

The Divergent School Harborough

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Written	01.09.24 by Amy Creatura, Chief Education Officer & Daniel Wellings, Director
External Scrutiny	24.06.24 by Stephanie Gilbert, Critical Friend, DSL Oxbridge Group Ltd
Implementation	28.04.25 onwards by Charlie Smith, Headteacher
Review	01.03.25 by Amy Creatura, Chief Education Officer & Acting Headteacher
	30.05.25 by Amy Creatura, Chief Education Officer
Update	27.11.25 by Charlie Smith

All policies are underpinned by the critical thread of SAFEGUARDING
All policies stem from The Divergent School Group's VALUES and MISSION

THE DIVERGENT SCHOOL GROUP  **MISSION**

Our mission is to provide a model of education which is **just the right fit** for children in the missing middle.

We inspire personal development and curriculum progress so that pupils can **be safe, feel safe, be well, learn and thrive.**

THE DIVERGENT SCHOOL GROUP  **VALUES**

All children deserve an education which is **just the right fit** for them
For children to thrive both their **talents and needs** must be catered to

The curriculum is most effective when it's delivery is **individualised**

In order to learn we must first **be safe and feel safe**

To make school accessible, **quality emotional, sensory & communication support** are needed

Effective practice is based on **innovation and contemporary evidence**

Crucial understanding comes from the **bio-psycho-social** and **psycho-neurological** models

Everyone benefits when **mainstream and special school communities are integrated**



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FOREWORD

Review

We have designed this policy with a **commitment to ongoing improvement and collaboration** at its core. It is our belief that by continuously refining our approach, we can ensure that our school provides the best possible experience for our students.

To achieve this, we follow a structured process:

1. Regular review and refinement under the guidance of the Headteacher.
2. Immediate full review in case of urgent matters.
3. Annual formal review by the Advisory Board, in consultation with pupils, parents, teaching staff, and the Headteacher.

Ensuring all staff are well-informed through effective communication, which includes the following steps:

- a. Holding meetings to discuss changes.
- b. Providing training on any changes.
- c. Sharing written copies of changes electronically.
- d. Assessing staff's understanding informally, with the Headteacher ensuring clarity.
- e. Ongoing monitoring by the Headteacher to ensure changes are implemented, and adjustments are made promptly if necessary.

We recognize that clear and timely communication is essential in maintaining a successful educational environment. Through this policy, we aim to foster a culture of continuous improvement and transparent communication among all stakeholders.

Contact

If you have any questions, concerns or ideas related to the Safeguarding Children Policy please contact the Chief Education Officer to discuss on:

Amy Creatura
07808 773 941
Amy.Creatura@thedivergentschoolgroup.com

KEY CONTACT DETAILS

If you are concerned about a child, contact the Headteacher
Charlie Smith
07880934030

Role	Name	Phone Number	Email Address
Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead	Charlie Smith	07880934030	Charlie.Smith@thedivergentschoolharborough.com
Class Teacher & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Georgia Turner	07880934030	Georgia.Turner@thedivergentschoolharborough.com
Chief Education Officer Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead <i>Contact with concerns if Headteacher is not available or if concerns relate to the Headteacher</i>	Amy Creatura	07808 773 941	Amy.Creatura@TheDivergentSchoolGroup.com
Local Authority Designated Officer	Kim Taylor Lovona Brown Sheille Miskin	0116 305 4141 0116 305 7597 0116 305 9084	CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk
First Response Team			Joanne.searle@leics.gov.uk donna.smalley@leics.gov.uk
Early Help			earlyhelpreferrals@leics.gov.uk
CSE Consultation			CSE.duty.team@leics.gov.uk
Children's Social Care		0116 305 0005	childrensduty@leics.gov.uk
Prevent		0116 273 3459	prevent@stphilipscentre.co.uk
Channel Referral		0116 248 6726	counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing		0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Sexual Abuse Help		0800 136 663	
Childline		0800 1111	
Police Emergency		999	
Police non-emergency		101	



PURPOSE OF POLICY

School Mission

The Divergent School Harborough is dedicated to ensuring that pupils **are safe** and **feel safe** at school.

We then help pupils to develop skills for **sensory regulation, emotional regulation, and communication**.

This work is critical in making school accessible so that pupils are able to **develop personally** and **progress through the curriculum**. As a result of this they can be **well, learn** and **thrive**.

Policy Mission

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- **Pupils are safe and feel safe**
 - school staff to carry this out in their **practice** by:
 - Recognising the emotional experiences of the child
 - Responding to the child's emotional experience effectively
 - Reporting concerns effectively
 - Reflecting on what happened constructively and with curiosity
- Pupils know how to raise concerns, feel safe to raise concerns and are confident that their concerns will be taken seriously.
- Staff are equipped to deal sensitively and effectively with concerns and disclosures.
- Inclusive and anti-discriminatory behaviour is an expectation for staff and pupils.
- All forms of bullying, harassment, and discrimination, or inappropriate, sexualised, or offensive language and behaviour are responded effectively
- The wishes and feelings of pupils are always considered.
- In line with the Education Act (Section 175, 2002), the school will ensure that arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by –
 - Providing a healthy, learning environment that allows them to develop to their full potential
 - Providing a safe learning environment and ensuring school staff have the skills and knowledge to act where children need extra support from early help
- Services or require a social work service because they are in need or need to be protected from harm.
- Safeguarding their welfare, particularly those pupils who are most disadvantaged
- Providing pupils with opportunities to discuss issues and report problems affecting their safety and welfare
- Ensuring safe recruitment practices including checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- Ensuring robust procedures for recognition and referral where there are welfare or child protection concerns



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

- Raising awareness amongst staff of child protection issues and ensuring staff are equipped to deal with concerns
- Monitoring and supporting pupils who are subject to child protection plans and contributing to the implementation of their plan
- Promoting partnership working with parents and professionals
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe

UNDERPINNING

Contemporary evidence and research underpinning this policy:

- SEN/D Review 2023
- Smart but Scattered Teens
- The Compassionate Mind
- The Six Principles of Nurture

Theoretical models of understanding underpinning this policy:

- The Bio-Psycho-Social model of understanding
- The Neuro-Psychological model of understanding
- Bowlby's Attachment Theory
- Mallow's Hierarchy of Needs

Government guidance and legislation underpins this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2020
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, 2015
- Behaviour and Discipline in schools, 2016
- The Equity Act, 2021
- Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, 2013
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying, 2017
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school, 2018
- The Independent School Standards, 2014
- Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Physical, Social, Health and Economic Education
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development (including British Values)

The Divergent School Harborough taxonomy of policy and procedure both inform and are informed by this policy:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Beyond Behaviour Policy
- Risk Assessments
- Confidentiality Policy
- GDPR Procedure
- Dealing with Allegations Against School Staff Procedure
- Medical Needs Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- PSHCRE Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Procedure
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The relationship between the key policies and procedures in The Divergent School Harborough Taxonomy can be seen below:



SAFETY

Safety is the first priority of The Divergent School Group. Work to ensure pupils are safe and feel safe is critical in all aspects of this policy.

To be safe we need to be free from the threat of physical or mental harm. But, to feel safe we need to be free from the perception of threat of physical or mental harm.

Everyone has the basic human right to be be safe and feel safe.

As a school, we have a critical duty to maintain the rights of our pupils to be safe and feel safe. All information and procedures in the Safeguarding Children Policy work towards this.



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Advisory Board are responsible for providing governance in the effective implementation of the Safeguarding Children Policy. This includes:

- Monitoring records related to safeguarding, and the emotional experience beyond behaviour, at least on a half termly basis (as part of a holistic view), or contemporaneously if needed
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Safeguarding Children Policy in relation to its purpose, at least annually, or contemporaneously if needed
- An allocated member of the advisory board undertaking accredited safer recruitment training.
- An allocated member of the advisory board to link with LADO in the event of an allegation against the Chief Education Officer.
- Keeping safeguarding pupils as their number one priority
- Upholding the values of the school in all work undertaken

The Chief Education Officer is the **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead** and is responsible for overseeing and supporting effective implementation of the Safeguarding Children Policy. This includes:

- Monitoring records related to safeguarding, and the emotional experience beyond behaviour, at least on a half termly basis (as part of a holistic view), or contemporaneously if needed
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Safeguarding Children Policy in relation to its purpose, at least annually, or contemporaneously if needed
- Linking with the LADO in the event of an allegation against the Headteacher or an Advisory Board member.
- Keeping safeguarding pupils as their number one priority
- Upholding the values of the school in all work undertaken

The Headteacher is the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**, as such they take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the school and are available for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. They are responsible for implementing the Safeguarding Children Policy consistently throughout the school. It is also the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all children and adults in the school. This includes:

- Safeguarding pupils as their number one priority
- Upholding the values of the school in all work undertaken
- Ensure, and continually monitor,
 - effectiveness of the policy with regards to its purpose
 - staff understanding of the policy, providing support as needed
 - staff ability to implement this policy, providing support as needed
 - conduciveness of the environment for implementation of the policy
- Liaise with Leicestershire & Rutland on safeguarding and child protection matters and who links with the LADO in the event of an allegation against teaching staff.
- Ensure that staff receive a thorough induction on joining and are given copies of all relevant safeguarding and child protection policies and the staff code of conduct policy.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

- Being the nominated person to promote the educational achievement of looked after children and previously looked after children
- Taking steps to ensure parents and pupils are aware of the schools safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- Taking steps to ensure children are given opportunities within the curriculum to learn how to keep themselves safe, including on-line.
- Liaising with and managing referrals to relevant agencies such as LRCS, the LADO, the Channel Panel, the Police and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- Keeping the Chief Education Officer and the advisory board informed of on-going safeguarding and child protection issues and enquiries.
- Providing advice and guidance for staff on safeguarding and child protection issues and making referrals and support them through the referral process.
- Ensuring the school's safeguarding and child protection policies are up to date and consistent with Leicestershire & Rutland's Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and that policies are reviewed annually.
- Ensuring staff are inducted thoroughly in line with section 5.1 of the Safer recruitment and staff conduct policy for schools and colleges. Schools-safer-recruitment- policy.pdf ([cscp.org.uk](https://www.cscp.org.uk))
- Ensuring that all staff, including temporary staff, are aware of and understand policies and procedures and are able to implement them through robust induction processes.
- Attending regular training, including Prevent awareness training, and the designated teachers' meetings hosted by Leicestershire & Rutland in order to keep up to date with new policy, emerging issues and local early help, safeguarding and child protection procedures and working practices;
- Working jointly with other agencies in order to ensure pupils can access help and support from early help services and statutory social work services and that children's plans are implemented and monitored.
- Asking for further support if they do not understand anything relating to this policy
- Asking for further support if they need additional help or resource to put into practice this policy

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

School staff are responsible for implementing the Safeguarding Children Policy consistently throughout their work in the school. It is also the responsibility of school staff to ensure health, safety and welfare of all children and adults in the school with whom they have contact in their work. This includes:

- Upholding the values of the school in all work undertaken
- Implement the policy consistently within the parameters of their role.
- Ensure that they are aware of current legislation
- All staff are vigilant to harm and abuse, are able to identify those children for whom there are safeguarding and child protection concerns and can make appropriate referrals to LRCS.
- Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, staff will act immediately by seeking the advice of the designated safeguarding lead who is most likely to have the most complete safeguarding overview. Following consultation, the designated safeguarding lead should decide on whether to make a referral to LRCS via the Contact Service.
- Working jointly with other agencies in order to ensure pupils can access help and support from early help services and statutory social work services and that children's plans are implemented and monitored.
- Ask for further support if they do not understand anything relating to this policy
- Ask for further support if needed to put into practice this policy

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The **Divergent School Harborough** will:

- Provide regular updates received from Leicestershire & Rutland to all staff members and governors on any changes in safeguarding or child protection legislation (updated information will be provided by Leicestershire & Rutland at the designated teachers meeting and safeguarding trainers via 6 weekly bulletins; designated safeguarding leads will be responsible for communicating this information to staff immediately; they may decide to hold workshops or discuss in staff meetings);
- Have an awareness of the vulnerability of children with special needs, representing the whole school cohort, to poor educational outcomes
- have an awareness of those children who may be more vulnerable to poor educational outcomes due to safeguarding and other issues such as children in need, children with child protection plans, children with mental health issues, young carers
- liaise with the SENDCO when considering any safeguarding action for a child with special needs;
liaise with the school's mental health lead or CAMHS team as appropriate where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health issues;
- raise awareness with staff on how children's vulnerabilities and exposure to safeguarding issues such as neglect, abuse and trauma can negatively influence their educational attainment and behaviour and how staff can work to meet these challenges and improve outcomes;
- liaise with the Leicestershire & Rutland Virtual School Head in order to meet the educational needs of children known to LRCS;
- liaise with the designated teacher for LAC whenever there are safeguarding concerns relating to a looked after child or previously looked after child;
- oversee child protection systems within the school including the management of records, ensuring confidentiality, standards of recording, and referral processes;
- provide a link between the school and other agencies, particularly LRCS and the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- ensure staff, including temporary staff, receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training every 2 years, including online safety training, identifying the early signs of child-on-child abuse and sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- ensure parents are fully aware of the school policies and procedures and that they are kept informed and involved;
encourage a culture where children are listened to, their views taken into account and where they are encouraged to participate in keeping themselves safe;
- ensure relevant records are passed on appropriately when children transfer to other schools and where appropriate, share relevant information with schools or colleges to enable continued support the child on transfer.
- Parents and carers have the main responsibility for safeguarding and promoting their child's welfare and the school recognises the importance of working in partnership with them to ensure the welfare and safety of pupils.

PRACTICE

Staff members working with children should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.

If staff are ever unsure of what they should do, they must always speak to the DSL.

What to do if you are concerned

If a member of staff is concerned about a pupil's welfare, the matter should be reported to the Headteacher, who is the DSL, as soon as possible. If they are unavailable the Chief Education Officer must be contacted. This contact is to be made either in person or by phone, to ensure that action can be taken immediately if necessary.

A written report of the concern must also be made on CPOMs as soon as possible, at the latest by the end of the day that the concern occurred.

On being notified of a concern the DSL, or Chief Education Officer, will consider the appropriate course of action in accordance with the LRSCP referral threshold document. Such action may include early help or a referral to children's social care.

Contact details can be found at the front of this document.

Immediate risk of harm – Children's Social Care and/or Police

Non-immediate risk of harm – MARF Team

(If risk of harm is identified by MARF Team, they will refer the concerns to the MASH team)

Advocating for Effective Response

If the referral is made by telephone, this should be followed up in writing. It is considered best practice to record who information is passed on to and for what reason. The College will therefore adopt this procedure.

Confirmation of the referral and details of the decision as to what course of action will be taken should be received from the local authority within one working day. If this is not received, the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should contact children's social care again.

If after a referral the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should press for reconsideration to ensure their concerns are addressed and that the pupil's situation improves.

The school will respond to requests for information from the police promptly and in any event within five to ten working days.

Immediate Danger or Risk of Harm

If a pupil 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.

Anybody can make a referral in these circumstances, although normal procedure would be via the DSL.

If a referral is made by someone other than the DSL, the DSL should be informed of the referral as soon as possible.

Contact details can be found at the front of this policy.

Non-Immediate Danger or Risk of Harm - MARF Referral

When a Multi-Agency referral Form (MARF) is used, the following guidance should be followed:

To download the MARF, use the link to: - <https://lrsb.org.uk/uploads/marf-form.pdf>

Contact details can be found at the front of this policy.

When completing the MARF, as much detail as possible needs to be provided to support the First Response Team who in turn will require the details to aid the pupil being referred.

Examples: -

- If pupil is self-harming, describe the nature of the harm, frequency of incidents and how serious you feel it is.
- State the College's view...the College knows the pupil far better than children's social services.
- Is the pupil looked after? Is the pupil unkempt? Does the pupil smell of urine? Has the College seen the pupil's home?
- Has the pupil been hit? Was it a punch or slap? Give a timeline if possible and what was the cause of being hit.
- Are there any siblings involved?
- Influencing factors: - Has something happened recently or is there a long-term issue?

Consent may be required from the family for children's social services to be involved via MARF.

- If the College suspects a safeguarding issue, consent is not required.
- What sort of support would benefit the pupil/family?

Take into consideration the thresholds for section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (the pupil has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed) and section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (the pupil is in need)

If it is decided that a referral is not required, the DSL will keep the matter under review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving.

Staff are reminded that normal referral processes must be used when there are concerns about children who may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

In accordance with these procedures, if a member of staff has a concern about a child, there should be a conversation with the DSL to agree a course of action where possible. However, any member of staff can make a referral to children's social care. If a referral is made by someone other than the DSL, the DSL should be informed of the referral as soon as possible.

Referral Resulting in Concerns of Significant Harm – MASH Response

Where the referral raises concerns that the child is at risk of significant harm, the case will be passed on to Leicestershire & Rutland's MASH team to gather relevant information from other agencies. The Contact Service will inform the school within 1 working day of the outcome of any referral and what action LRCS will be taking. This may include any of the following:

- Carrying out a child and family assessment to identify the child's needs and establish if the child is a **child in need** under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. These are children (including disabled children) who are unlikely to meet a reasonable standard of health and development unless provided with services.

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- Convening a **strategy meeting under child protection** procedures as set out in section 4 for any child where there are concerns about significant harm and/or taking any immediate action in order to protect the child.
- Providing services for the child and their family in the meantime whilst work is on-going (including details of services).
- **Child protection referrals** will be made by way of an e-CAF referral to the LRCS MASH team under the procedures set out in section 4 for any child where there are concerns about significant harm. Parents should be informed that a referral is being made and consent sought, but a referral may still be made even if parents refuse consent.
- Where the referral raises concerns about the child's safety and welfare and it is thought a social work service is needed, the case will be passed on to Leicestershire & Rutland's MASH team.
- Staff are able to work in partnership with other agencies to safeguard children, including providing early help support, contributing to assessments and the implementation of the child's plan, attending network meetings and case conferences, monitoring children's progress and liaising with social workers.
- Safer recruitment practice is followed when recruiting to posts and appropriate action is taken whenever an allegation is made against a member of staff in line with the policy Safer recruitment and staff conduct policy for schools and colleges.



Role of Family Services and Social Work (LRCS)

W is responsible for carrying out Leicestershire & Rutland's statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the borough by providing services for children who have been assessed as being in need, in need of protection or in need of accommodation under the Children Act 1989.

Intervention by LRCS is based on the assessed level of need or risk the child is experiencing. Levels of need and risk and corresponding responses by LRCS are explained in the division's eligibility criteria for services. LRCS offer a service at the following levels:

Early help – low level risk

- Family Services provide help for children whose needs do not reach the threshold for a statutory social work service but who would benefit from support and services in order to improve outcomes and avoid escalation of problems.
- Where staff wish to refer a child for early help services, they should complete a CAF assessment and make an e-CAF referral to the Family Service. Parental consent must be sought prior to making any referral.

Children in Need – medium level risk

- These are children (including disabled children) who are unlikely to meet a reasonable standard of health and development unless provided with services. Services for these children focus on early intervention and prevention and are aimed at supporting families so that children are able to remain at home.
- Staff who are concerned that a pupil may require a social work service from LRCS because they are in need should complete a CAF assessment and make a referral to the MASH team using an e-CAF referral.
- Parental consent must be sought prior to making any referral. Staff may use the monitoring form shown at appendix 2 to record any concerns and/or monitor the pupils' progress.

Children in need of protection – high level risk

- These are children who it is believed are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm requiring statutory intervention via child protection procedures.

Recruitment and Induction

The school has appropriate written procedures in place to ensure safer recruitment practices and reasonable checks on visitors to the school, to deal with allegations against staff or volunteers and to report matters to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and that these policies are consistent with statutory guidance and reviewed on an annual basis.

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at least every 2 years and receive regular updates from the designated safeguarding lead to ensure they remain up to date with new legislation.

All governors and trustees receive safeguarding and child protection training needed to help them effectively scrutinise school safeguarding and child protection policies so that they can ensure policies are fit for purpose.

Child Protection Training

- All staff including the Headteacher will receive a copy of this Policy and Part 1 and, where appropriate, Annex B of KCSIE, and will be required to confirm that they have read and understand these.
- The Headteacher and all staff members will undertake appropriate child protection training which will be updated annually and following consultation with the LRSCP. In addition, all staff members will receive safeguarding and child protection updates via e-mail, e-bulletins and staff meetings on a regular basis and at least termly.
- Staff development training will also include training on how to manage a report of a child-on-child sexual violence or harassment act, online safety and Prevent training assessed as appropriate for them by the College.
- Additionally, the school will assess the appropriate level and focus for staff training and responsiveness to specific safeguarding concerns such as radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, cyberbullying and mental health, and to ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe.
- The Advisory Board will receive appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The school has mechanisms in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities with particular regard to KCSIE Part 1 and Annex A, and to ensure that they have the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively, including questionnaires / test your understanding forms, staff meetings, professional development reviews.

DSL Training

The Chief Education Officer, and, as DSL, the Headteacher will undertake training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training includes Prevent awareness training and will be updated at least every two years. In addition, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Prevent duty training will be consistent with Home Office WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) training if available.

Teaching pupils about safeguarding

The school teaches pupils about safeguarding through the curriculum and PSHE, including guidance on adjusting behaviour to reduce risks, particularly online, building resilience to protect themselves and their peers, and providing information about who they should turn to for help.

RSHE is embedded within the PSHE programme and is taught within three themes:

- Theme 1: Health and wellbeing
- Theme 2: Relationships
- Theme 3: Living in the wider world.

Working with Parents and Carers

The Divergent School Harborough will:

- make parents aware of the school statutory role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, including the duty to refer pupils on where necessary, by making all school policies available on the school website or on request;
- provide opportunities for parents and carers to discuss any problems with class teachers and other relevant staff;
- consult with and involve parents and carers in the development of school policies to ensure their views are taken into account;
- ensure a robust complaints system is in place to deal with issues raised by parents and carers;
- provide advice and signpost parents and carers to other services and resources where pupils need extra support.

Inter-agency working

The school recognises its duty under the Children Act (2004) to work in partnership with other professionals and agencies within the children's workforce in order to deliver integrated services that focus on prevention.

The school works in partnership with hospital departments and other outside agencies that may support the pupil, such as Social Care, Child and Mental Health Services, Education Welfare Services, the Educational Psychology Service and the child's home school

To achieve this, the school will lawfully share information with agencies in order to ensure pupils receive appropriate services, and will use the Common Assessment Framework to assess those children with additional needs and make appropriate referrals to agencies on behalf of the pupil.

The Divergent School Harborough recognises the central role they play in safeguarding pupils and will ensure that a representative attends all multi-agency meetings such as case conferences, core group and network meetings.

We will liaise with Leicestershire & Rutland's lead officers for safeguarding wherever there are any concerns or issues relating to safeguarding practice or the safeguarding of individual pupils. If the pupil's Local Authority of residence differs, they will also be liaised with.

Informing Parents

Parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, there may be circumstances when the Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to consult the Chief Education Officer, the Designated Officer(s), children's social care and / or the police before discussing details with parents.

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In all cases, the DSL will be guided by LRSCP referral threshold document.

For reference, referrals do not require parental consent. Staff must act in the best interests of the child, even if this means making a referral against the parents' wishes. In making a referral, and after discussing the matter with LRSCP, attention must be paid to sections 47 and 17 of the Children Act. This will determine if a referral is the correct course of action.

In relation to Channel referrals, the DSL will consider seeking the consent of the pupil (or their parent/guardian) when determining what information can be shared. Whether or not consent is sought will be dependent on the circumstances of the case but may relate to issues such as the health of the individual, law enforcement or protection of the public.

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

The school's Policy on the Safe and Acceptable Use of ICT sets out the expectations on pupils. This includes expectations about online safety and use of the internet and how the college acts to minimise threats to the safety and/or welfare of pupils

Staff and volunteers should use mobile phones and cameras in accordance with the guidance set out in the staff Code of Conduct.

Record Keeping, Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing.

Staff must record all concerns about a child on the school's pro forma on CPOMS, at Reception, in all staff rooms and from the DSL on request.

The DSL will open a digital child protection file following a report to them of a child protection concern about a pupil. The DSL will record all discussions with both colleagues and external agencies, decisions made and the reasons for them and detail of the action taken.

The school will keep all child protection records confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The school will co-operate with police and children's social care to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. For the purposes of full disclosure of information, the school do not need consent to share personal information provided that there is a lawful basis to process any personal information required. The College will adopt this approach whilst still adhering to point 3.2 of appendix 4. Pupils' privacy matters are covered in the Children's Code for privacy, which comes into law Sept. 2021. The school's Children's Code is available within the policy file and on the school's website.

Where allegations have been made against staff, the College will consult with the Designated Officer(s) and, where appropriate, the police and children's social care to agree the information that should be disclosed and to whom.

Holding and sharing information

The designated safeguarding lead has been suitably trained to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the College, and with other schools on transfer including in-year and when pupils change schools, and with the local safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018; and be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.
- Keep all such records in a safe and secure location along with individual safeguarding files, the annual audit and the annual safeguarding report.

Understanding the Views of Children

The College understands that it is important that children feel heard and understood. Therefore, The College has a series of forums to gather the views of our pupils. Staff will:

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them; and
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

SPECIFIC CONCERNS

Children who are missing or absent from education

The Divergent School Harborough is aware of those children who are persistently absent or missing from school. The Attendance Policy states who should be notified, what action taken and any relevant timescales.

Further details: Leicestershire & Rutland "Children missing from education" policy and CSCB missing children protocol.

Where a parent notifies the school that they are removing their child so they can be educated at home, the following notifications will immediately be made:

- The Education Welfare Service
- If the child is already known to Leicestershire & Rutland Children's Services (LRCS), their allocated social worker will be notified immediately

If the child is not known to LRCS, but the school has concerns about their welfare, the designated safeguarding lead will make a referral to LRCS.

Collection of children from school

Parents must notify the school in advance if someone, who does not have parental responsibility, will be collecting a pupil.

In the event that anyone who is not authorised to do so attempts to collect the pupil, the school will not allow the child to leave but contact the parent immediately.

Parents are asked to inform the school if their child is subject to court orders that limit contact with a named individual.

If a pupil, who is usually met by e.g. a parent, is uncollected at the end of the school day, the school will:

Check with the child to see if there are any changes to arrangements

Try to make contact with the parent or other family members

Inform LRCS if there are difficulties in contacting parents, or other family members

The use of social media for online radicalisation

The safe use of technology is a focus in all areas of the curriculum and key ICT safety messages are reinforced as part of assemblies and tutorial / pastoral activities.

The school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place (see the College's Policy on the Safe and Acceptable Use of ICT Updated with KCSIE Sept 2023) and is mindful that this should not lead to unnecessary restrictions on learning. The aims of our online provision will be such that the College will evaluate what pupils see online and will teach the pupils to recognise techniques for persuasion, types of online behaviour, the ability to recognise online risks and inform the pupils how and when to seek support.

Sexting and Up-Skirting

The school also sends a very clear message within its educational programme regarding 'sexting' and 'up-skirting & down-blousing'. This topic is dealt with in assemblies, the PSHE curriculum and with outside agency presentations.

"Up-skirting" became a specific criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 [April 2019]. It typically involves taking a photograph under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification or causing humiliation, distress or alarm.

'Down-blouse' refers to the practice of making unauthorized photographs down the top of a female's dress, capturing an image of her breasts. The practice is regarded as a form of sexual fetishism or voyeurism and is similar in nature to up-skirting. For ethical and legal issues relating to similar types of photography, see upskirt.

"Sexting" [Youth produced sexual imagery including requests for and the transmission of nudes and semi-nudes]. The College will always respond if informed that pupils have been involved in 'Sexting'. The College will use the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) guidance, "Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents & safeguarding young people" as its guide. The key points being: -

- Inform the Headteacher as soon as possible
- Support the victim as appropriate and in accordance with their best interests
- Inform all parents of involved children unless by doing so you put a child at risk

The Divergent School Harborough Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

- Images will not be viewed by school staff
- If school is to deal with the matter, involve parents in ensuring the images are deleted
- If there is evidence of exploitation or the targeting of a vulnerable student, inform the police
- Report it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent immediately.
- Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal.
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g., if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL (or equivalent) and seek support.
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- Do not ask the child/children or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL (or equivalent).
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL (or equivalent).

Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-Child abuse (formally described as peer-on-peer) is also tackled within the PSHE curriculum and by other means. Within this structure, the school explains how child-on-child abuse will be dealt with and how the risk of child-on-child abuse will be minimised by:

- Provide appropriate and regularly updated staff training.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviours.
- Provide a preventative curriculum programme.
- Resources.

The Divergent School Harborough recognises:

- the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse; specifically, the dominance of male-on-female abuse, and to put in place, through PSHE and other means such as assemblies, measures to educate and mitigate against it.
- Staff should familiarise themselves with the College's separate Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse & Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse.
- Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between two or more children and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).
- even if there are no reports, it does not mean that child-on-child abuse is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported
- Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
 - Sexual violence, such as rape assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
 - Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
 - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children.
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying).
 - Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, jokes and online sexual harassment, or misogynistic messages which may be stand alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
 - The non-consensual sharing of indecent images*, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images, nudes, videos and pornography to those who do not want to receive it (see further below).
 - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
 - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element);
 - Up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Child-on-child abuse can be associated with factors outside the school and can occur online and face-to-face between two or more children of any age or gender. The school therefore takes a contextual safeguarding approach to managing child-on-child abuse.

Child-on-child abuse is abuse and is never acceptable. It should never be passed off or dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys".

The school emphasises the importance of mutual respect and consideration for all members of the School community by:

- Encouraging action to keep others and self safe
- Working to progress away from intimidating, inconsiderate and overtly sexualised behaviour wherever we encounter it, however minor it may appear
- prohibiting pornography in any form
- being alert to any behaviour or the development of circumstances which may suggest that bullying / abuse could be more likely to happen (such as: the formation of gangs or assertive cliques; certain pupils appearing to be uncomfortable in the presence of other pupils; overtly sexualised behaviour / use of sexual language)
- publicising to pupils where to go if they are scared, intimidated, or concerned about others' behaviour

Whilst not abusive, children still need to know it is illegal, whilst non-consensual sharing is illegal and abusive. The school's approach to pupil's sharing nudes and semi-nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is that it should be treated as a safeguarding concern.

In this event, the DSL will:

- hold an initial review meeting with appropriate School staff • interview the young people involved (if appropriate)
- inform parents at an early stage and involve them in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Further guidance can be found in the UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings guidance. Where an issue of student behaviour or bullying gives 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', staff should follow the procedures below rather than the College Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies in the first instance.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment and sexual violence can be driven by wider societal factors such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language. Therefore, we place emphasis on building a preventative culture through the curriculum. It is important that students develop a good understanding of what makes relationships safe and healthy. "Given the increasing concerns around child sexual abuse and exploitation and the growing risks associated with growing up in a digital world, there is a particularly compelling case to act in relation to pupil safety." (DfE Guidance, Relationship and Sex Education 2020).

Child-on-Child sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. We place emphasis on the importance of raising awareness that as a community violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up. Where this occurs proactive work will be undertaken to enable all pupils concerned to progress away from this action.

The College works collaboratively with external organisations to challenge, sanction, record and report behaviours that are exploitative and unsafe in line with the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education guidelines. "Schools and colleges should be made aware of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated."

Female genital mutilation and Forced Marriage

Teachers must report to the police known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) in under 18s & discuss with the DSL unless there is a good reason not to.

If teachers have suspicions or are concerned that a pupil may be about to be forced into a marriage or may be a victim of forced marriage, their key responsibility is to inform the DSL (the person with designated responsibility for child protection in their school) as soon as possible.

Allegations Against Teachers

(including supply teachers, the Headteacher, Directors, volunteers, other staff and any host school staff)

The school has procedures for dealing with allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, the Headteachers, Directors, volunteers and other staff who work with children. The same procedure applies if there are allegations against any host school staff.

Procedures aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow Part 4 of KCSIE.

Where there is an allegation about a supply teacher or a member of host school staff: Whilst the school is not the employer of these teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances will the school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome.

The local authority has designated a particular officer, or team of officers, to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children (**Designated Officer(s)**). The Designated Officer(s) will be informed immediately and in any event within one working day of all such allegations that come to the College's attention and appear to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 1 of Appendix 4.

Detailed guidance is given to staff, Directors and volunteers to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. This guidance is contained in Staff Code of Conduct, which is available in Reception, in all staff rooms and which includes detail of additional safeguarding arrangements where staff engage in one-to-one teaching and meetings with pupils.

Staff and volunteers should also feel able to follow the school's separate Whistleblowing Policy to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the College or potential failures by the College or its staff to properly safeguard the welfare of pupils, and that such concerns will be taken seriously. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns about child protection failures internally (see the front of this policy for the relevant contact details).

Allegations Against Pupils

The conduct of pupils towards each other will, in most instances, be covered by the College's behaviour and discipline policies. However, some behaviour by a pupil towards another may be of such a nature that safeguarding concerns are raised. Staff should have read the College's separate policy on Child-on-Child sexual Abuse and Harassment. Examples of behaviour by a pupil which may raise safeguarding concerns may include:

- violence, including gender-based violence.
- threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- blackmail.
- misconduct of a sexual nature, including indecent exposure or touching or serious sexual assaults.
- sexting and up-skirting & down-blousing [including requests for and the transmission of nudes and semi-nudes] (see the school's Policy on the Safe and Acceptable Use of ICT for the College's approach to sexting).
- encouraging others to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- any form of inappropriate behaviour by an older pupil towards a younger or more vulnerable pupil.
- bullying, including cyberbullying.

The school takes steps to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, including sexting and up-skirting & down-blousing. The school has robust anti-bullying procedures in place (see the school's Anti-bullying Policy) and pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to protect pupils.

Abusive behaviour by pupils must be taken seriously. Behaviour should not be dismissed as being normal between young people, as "banter" or simply "part of growing up". Behaviour such as initiation violence or any form of sexual harassment is not acceptable.

Allegations against pupils should be reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this Policy.

The school will take advice from children's social services and the police on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the pupil or pupils accused of abuse.

If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the school will ensure that, subject to the advice of children's social care, the pupil's parents are informed as soon as possible, and that the pupil is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Where an allegation is made against a pupil, both the victim and the accused will be treated as being at risk and safeguarding procedures in accordance with this Policy will be followed. Appropriate support will be provided to all pupils involved, including support from external services as necessary.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is when a child under 16 (or under 18 if the child has a disability) is being cared and is living with someone else. That person is someone who is not a close relative for example a grandparent, stepparent, brother or sister, aunt or uncle. The relative can be half blood, full blood or by marriage. It is an arrangement where care is intended to last more than 28 days. Any private fostering arrangement details must be provided at the point of enrolment and prior to arrival at the school. We will make a referral to social care prior to the child's arrival and the LA will a) check that the person who is caring is able to fulfil that role b) check that the accommodation is suitable for the young person. The Divergent School Harborough will advise the LA of the child's intended date of arrival at the College.

CONTINUOUS REVIEW

The Headteacher, as DSL, and Chief Education Officer, as DDSL, will ensure that the procedures set out in this Policy and the implementation of these procedures are updated and reviewed regularly, working with the advisory board as necessary and seeking contributions from staff. The DSL will update the staff team, and the host school's DSL, regularly on the operation of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Any child protection incidents at the school will be followed by a review of these procedures by the DSL and a report made to the Advisory Board. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the Designated Officer(s) will be asked to assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the school's procedures. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements at any time will be remedied without delay.

The Headteacher, as DSL, and Chief Education Officer, as DDSL, will undertake an annual review of this Policy and the school's safeguarding procedures, including an update and review of the effectiveness of procedures and their implementation and the effectiveness of inter-agency working. The DSL will prepare a written report commissioned by the full Advisory Board. The written report should address how the school ensures that this Policy is kept up to date; staff training on safeguarding; referral information; issues and themes which may have emerged in the school and how these have been handled; and the contribution the school is making to multi-agency working in individual cases or local discussions on safeguarding matters.