autism may display could be seen to be abusive towards others. However, we will explore the reasoning behind the behaviour as it may relate more to their autism than to a purposeful attempt to cause harm. (*See Appendix E for the NAS guidance*)

SUPPORTING PUPILS/STUDENTS

Age appropriate opportunities will be provided for pupils to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and wellbeing as they move through the different phases of their education. Relevant issues will be supported through the curriculum, specifically in PSHE (including Relationships and Sex Education), to explore key areas such as self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, sex and relationship education, online safety, extra familial harm and bullying.

Effective PSHE education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities. We will also work to develop a zero tolerance culture for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, bi-phobia and sexual violence/harassment behaviours.

We recognise that pupils may find safeguarding issues/disclosures to be a difficult experience and often this significantly impacts upon their mental health and wellbeing, which can result in behavioural changes. Therefore, we will support pupils by providing appropriate pastoral interventions and liaising with Social Care and external agencies as appropriate. If parents/carers or external agencies are not taking action, then we will challenge this decision and reinforce our concerns.

We will all work to ensure that all pupils are helped to understand how safeguarding and child protection processes work, how they can be involved and how they can contribute to decisions made about their future in accordance with their age and understanding.

When a child is missing from education, we will follow Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Guidance for schools. We will also provide continued support to a pupil who comes off roll by ensuring the appropriate safeguarding and child protection information is forwarded to their new provision, with our DSL ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt. If a child is coming off roll due to being electively home educated, we will ensure that the risks of this are assessed in line with expectations from KCSiE September 2023 and ensure parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests for their child, especially if they have SEND, are vulnerable or have a Social Worker.

Gradually Developing Futures recognise that a child who is abused, who witnesses violence or who lives in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of worth. *(See Appendix D types of abuse).*

We aspire to work in a trauma informed way, supporting children to be safe in their school and their communities and consider the impact of contextual and historical factors in their lives that may limit their opportunities to succeed.

We recognise that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of this environment. We will consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families understanding that extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

We will ensure that our school provides a stimulating, challenging and caring environment in which all children and young people are able to learn, grow and succeed within their school and beyond. We will develop a trauma informed workforce, that understands the potential impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on all members of their communities (children, young people, parents/carers, staff, community members).

We are aware that our school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. Research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn – we will ensure a culture of vigilance and questioning of our practice as professionals to ensure the identification of children who need support happens in a timely manner.

Gradually Developing Futures will support all pupils by;

- Encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of school life, including through the curriculum.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working together with all support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern
- Ensuring that a named teacher is designated for Children in Care (CiC) and that an up to date list of children regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring the SENDco for the school is be made aware of all Looked After Children (LAC) and previously Looked After Children in the school.
- Providing continuing support to a pupil (about whom there have been concerns) who leaves the school by ensuring that such concerns and school medical records are forwarded under confidential cover to the principal at the pupil's new school as a matter of urgency. In addition, for any pupils joining from another school, ensuring that there is full disclosure of any prior concerns/issues that we need to know to ensure we can continue to support that pupil.

CHILDREN REQUIRING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. World Health Organisation (WHO), 2014

Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well and comprises an individual's experience of their life; and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values. Department of Health and Social Care, 2014

Inclusion The goal of an inclusive education system is to provide all students with the most appropriate learning environments and opportunities for them to best achieve their potential. All **children** can learn and **reach** their full potential given opportunity, effective teaching and appropriate resources.

Behaviour – The way pupils act or conduct themselves, especially towards others, recognising that it is a form of communication and we have to ensure we are understanding this and how our response will enhance the quality of adult-child and child-child interactions and relationships.

At Gradually Developing Futures we recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all staff and students. Our ethos is a caring one which develops respect, self-esteem and gives a voice for all. We promote a supportive and inclusive ethos, which values parental/carer involvement and their contributions.

We will scrutinise all areas of our work with children and young people to look at the links between Mental Health and Wellbeing, Inclusion, Safeguarding and Behaviour to work towards a fully inclusive and supportive environment that meets the educational and social and emotional needs of all pupils, enabling them to thrive and succeed throughout their school careers and beyond.

We will ensure staff;

- Are aware that Mental Health problems can be an indicator, in some cases, that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Take immediate action if they have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern and follow our reporting processes to ensure the DSL and /or safeguarding team are aware of the concern.
- Are well placed to observe children day to day and can potentially identify those whose behaviour suggest they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one, and support the referral to appropriate services.
- Have access to routes to escalate concerns and there are clear referral and accountability systems in place
- Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood, and can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- If they have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Gradually Developing Futures also adheres to the principals of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act 1998.

SUPPORTING PARENTS AND CARERS

We recognise that parents/carers may find accepting safeguarding issues/disclosures to be a difficult experience. The 'Safeguarding and Child Protection' policy is available to view on the School website and we ensure safeguarding concerns/actions relating to a child are communicated to their parents/carers in a timely manner (unless informing parents/carers poses a potential risk of harm to the child). Therefore, wherever possible, we will seek the consent of parents/carers prior to making a referral to Local Authority Safeguarding teams. Staff also signpost parents/carers to potential support during meetings and discussions.

When visiting the School, information regarding the DSL and designated safeguarding team is clearly displayed so all visitors are aware of the steps taken to safeguard children in our School.

Information about how the school works to safeguard children will be made available to families coming into the school at transition times and at any mid-year admission point to ensure parents/carers and their children understand the school's commitment to them and their safety.

MULTI AGENCY WORKING

At Gradually Developing Futures our staff work in partnership with other agencies to act in the best interests of our pupils. We recognise that we have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and that we are part of the universal Early Help and Intervention services available to families. We will support the early identification of issues that may lead to risk of harm and seek to resolve these issues through partnership working with multi agency partners as appropriate by working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguarding Children.

We will co-operate with any child protection enquiries conducted by children's social care: the school will ensure representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings and initial and review child protection conferences.

We recognise that children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

Where children have a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

Certain groups of pupils within the school are more likely to be identified as requiring extra support to meet their safeguarding needs, these could include: looked after and previously looked after children, young carers, those living in households where there is domestic abuse, and/or substance misuse, etc.

Additional consideration also needs to be given to the needs of SEND children, due to their specific and increased vulnerabilities and the barriers they, and their families, face accessing support services.

It is therefore important that those at greater risk are identified, regularly monitored and appropriate measures put in place to support their needs. Multi agency working and appropriate and timely information sharing can lead to better outcomes and lower risk for these more vulnerable pupils.

INFORMATION SHARING

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes.

School staff will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local social care.

The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to safeguard and protect a child. We will be open and honest with the parent/carers (and the pupil where appropriate) from the outset about why/what/how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their consent, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

No staff member will assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe. If a professional has concerns about a child's welfare and believes they are suffering or likely to suffer harm, then they should share the information with informed consent (where appropriate), with the DSL, Social Care

or the Police. We will follow procedures for information sharing as set out in the 'Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' (2015).

Before sharing information, the following key principles will be considered. Is the information being shared; necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely, secure, recorded?

All information held at School level will be stored and shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This legislation determines how personal data is processed and kept safe, and the legal rights individuals have in relation to their own data. It is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Fears about sharing information **cannot** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children; if unsure, staff should contact the DSL to discuss.

Information on how and why we share information about children will be shared with parents/carers when they become part of the school community and will feature within their induction information.

RECORDING

All concerns/disclosures/actions relating to safeguarding and child protection must be recorded. All appropriate evidence must be preserved to support future actions. Referrals and actions must be recorded on the School's secure record (My Concern) and monitored by the DSL who will then update the Principal and governors as appropriate. *(See Appendix F responding to a disclosure of abuse).*

Record keeping regarding behaviour incidents and use of physical interventions is also clearly expected and records will be kept on the school's behaviour recording system. These records will be looked at by both the safeguarding team in the school and will be used to assess the safety of staff and the children in our care.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Gradually Developing Futures recognise that safeguarding issues include personal information about children (and often their families) and it is therefore essential that this information is treated as confidential. This information is stored and handled in line with the GDPR procedures, however, child protection records are often exempt from the disclosure provisions and therefore any requests by parents/carers to see their child protection data will be referred to the DSL.

Disclosure of any information about a child and their family to staff members will be on a need to know basis only.

All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

WHISTLE-BLOWING

Gradually Developing Futures is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability and we encourage staff with any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. Staff have a responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the safeguarding lead or other members of the senior leadership team and/or relevant agencies by following the School's Whistle-blowing policy.

We will empower staff to share any safeguarding concerns about the conduct of colleagues including low-level concerns with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), which will help us to address unprofessional behaviour and with low-level concerns support the individual to correct these behaviours at an early stage. Where necessary we will provide a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised and use monitoring tools to identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.

Records of any whistleblowing reports will be kept by the school confidentially and in a secure manner in line with GDPR. Any reports will be responded to through our disciplinary processes and in terms of any involvement of the LADO.

POSITION OF TRUST

Adults have a position of power and trust in relation to children and this power or influence might be abused to persuade and encourage or intimidate a child or young person into certain behaviours or activities.

All staff at the School are trained to recognise the responsibility they have to ensure they do not abuse their positions of trust. The Sexual Offences Act (2003) re-enacts and extends the abuse of position of trust offences set out in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act (2000)⁶. While young people aged between 16 and 18 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity this is not the case in a situation where there is an abuse of trust. Exploitation of this by those in positions of trust, responsibility or authority constitutes a criminal offence which will be dealt with through notification by the school to the LADO who will advise whether the police should be contacted and the next course of action and investigation.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Graduatedly Developing Futures about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use the Graduatedly Developing Futures complaints procedure to work to resolve any issues raised. The Complaints procedure can be found on our website.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum, last review date 01.09.2023. Next review date 31.08.2024

APPENDIX A - RELATED POLICY, PROCEDURE AND GUIDANCE LIST

School Documents:

- School Staff Handbook
- Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Prevent Toolkit, Risk Assessment and action plan
- Safer Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure
- Children in Care (CIC) and Children Previously Looked After (PLAC) Policy
- Whistleblowing
- Attendance
- Equality and Diversity
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Induction Processes
- GDPR Data Protection Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Allegations Against Staff
- DBS Policy
- Health and Safety (incl Fire safety)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Reference Policy
- Social Media Policy
- First Aid and Medication policies
- SCR Guidance
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Looked after Children
- Online Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- PSHE incl RSE Policy

External Organisations' Documents

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(Updated 2023\)](#)
- [The Teaching Standards](#)
- [The National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers](#)
- [Guidance for Safer Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings](#)
- [What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused: Advice for practitioners](#)
- [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers.](#)
- [Criminal Exploitation of Children \(CCE\) and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines \(Home Office\)](#)
- [Disqualification under the childcare Act 2006 \(2018\)](#)
- [Data Protection: toolkit for schools \(DfE\)](#)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools \(DfE\)](#)
- [Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings \(Ofsted\)](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance \(Home Office\)](#)
- [Use of Reasonable Force in Schools \(DfE\)](#)
- [Alternative Provision \(DfE\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Young People on the Autism Spectrum \(NAS\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

APPENDIX B - OVERVIEW OF THE DSL ROLE

The designated safeguarding lead will be part of the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and will undertake lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the school.

Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL, they will hold the safeguarding picture for the school and be the most appropriate person to offer safeguarding advice.

The broad areas of responsibility for the DSL are:

Managing referrals to other agencies including: the local authority; Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, Childrens Advice and Duty Service and the Police in cases where a crime may have been committed in relation to safeguarding. The DSL will also support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.

Work with others to fulfil statutory responsibilities in relation to children and young people subject to a child protection plan by attending child protection conferences and implementing the multiagency child protection plan; and liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as required.

Undertake Training to ensure they (and any deputies) are provided with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role, updated at least every 2 years.

Raise Awareness to ensure school safeguarding and child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately. The DSL will also provide an annual report to the governing body on safeguarding and child protection activity within the school.

Filtering & Monitoring Systems: The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

Availability of the DSL (or a deputy) during term time and school hours, needs to be ensured for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

More specific areas of responsibility for the DSL are to:

- Ensure the 'Safeguarding and Child Protection' policy, procedures, linked policies and Culture of Vigilance are known, understood and used appropriately
- Work with the school Safeguarding Lead to ensure the 'Safeguarding and Child Protection' policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum), is ratified by the governing body and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly
- Ensure that the designated safeguarding governor is regularly updated regarding matters of safeguarding as appropriate
- Ensure each member of staff (especially new and part time staff) has access to and has read/understood the 'Safeguarding and Child Protection' policy, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated September 2023): Part 1 and Annex A; and the 'Code of Conduct' for staff
- Ensure the 'Safeguarding and Child Protection' policy is available publicly (via the School website) and parents/carers are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the School in this
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school leadership staff.
- Help to ensure that the school and their staff, know who children with welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues are (including those with a social worker), understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- Ensure pupils are aware of where to go for support or to disclose abuse
- Ensure the deputy DSLs are equipped with the knowledge and understanding of how to complete the roles and responsibilities of the DSL as appropriate. Complete DSL training every two years with an appropriate update annually, as a minimum
- Provide appropriate staff safeguarding training annually (as a minimum) to ensure all staff have the knowledge and understanding to implement safeguarding procedures
- Where appropriate, work with the Principal or Chair of Governors to inform relevant professionals following any allegation of abuse relating to a member of staff within the School
- Ensure staff know how to act upon safeguarding concerns and disclosures
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to safeguarding and ensure staff understand the role of DSL
- Refer cases of suspected abuse, as required
- Refer cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to the police and First Response
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required
- Support staff who make referrals as appropriate
- Be alert to the specific needs of children with child protection plans (CP), children in need (CIN), those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and children looked after (CLA)
- Are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure records of concerns/referrals/actions
- Understand and support staff with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses
- Ensure child protection records/information are provided to Social Care, the Police and the accepting school of a student coming off roll, in accordance with information sharing protocols

This is not an exhaustive list, a more detailed description of the role of the DSL is explained in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated September 2023) – Annex B.

Details of our DSL and Deputy DSLs are available on the **School website and on display around the school.**

APPENDIX C - OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNORS

The governing body will ensure that:

- The school has a safeguarding policy in accordance with the procedures of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Updated September 2023)
- The safeguarding policy is shared with all staff, is available on the School website and can be accessed by parents/carers of the school;
- The school operates safer recruitment procedures and ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff and relevant volunteers and conforms to the legal reporting duties for employers to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of children;
- The DSL within the school has appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, recognising the significant level of responsibility and time needed to be effective.
- The DSL attends appropriate refresher training every two years;
- The Head Teacher/Principal and all other staff who work with children undertake regular safeguarding training;
- Temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection and their responsibilities;
- All staff within the School are aware of professional behaviour expectations from the School code of conduct and the School Staff Handbook;
- The school remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay;
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff/volunteers
- The governing body reviews its policies/procedures annually or as required;
- A nominated Link governor is appointed with a specific brief for safeguarding and child protection and will liaise with the Head Teacher/Principal and DSL. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils/students;
- The nominated governor will be responsible for checking the Single Central Record alongside school staff.
- The Nominated Governor will liaise with the Head Teacher/Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead to produce an annual report for governors and complete the annual safeguarding audit for the local authority;
- The chair of the governing body is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head Teacher/Principal. The chair of the governing body will also act as a 'case manager' in this situation.
- Training is undertaken by all members to the expected level as specified by Gradually Developing Futures.
- They have an understanding of the relevant data protection principles, which allow the school to share (and withhold) personal information and are confident that all storage, sharing and processing conditions are met.
- They have a broad understanding of cyber security and have appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems in place.
- Information sharing protocols are followed in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children and that fears about information sharing does not prevent the safeguarding and protection of children. This includes safeguarding information for pupils or students who move to another education provider.
- The school takes all appropriate opportunities to teach children about safeguarding, including online safety, in an age or ability appropriate way as part of their curriculum.

APPENDIX D TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse and neglect is defined as the maltreatment of a child or young person whereby someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

All School staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

The following are the definitions of abuse and neglect as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) however, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to is that of the Police and Children's Services – our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse and neglect (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible.

<p>Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</p>	<p>Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy 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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.</p>
<p>Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.</p>	<p>Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.</p>
<p>All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the DSL, and deputies, should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families - Extra-familial harms - including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.</p>	

APPENDIX E – SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Autism is recognised as a disability, and some disabled children may be more vulnerable to abuse than non-disabled children.

This may be because some autistic children can experience differences with communication, social interaction or have difficulty understanding other people's motives. Some may also be less able to recognise or report abuse. This requires professionals to be more vigilant with regard to recognising, reporting and investigating potential signs of abuse as well as ensure that safeguarding issues remain on the agenda when working with children and young people on the autism spectrum.

The National Autistic Society has produced guidance on Safeguarding Young People on the Autism Spectrum. It is important to read and understand this guidance if you are working with children and young people with autism.

NAS GUIDANCE - Children or young people with autism who may abuse others.

If a child with autism bullies another child, carefully consider the possible reasons for the bullying. Some children with autism find it difficult to understand or control their emotions or behaviour and may have little or no concept of the consequences of their actions. They might not have the insight or language to describe their feelings of frustration, may not be able to appreciate the impact of their words or behaviour on others, or may be re-enacting the bullying that they have experienced from others. The possibility that the child with autism is being coerced by others, as in mate crime, should also be explored. All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

All staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to child on child abuse. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school environment.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as extra familial harm and the response to this needs to be made with a contextual safeguarding approach, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

APPENDIX F - RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

When a child tells me about abuse s/he has suffered, what must I remember?

Stay calm.

Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.

Reassure the child. Tell her/him you are pleased that s/he is speaking to you.

Never promise confidentiality. Assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you may have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.

Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information.

Listen and remember.

Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.

Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.

It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.

Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.

At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.

As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

NB It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer - Record

NB: For more information on what to do if a child discloses see the government guidance - [What to do if worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners](#)