



LIONHEART
EDUCATIONAL
TRUST

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**This policy applies to all schools within
the Lionheart Educational Trust**

Approved by the Trust

2024 – 2025

Name of School: Mercia Academy

Signature: (Chair of Governors)

Print Name: Dr Alan Jones



Contents

Introduction	3
Policy Statement and Principles.....	3
1. Purpose and Aims	5
2. Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement	5
3. Maintaining a Child Centred and Coordinated Approach to Safeguarding:.....	5
4. Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children	5
5. Whole School/College Approach to Safeguarding:	6
6. Safeguarding is Not Just About Protecting Children From Deliberate Harm. It Also Relates to the Broader Aspects of Care and Education Including:	6
7. Safeguarding Can Involve a Range of Potential Issues	7
8. Online Safety.....	9
9. Identifying Concerns	10
10. Indicators of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation:	11
11. Safeguarding Issues:	12
12. Child on Child Abuse	12
13. Alternative Providers and Other Agencies	14
14. CPD, Culture and Ethos.....	15
15. Responsibilities of the DSL/DSL Team	15
16. The Seven Main Elements of Our Child Protection Policy	16
17. Providing a Safe Environment	16
18. Additional Measures.....	19
19. Procedures for Identifying and Reporting Cases	19
20. Supporting Children and Working in Partnership.....	21
21. Staff and Safe Recruitment.....	22
22. Links to Other Local Authority Policies	23
23. Raising Awareness - Roles and Responsibilities	24
24. Safeguarding Training	24
25. Staff Responsibilities.....	25
26. Senior Leadership/Management Team Responsibilities:	26
27. Teachers (including ECTs) and Headteachers – Professional Duty.....	27
28. Designated Safeguarding Lead	27
29. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Expected To:	28
30. Work With Others.....	28



31.	The Training Undertaken Should Enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead to:	29
32.	Child Protection File - The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is Responsible:.....	30
33.	Headteacher	31
34.	Governing Body and Multi-Academy Trust	32
35.	Looked After Children – The Role of Designated Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.....	34
36.	Children with Special Educational Needs	35
37.	Acting Where Concerns are Identified.	36
38.	Confidentiality	37
39.	Information Sharing.....	37
40.	Records and Monitoring [KCSiE 2024 Paragraphs 68 to 70, Part Four, Part Five, Annex C]	38
41.	Why Recording is Important.....	39
42.	The Child Protection (CP), Child in Need (CiN) or Confidential File.....	39
43.	Transfer of Child’s Child Protection File, Child in Need, LAC, or Confidential File (Statutory Requirement):.....	40
44.	Recording Practice.....	40
45.	Educating Young People – Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding	41
46.	Helplines and Reporting	42
	Appendix 1	43
	Appendix 2	44



Introduction

Note: this policy is based upon Leicestershire’s LA Model Child Protection Policy template.

The content within this Child Protection Policy reflects the statutory requirements within DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024, which will come into force on the 1st of September 2024 and replaces KCSiE 2023. Content based upon the changes to KCSiE 2024 are highlighted in **blue**.

Policy Statement and Principles

Mercia Academy fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school. The aim of the policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils’ welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive environment. We encourage children to talk about their worries and to report their concerns to us in a number of alternative ways. Our pupils’ welfare is of paramount importance. Safeguarding concerns must be passed promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies as appropriate) who must respond to the concerns in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children’s welfare.

This policy is consistent with:

- the legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as described in section 175 of the Education Act 2002 [or section 157 of the Education Act 2002 for independent schools and academies] and the statutory guidance “*Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges*”, 2024 and “*Working Together to Safeguard Children*”, 2023.
- the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- LET Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- LET Complaints Policy
- LET Behaviour Policy – Secondary
- LET Behaviour Policy – Primary
- LET E-Safety Policy

This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead Marie Payne on a regular basis to ensure it remains current and incorporates all revisions made to local or national safeguarding guidance. This policy will be fully reviewed as a minimum once a year during the autumn term and provided to the Chair of the Local Governing Body for approval and sign off at the first autumn term meeting.

Date of next review – 20th September 2025



Role	Name	Contact Details
Headteacher/Principal	Jackie Cooper	Jackie.cooper@merciaacademy.org.uk
Designated Governor for Child Protection/ Safeguarding	Ian Bottrill	ian.bottrill@merciaacademy.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Marie Payne	Marie.payne@merciaacademy.org.uk
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Kelly Lundman	Kelly.lundman@merciaacademy.org.uk
Names of additional Safeguarding Leads	Gillian Francis Aaron Black Toby Chaplin	gillian.francis@merciaacademy.org.uk aaron.black@merciaacademy.org.uk toby.chaplin@merciaacademy.org.uk
Senior Lead in the absence of the onsite DSLs	Nick Holmes (Deputy Head)	Nick.holmes@merciaacademy.org.uk
Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership		Starting point – report concerns 01629 533190
LA Safeguarding Children in Education Officer	Miles Dent	Professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk
LA Child Protection Contact/LADO	Miles Dent	Professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk 01332 642376 Out of hours: Starting Point, as above
Starting Point	For urgent concerns about a child who needs a social worker or police officer today	As above; contact police direct for situations where there is immediate harm to a child
Police (to report a crime and immediate risk of harm or abuse to child)	101	In an emergency 999 (only)
NSPCC help/whistleblowing line	<u>Line is available 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday</u>	<u>0800 028 0285-</u> <u>email: help@nspcc.org.uk</u>



1. Purpose and Aims

- 1.1 Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school/academy/college and takes into account statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education and local guidance.
- 1.2 We will ensure that all parents/carers are made aware of our responsibilities regarding child protection procedures and how we will safeguard and promote the welfare of their children through the publication of this school/college/academy child protection policy. These duties and responsibilities, as set out within the Education Act 2002 section 175 and 157, DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 are incorporated into this policy.

2. Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement

- 2.1 We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We will endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We will be alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection, and justice.
- 2.2 The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, supply staff, volunteers, and governors/members of the Lionheart Educational Trust and are consistent with those from the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

3. Maintaining a Child Centred and Coordinated Approach to Safeguarding:

- 3.1 Everyone who works at school understands they are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children and accepts that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all our staff, including supply staff and volunteers will ensure their approach is child-centred and will be supported to consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- 3.2 We recognise no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.
- 3.3 **Safeguarding children is defined as:** The actions we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm are everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

4. Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

- 4.1 Defined as:
 - Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
 - Protecting children from maltreatment, **whether that is within or outside the home, including online.**



- Preventing the impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development.
 - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
 - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- **NB Definition:** Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

5. Whole School/College Approach to Safeguarding:

- 5.1 We understand the importance every member of our staff has through their contact with children in and outside of our school environment and the particular importance of the roles and relationships they have which places them in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and promote children’s welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.
- 5.2 As a school/college we have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- 5.3 We will make every effort to identify children who may benefit from early help and put in place support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life.
- 5.4 **Any staff member** who has **any** concerns about a child’s welfare should follow the processes set out in this child protection policy and raise concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy without delay. **Any staff member** who has concerns about the conduct of an adult should report this immediately to the Headteacher. The Lionheart Adult Concerns Form is also available for this purpose. See Appendix 2 for the Low Level Concerns Policy.
- 5.5 All our staff should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral, especially if they were involved in being alert to or receiving a disclosure of risk, harm or abuse or harassment from a child.
- 5.6 Our senior designated safeguarding lead will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children’s social care, police, early help, and health where required, as the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

6. Safeguarding is Not Just About Protecting Children From Deliberate Harm. It Also Relates to the Broader Aspects of Care and Education Including:

- Pupils’ health and safety and emotional well-being, and their mental and physical health or development.
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Meeting the legal duties on the school/college under the Equality act: will not unlawfully, discriminate against pupils or students based protected characteristics; we will carefully consider how we support pupils/students regarding particular protected



characteristics; we will take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students.

- Where a child receives elective home education and has an EHCP, the LA should review the plan working with parents and carers.
- The use of reasonable force.
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions.
- Providing first aid.
- Educational visits and off- site education.
- Intimate care and emotional wellbeing.
- On-line safety and associated issues including filtering and monitoring in accordance with DfE monitoring standards.
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure school security, considering the local context.
- Keeping children safe from risks, harm, exploitation and sexual violence and sexual harassment between children: KCSiE 2024 Annex A.

7. Safeguarding Can Involve a Range of Potential Issues

7.1 Such as:

- Neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and **exploitation**.
- Contextualised also known as extra-familial abuse.
- Bullying, including online bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, and prejudice-based bullying and being aware of the ease of access to mobile phone networks.
- The approach to online safety, including appropriate filtering and monitoring on school/college devices and school/college networks for home use.
- Going frequently missing and who are 'absent from education' going 'missing from care or home' and the risks this poses on repeat occasions and for prolonged periods.
- Domestic Abuse including teenage relationship abuse.
- **Domestic Abuse including where they see, hear or experience its effects.**
- Racist, disability- based, homophobic, bi-phobic, or transphobic abuse.
- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls.
- Risk of extremist behaviour and/or radicalisation and susceptible to being at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- Child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, modern slavery, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- A young carer.
- Has a mental health need and has an effect on school attendance and progress.
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Privately fostered.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending.
- Child-on-Child Abuse (broadened by KCSiE 2024 to include children abusing other children, other varying forms of bullying including online and sexually harmful behaviour, sexual violence, and sexual harassment (further defined in KCSiE 2024 Part Five).
- Harm outside the home - extra familial harm.
- The impact of new technologies, including 'sexting' and accessing pornography.



- Issues which may be specific to a local area or population, is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang activity or involvement and associations with organised crime groups or county lines.
 - In possession of a knife and or involved in knife crime, youth violence, criminal child exploitation (CCE).
 - Is in family circumstances which present challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse/harm.
 - Is at risk of or from serious violence and violent crime.
 - Persistent absence from education, including persistent absence for part of the school day.
 - At risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
 - Particular issues affecting children including domestic abuse and violence, female genital mutilation, and honour-based abuse.
 - Being subject to any conduct where the purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages (Law change on Forced Marriage, February 2023).
 - 'Upskirting'- The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. Upskirting is a criminal offence and reportable by all teachers (KCSiE Annex A).
- 7.2 All our staff and volunteers are aware of the indicators of **abuse, neglect and exploitation** and know what to look for is vital for the early identification so that support can be put in place. Our staff and volunteers are also aware of the specific safeguarding issues that indicate or inform of concerns or incidents linked to child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation and know to report concerns directly to the designated safeguarding or a member of the senior leadership team should the designated safeguarding lead not be available for children who may be in need of help or protection.
- 7.3 Our staff recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may also feel embarrassed, humiliated, or could be being threatened not to tell, so not feel able to share what is happening to them. Alternatively, we recognise children may not want to make a disclosure or talk about what is happening due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child and agree a way forward to support the child and determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate good opportunities for communication.
- 7.4 All staff should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead, or deputy at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.5 As a school/college we are aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore all staff should always be vigilant and always raise any concerns with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).



- 7.6 **All** staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of our school environment.
- 7.7 All our staff have received information and training regarding the risks that can take place outside the child's family. This is known as extra-familial harm and these can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.
- 7.8 Our staff are aware that technology offers many opportunities but is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.
- 7.9 All our staff have 'an understanding of the expectations, applicable to their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring' of ICT systems and regular monitoring of school's equipment and networks.

8. Online Safety

- 8.1 Our school/college approach to online safety, including appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks is reflected in this Child Protection Policy including awareness of the ease of access to mobile phone networks. (See KCSiE 2023 Paragraph 138). Note: Lionheart uses **Lightspeed** for filtering and monitoring purposes.
- 8.2 Our DSL and the DDSL team has the lead responsibility in this area, which is overseen and regularly reviewed by the Governing body/ trust, along with considering the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm, and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.
- 8.3 Our Trust will ensure they maintain oversight of the LET E-Safety Policy and the arrangements put in place to ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and the school network. The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems will in part be informed by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty as required by KCSiE 2024 paragraph **140-150**.
- 8.4 This will include:
- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
 - review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
 - block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
 - have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet the school/colleges safeguarding need.
 - review and discuss the standards with the leadership team, IT staff and service providers to ensure the school/college meets the standard published by the [Department for Education filtering and monitoring standards](#).



- 8.5 Our school content filtering system is managed at Trust level by the Head of IT. Our Trust-wide content filtering system is provided by Lightspeed and provides protection for all devices connected to our school network. This system also uses cloud-based technology to monitor and protect any device given to pupils both in school and at home. Lightspeed blocks all harmful content and has a full reporting suite that alerts DSLs so that even unsuccessful searches can be reviewed. The solution includes an out of hours service to allow alerts to be triaged 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 8.6 Our Trust will ensure an overview is maintained to ensure standards. They will hold to account IT staff and service providers regarding these standards and whether more needs to be done to support our school/college in meeting and maintaining these standards and communicating these to staff, our pupils/students, parents, carers and visitors to the school who provide teaching to children as part of the learning and educational opportunities we provide.
- 8.7 Our DSL and the DSL team will always act in the 'best interest of the child' and remain mindful of the importance with parents and carers about safeguarding concerns held for children and in particular children's access to online sites when away from school or college.
- 8.8 We will support understanding of harmful online challenges and hoaxes and share information with parents and carers and where they can get help and support.
- 8.9 All forms of abuse or harassment will be reported in accordance with national safeguarding guidance, and we will take a 'zero tolerance' approach to harassment and abuse as informed in KCSiE.
- 8.10 As a school/college, should an incident or disclosure be made by a child, our staff will always reassure the child (victim) that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe, but we recognise that not every victim will view themselves as such. We will also be mindful of the use of other terminology such as '**alleged perpetrator(s)**' or '**perpetrator(s)**' as in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.
- 8.11 We will do our best to ensure children understand the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them rather than criminalise them. In doing this we will discuss with relevant statutory safeguarding agencies to ensure all concerns or incidents are addressed fully, and where required different types of assessment and services are put in place where required and in accordance with the Pathway to Provision v 9.1.

9. Identifying Concerns

- 9.1 All members of staff, volunteers and governors will be aware of indicators of **abuse, neglect and exploitation** know, will know how to identify pupils who may be being harmed and then how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse, or where others raise concerns about them. Our staff will be familiar with procedures to be followed and will receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates.
- 9.2 Staff understand that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition, and that in most cases multiple issues will overlap with each other. Staff who regularly come into contact with children are aware of the DfE guidance [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)



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

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

10. Indicators of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation:

- 10.1 **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.
- 10.2 **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- 10.3 **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectation being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- 10.4 **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children to look at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education and **all**



staff should be aware of it and of their school or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.

10.5 **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to; provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

10.6 **Child Criminal Exploitation:** occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Child Criminal exploitation is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms, to commit theft, shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

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

11. Safeguarding Issues:

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

11.2 Our Trust-wide content filtering solution, Lightspeed, is device agnostic and allows us to protect all devices used by our pupils both on site and at home. The solution includes key word filtering which allows staff to intervene with difficult issues such as online abuse, grooming and suicide.

As set out in our LET E-Safety Policy, parents/carers are provided with regular e-safety guidance including different ways to access support.

12. Child on Child Abuse

We recognise that children sometimes display harmful behaviour themselves and that even if there are no reports, it may still be happening. Incidents or allegations will be referred on for appropriate support and intervention. Such abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at all or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". This abuse could



for example include sexual violence and sexual harassment, “upskirting”, initiation/hazing type violence, all forms of bullying, abuse in intimate relationships between peers, consensual and non-consensual sharing of indecent images, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent and physical violence (eg hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, etc). This may be experienced by both boys and girls; however, girls are more likely to be the victims and boys perpetrators. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination. We will therefore take positive action to create a culture of support and to ensure that girls and vulnerable groups such as LGBT and pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds feel confident to bring forward any concerns and have a safe space to talk to trusted staff about their experiences. There are different school and local authority or Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance and policies which detail the school’s procedures to address and minimise these concerns including for example;

- LET Behaviour Policy - Secondary
- LET Anti-Bullying Policy - Secondary
- LET E-Safety Policy
- DfE guidance Part 5 of “Keeping children safe in education”.

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

12.2 Our school has a number of ways to listen and hear the child’s voice.

- DSLs and other pastoral staff have been trained in the use of tools such as ‘3 Houses’ to encourage talk from students when they are reluctant to speak
- Our system of tutors and vertical houses allows tutors to get to know their students well and follow them through their years in school, building trusting relationships and allowing swift identification of concerns
- We have a student council to discuss issues that students want to address
- There are dedicated email addresses to report to if a student doesn’t feel comfortable speaking to an adult at first and all students are aware of these, as well as a box in the library where they can leave notes for us to contact them
- Assemblies and tutor time reiterate who in school is responsible for safeguarding, but also that everyone is available for student to talk to

12.3 Our school is led by senior members of staff and governors whose aims are to provide a safe environment and vigilant culture where children and young people can learn and be safeguarded. If there are safeguarding concerns, we will respond with appropriate action in a timely manner for those children who may need help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

12.4 Where staff members have concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will decide what action to take in conjunction with the



Designated Safeguarding Lead. Although we advocate that any staff member can make a referral to children's social care or Starting Point, especially where a child is identified as being in immediate danger, they should however ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a member of the senior leadership team is informed as soon as possible.

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

13. Alternative Providers and Other Agencies

- 13.1 Staff from our school attend the local partnership meetings and host meetings on-site for multi-agency when requested. We also liaise closely with the local PCSOs and police to support their work in the community. Groups attended include:
- ASB tasking meeting
 - Children and Locality Partnership
 - South Derbyshire Inclusion Panel
 - CRE Mapping and Planning
 - Child Protection and CiN
 - Case conferences and STRAT Meetings
- 13.2 Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider can meet the needs of the pupil.
- 13.3 Children who attend alternative education often have complex needs, it is important governing bodies/trusts and designated safeguarding leads ensure children are fully always supported, and the alternative setting is aware of any additional risks of harm that pupils may be vulnerable to. Information sharing for pupils who receive education provision outside of a mainstream setting is vital to support the child and ensure the learning environment where they are placed has all necessary information for the child before they access the provision. The working together principles are key to keep the child safe and understanding the vulnerabilities needing to be supported. This should include up to date contact details for the professionals working with the child and family.
- 13.4 Schools should also obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been conducted on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.
- 13.5 The school follows LET processes to ensure staff and AP provisions are compliant with safeguarding regulations



- 13.6 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or headteacher, who is familiar with national and local guidance, will share concerns, where appropriate, with the relevant agencies.
- 13.7 In addition to the external meetings in 13.1, concerns are also shared in staff briefings and with individual tutors as appropriate. The school works with a number of additional provisions, including:
- Trident (DV/DA)
 - Youth for Christ – emotional well-being
 - Youth Justice and Engagement Officers
 - Go Beyond – Holidays for PP students
- 13.8 The school has a dedicated email address so that any allegation or incident that happens on the school/college premises out of hours can be reported (e.g., community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities etc.). The email address is: dsl@merciaacademy.org.uk
Upon receiving such a disclosure the school will follow the safeguarding policies and procedures set out in this document, including informing the LADO where appropriate to do so.

14. CPD, Culture and Ethos

- 14.1 The school delivers regular training to staff, including a quiz to check knowledge and further on-line training as needed; staff briefings are used to raise new issues and address any concerns seen during the week. Induction processes include an on-line course and 1-1 with the DSL and a leaflet is available for one-off visitors giving information about the processes in school, who to report to and signs to look out for
- 14.2 The school follows Safer Recruitment processes and ensures that every interview includes at least one adult trained in Safer Recruitment.

15. Responsibilities of the DSL/DSL Team

- 15.1 The DSL and deputies maintain a key role in raising awareness amongst staff about the needs of children who have or who have had a social worker and the barriers that those children might experience in respect of attendance, engagement and achievement at schools or college.
- 15.2 The DSL along with the Designated Teacher can inform the Governing body and Headteacher of the number of children in their cohort who have or who have had a social worker and appropriate information is shared with teachers and staff on individual children's circumstances.
- 15.3 The Designated Teacher and Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead maintain data for children who have looked after status and for children who have been involved in the care system.
- 15.4 The Designated Teacher maintains good links with the Virtual School Head to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. The role of virtual school heads was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of



children with a social worker. The virtual school head should identify and engage with key professionals, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children. This should include Designated Safeguarding Leads, social workers, headteachers, governors, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, mental health leads, other local authority officers.

- 15.5 The school has a non-teaching DSL Lead to allow time for the role to be carried out well and supervision is provided through both an external provision and through regular line management. The DSL is supported by other trained staff to share workload as needed. The Designated Teacher is also a DSL and an experienced senior leader.
- 15.6 Under the section on additional safeguarding vulnerabilities of children with SEND, the SEND Code of Practice is a source of information and support is available from specialist organisations including SENDIASS. Derbyshire SEND provides a local officer for further support and the school is part of the Derbyshire Local Offer

16. The Seven Main Elements of Our Child Protection Policy

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

17. Providing a Safe Environment

- 17.1 We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact our school/college staff have with children they and we are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.
- 17.2 The school/academy/college will therefore:
- 17.2.1 Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to and heard.
- 17.2.2 Ensure children know that there are trusted adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried.



- 17.2.3 Ensure that every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and colleagues from other agencies.
- 17.2.4 Include opportunities in the *RSHE* curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse by offering a robust PDC curriculum which is supplemented by our Global Issues programme.
- 17.2.5 Recognise and managing risks including online safety, radicalisation and extremism, sexual exploitation, child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, the sharing of nude and semi-nude images which has replaced what was termed as sexting.
- 17.2.6 Support the development of healthy relationships and awareness of domestic violence and abuse, recognising that Domestic Abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may involve a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional harm and children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.
- 17.2.7 Recognising how pressure from others and safeguarding vulnerabilities can affect their behaviour.
- 17.2.8 Recognising the link between mental health, school attendance and children 'absent from education' and the impact on learning, progress, and educational attainment.
- 17.2.9 Knowing that as a school/college we will act swiftly to address any concerns related to serious violence, gang and knife crime or child on child sexual violence or sexual harassment incidents.
- 17.2.10 Ensuring our behaviour policy includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, harmful online challenges, hoaxes, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying and use of social media platforms and networks is including in the LET E-Safety Policy
- 17.2.11 Maintain an on-line safety policy which address statutory filtering and monitoring standards, which take into account remote learning, and use of mobile and smart technology and is reviewed regularly to take into account any new threats are included in the LET E-Safety Policy
- 17.2.12 The response required by schools/colleges and safeguarding agencies to address any 'harm outside the home' also known as 'extra familial harm.' Schools/colleges are a place of protection and where children and young people can share concerns and seek support and are place of safety and where children and young people can form safe and trusted relationships. Through creating a whole school/college ethos and sharing excellent communication with safeguarding partners and services, children and young people can feel assured they will be listened to, heard, and offered support to enable them share sensitive information and strengthen their resilience.
- 17.2.13 Importance of our *school/colleges* ethos of working together with parents, carers, and external services to form strong and trusted partnerships which can advocate trauma informed and trauma aware responses and where



trusted relationships can be formed and go on to create safe places and spaces within the community, so children and young people know how to access a place of safety outside of the school/college environment if needed.

- 17.3 The school has a Family Resource Worker who works with families, feeder school and external agencies to support children with wrap around care. Working with other agencies and using information from a variety of sources (including police reports) ensures that we are aware of issues outside of school and can support in a joined-up way. The school also provides emotional and mental health support and has a school nurse on site each week with a confidential 'drop in' service
- 17.4 The school shares information with external agencies and signposts parents, carers and families to support agencies, e.g. Build Sound Minds, Trident
- 17.5 Our school teaches safeguarding and keeping yourself safe through the PD curriculum as well as through assemblies, tutor time and additional sessions 1-1 or online as needed. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Bullying, including cyber bullying
 - Drugs, alcohol and substance misuse; County Lines and CRE/CSE
 - Online safety and Cybercrime
 - Fire, water and road safety
 - Domestic abuse, and its different forms
 - Healthy relationships, including consent
 - Forced marriage, FGM
 - Preventing extremism and radicalisation
- 17.6 We will take all reasonable measures to ensure any risk of harm to children's welfare is minimised inside and outside of the school/college environment.
- 17.7 Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, working to local policies and procedures in full working partnership with agencies.
- 17.8 Ensure robust child protection arrangements are in place and embedded in the daily life and practice of the school.
- 17.9 Promote pupil health and safety.
- 17.10 Promote safe practice, and challenge unsafe practice.
- 17.11 Ensure that procedures are in place to deal with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff including volunteers, supply staff and contractors. KCSiE Part Four has two sections, the second section addresses low-level concerns. Appendix 2 outlines our Low level Concerns Policy.
- 17.12 Provide first aid and meet the health needs of children with medical conditions.
- 17.13 Ensure school site security.
- 17.14 Address drugs and substance misuse issues.
- 17.15 Support and plan for young people in custody and their resettlement back into the community.
- 17.16 Work with all agencies regarding missing children, anti-social behaviour/gang activity and violence in the community/knife crime and children at risk of sexual exploitation.



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

18. Additional Measures

- 18.1 Children in off-site provision are monitored regularly, including the use of independent student voice. Records of visits are kept. Robust checks, including those for the DBS and suitability of staff, are carried out before use of a provision. Concerns are escalated as needed.
- 18.2 Children with emotional and mental health needs are supported by the DSL and other trained staff in school, including the Mental Health First Aider. As a result of their training, staff are able to recognize signs of emotional and mental health concerns. CPOMS is in use and staff are regularly reminded that any concern must be reported promptly.
- 18.3 Children who may be LGBT are given support from staff, including a lunch club supervised by staff, and encouraged to report any issues through the multiple methods that the school has to hear student voice. Resources in the PD curriculum support students who may be LGBT or want to understand more; this curriculum also informs students about the illegality discrimination and hate crimes. KCSiE acknowledges that children who are LGBT may be targeted and informs Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are not phobias, they are not fears; they are forms of discrimination of or hate towards LGBT people or those perceived to be LGBT and must not be tolerated. *Note – to be kept under review as the guidance may change as the 'Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning' section is currently under review pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation (DfE, 2023b).*
- 18.4 KCSiE 2023 Annex B page 142 Child abduction and community safety incidents – Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends, and acquaintances); and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. Staff know to be vigilant and students can report concerns through the emails and to staff directly. Information is also shared at the meetings attended by the DSL
- As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe.
- 18.5 We do not provide outdoor safety lessons, but provide regular reminders to students about staying safe and reporting any concerns to a trusted adult

19. Procedures for Identifying and Reporting Cases

- 19.1 We will follow the procedures set out by the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) and take account of guidance issued by the DfE in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 to:



- 19.1.1 Ensure we have a Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is a member of the school/college leadership team, and a Deputy Safeguarding Lead for child protection/safeguarding who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- 19.1.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead role is written into their job description and clarifies the role and responsibilities including as defined in KCSI E 2024 Annex C.
- 19.1.3 Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection/safeguarding.
- 19.1.4 Ensure that we have a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC).
- 19.1.5 Ensure every member of staff (including temporary, supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputies responsible for child protection, and their role.
- 19.1.6 Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or to children's social care/police if a child is in immediate danger.
- 19.1.7 Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the early help process and understand their role in making referrals or contributing to early help offers and arrangements.
- 19.1.8 Ensure that there is a whistleblowing policy and culture where staff can raise concerns about unsafe practice, and that these concerns will be taken seriously.
- 19.1.9 Ensure that there is a complaints system in place for children and families.
- 19.1.10 Ensure that parents understand the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection and safeguarding by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus and on the school's website.
- 19.1.11 Notify Children's Social Care if there is an unexplained absence for a child who is subject to a child protection plan and where no contact can be established with the child, or a parent or appropriate adult linked to the child.
- 19.1.12 Develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at child protection conferences.
- 19.1.13 Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately; documenting and collating information on individual children to support early identification, referral, and actions to safeguard.
- 19.1.14 Ensure all records are kept securely; We use CPOMS to electronically store all safeguarding records in a secure manner.
- 19.1.15 Ensure that we follow robust processes to respond when children are missing from education or missing from home or care.



- 19.1.16 Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- 19.1.17 Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- 19.1.18 Apply confidentiality appropriately.
- 19.1.19 Apply the DDSCB escalation procedures if there are any concerns about the actions or inaction of social care staff or staff from other agencies.

20. Supporting Children and Working in Partnership

- 20.1 We recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a positive sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation, and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure, and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication. We also recognise that there are children who are more vulnerable than others, which include children with special educational needs and or disabilities.
- 20.2 All staff including volunteers are advised to maintain the attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is a concern, and when concerned about the welfare of the child should always act in the **best** interests of the child.
- 20.3 Our school will endeavour to support the pupil through:
 - 20.3.1 Developing the content of the curriculum through PD and as part of our wider programmes.
 - 20.3.2 Maintaining a school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive, and secure environment, and which gives pupils a sense of them being valued.
 - 20.3.3 The school behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy and child-on-child abuse policy which is kept up to date with national and local guidance and which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in our school.
 - 20.3.4 Our school will proactively ensure that all children know that some behaviours are unacceptable and will need to be addressed but as members of our school/college they are valued and will be supported through the time required to deal with any abuse or harm that has occurred, or outcomes from incidents.
 - 20.3.5 Students are supervised when in Reflection or other interventions and escorted for breaks as needed. Supervising staff are experienced in behaviour management and escalate any concerns to the DSL



- 20.3.6 Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children's Social Care (in line with the Thresholds for access to services, updated in September 2021); Derbyshire Exclusion and Access Team, Build Sound Minds and the behaviour support service
- 20.3.7 Ensuring that, where a pupil leaves and is subject to a child protection plan, child in need plan or where there have been wider safeguarding concerns, their information is transferred to the new school immediately or within **5 working days** and that the child's social worker is informed.
- 20.3.8 Ensuring that the vulnerability of children with special educational needs and or disabilities is recognised and fully supported by the SENDCO and Assistant Principal (Inclusion)
- 20.3.9 Where a child discloses a concern or informs of an incident that has involved them in an incident involving sexual violence and or sexual harassment the staff member will ensure the child (victim) is taken seriously, kept safe and never be made to feel like they are creating a problem for reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment.
- 20.3.10 The DSL and Principal will be informed immediately, and actions taken in accordance with the school/college child-on -child/ sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school and college policy.
- 20.3.11 Weekly line management of the DSL supports her and staff have open access on a Thursday night for supervision by the DSL and senior team where needed

21. Staff and Safe Recruitment

- 21.1 The leadership team and governing body/multi academy trust of the school/college will ensure that all safer working practices and recruitment procedures are followed in accordance with the guidance set out in KCSiE 2024 Part Three.
- 21.2 School leaders, staff and members of the governing body/trust will be appropriately trained in safer working practices and access safer recruitment training.
- 21.3 Statutory pre-employment checks and references from previous employers are an essential part of the recruitment process. We will ensure we adopt the appropriate necessary procedures to carry out the checks required and where any concerns arise, we will seek advice and act in accordance with national guidance.
- 21.4 The school/college has in place recruitment, selection, and vetting procedures in accordance with KCSiE 2024 Part Three and maintains a Single Central Record (SCR), which is reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with KCSiE 2024 Part Three paragraphs 206 to 351.
- 21.5 Staff will have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and will be aware of the Lionheart Code of Conduct (Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings 2022), which includes contact between staff and pupils outside the work context. Staff can access a copy of this through our VLE.



- 21.6 Newly appointed staff and volunteers will be informed of our arrangements for safer working practices by the HR lead admin and DSL before beginning working and contact with pupils.
- 21.7 In the event of any complaint or allegation against a member of staff, the headteacher (or the Designated Safeguarding Lead) if the headteacher is not present, will be notified immediately. If it relates to the headteacher, the Chair of Governors will be informed without delay. We will respond to all allegations robustly and appropriately in collaboration with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), LADO Allegation Officers or HR Service.
- 21.8 Staff may find some of the issues relating to child protection and the broader areas of safeguarding upsetting and may need support which should be provided by the school and their Human Resources Team.
- 21.9 Staff can also access support through Education Support, their unions and counselling (CBT) sessions offered by the school.
- 21.10 Advice and support will be made available by the Safeguarding and Compliance Lead (SCL), LADO and LCC HR where appropriate to the leadership team
- 21.11 Safeguarding processes are shared with all staff and visitors. The induction checklist prioritises safeguarding
- 21.12 The school obtains written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been conducted on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.
- 21.13 Letters of assurance, observations and student voice are used to check safeguarding processes at APs

22. Links to Other Local Authority Policies

- 22.1 This policy, together with the following, should be read alongside and in conjunction with other policies and statutory guidance regarding the safety and welfare of children, including those adopted from Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
- 22.2 The above together with the following will make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school
 - LET Code of Conduct
 - LET Complaints Policy
 - LET Behaviour Policy (Secondary)
 - LET E-safety Policy
- 22.3 Disclosures involving sexual violence and/or child sexual harassment are taken extremely seriously and dealt with promptly and comprehensively. The safeguarding team discuss the case, liaising with outside agencies as needed and appropriate



23. Raising Awareness - Roles and Responsibilities

- 23.1 All staff and volunteers: Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone in our school/college who comes into contact with children and their families have a role to play in safeguarding children. All staff in our school/college/academy consider, always, what is in the best interests of children.
- 23.2 All staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that it could happen here. They are encouraged and supported to report concerns promptly and accurately. Staff are trained on CPOMS, and feedback is given to staff once concerns are addressed. Current issues and on-going concerns, locally and nationally, are shared in staff briefings
- 23.3 All staff within our school are particularly important as they are able to identify concerns early and provide help to children to prevent concerns from escalating.
- 23.4 All staff contribute to providing a safe environment in which children can learn.
- 23.5 Staff are vigilant on trips and briefings for safeguarding and health and safety; advice is shared by pastoral staff and the DSL and if necessary the visit is accompanied by specialist trained staff
- 23.6 All our staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in this. This includes being able to identify emerging problems to recognise children who may benefit from early help. Staff know in the first instance to discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and understand they may be required to support other agencies and professionals in assessments for early help.
- 23.7 A family resource worker is employed by the school
- 23.8 Parents/carers can contact the school through all communication methods or can visit the school, although a meeting is not always guaranteed. Reception staff are trained to recognise when a meeting is needed and a confidential meeting space is available.
- 23.9 The school recognises the importance of children and social workers meeting during the school day where required and our DSLs work closely with social care and safeguarding partners to ensure children subject to child protection, child in need and LAC plans are kept safe, and the child's needs are met.
- 23.10 Children, parents, and carers are signposted to a number of local agencies, including the CSV and Circularity Hub (both of whom offer multiple ways to help) as well as specialist support such as Trident. Information is shared in various ways in school and through your website, posters, newsletters and during meetings.

24. Safeguarding Training

- 24.1 All our staff are aware of systems within Mercia Academy and these are explained to them as part of staff induction, which include our child protection policy; the employee code of conduct and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- 24.2 Our school utilises an induction checklist when staff are inducted which includes the above, but also other policy and procedural information



- 24.3 All our staff receive safeguarding and child protection training which is updated every three years. In addition, to this training all staff members receive child protection and safeguarding updates when required, but at least annually.
- 24.4 Training is provided by LET and the DSL, with additional training available through the National College and staff briefing updates
- 24.5 All our staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act (1989) and understand the role they may have in these assessments.
- 24.6 Staff have training and ask for support from the DSL to understand their role and the opportunities available, including any partnership work especially with social care and the local arrangements put in place by DDSCP and know how to access the NSCP website and training opportunities.
- 24.7 All our staff know what to do if a child is raising concerns or makes a disclosure of abuse and/or neglect. Staff will maintain a level of confidentiality whilst liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and children's social care. Our staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a disclosure or allegation, recognising this may not be in the best interest of the child.

25. Staff Responsibilities

- 25.1 All staff have a key role to play in identifying concerns and provide early help for children. To achieve this, they will:
- 25.2 Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- 25.3 Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- 25.4 Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.
- 25.5 Lead and ensure robust arrangements and procedures are in place to effectively manage and regularly monitor the school/college online safety, and specifically appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks which are reflected in this Child Protection Policy, including awareness of ease of access to mobile phone networks.
- 25.6 Attend training to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse.
- 25.7 Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" with regards to safeguarding.
- 25.8 Record their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the DSL as soon as practical that day. If the DSL is not contactable immediately a Deputy DSL should be informed.
- 25.9 Be prepared to refer directly to social care, and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or their Deputy is not available.



- 25.10 Follow the allegations procedures if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff.
- 25.11 Follow the procedures set out by the LRSCP and take account of guidance issued by the DfE KCSIE 2024.
- 25.12 Support pupils in line with their child protection plan, child in need plan, LAC Care Plan.
- 25.13 Treat information with confidentiality but never promising to “keep a secret.”
- 25.14 Notify the DSL or their Deputy of any child on a child protection plan or child in need plan who has unexplained absence.
- 25.15 Understand early help and be prepared to identify and support children who may benefit from early help, to include children who are frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care, has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit, has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending.
- 25.16 Liaise with other agencies that support pupils and provide early help.
- 25.17 Ensure they know who the DSL and Deputy DSLs are and know how to contact them.
- 25.18 Have an awareness of the Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Staff Behaviour Policy (or Code of Conduct), procedures relating to the safeguarding response for children who go missing from education and the role of the DSL.
- 25.19 The school engages in learning opportunities with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), and Health professionals

26. Senior Leadership/Management Team Responsibilities:

- 26.1 Contribute to inter-agency working in line with HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (updated December 2020) guidance.
- 26.2 Provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified.
- 26.3 Ensure all staff, supply staff and volunteers are alert to the definitions of abuse and indicators, and through access to regular training opportunities and updates.
- 26.4 Ensure staff are alert to the various factors that can increase the need for early help.
- 26.5 Working with Children’s Social Care, support their assessment and planning processes including the school’s attendance at conference and core group meetings as appropriate.
- 26.6 Carry out tasks delegated by the multi academy trust such as training of staff and volunteers, safer recruitment and maintaining of a single central register.
- 26.7 Provide support and advice on all matters pertaining to safeguarding and child protection to all staff regardless of their position within the school.
- 26.8 Treat any information shared by staff or pupils with respect and follow agreed policies and procedures.



26.9 Ensure that allegations or concerns against staff including low-level concerns are dealt with in accordance with guidance from Department for Education (DfE) KCSiE 2024 Part Four 'Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation teachers including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors in Sections One and Two.

26.10 Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Note: KCSiE 2024 paragraphs 187 to 202, 'Children potentially at greater risk of harm and Children who need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Our school will always work with social care and agencies to address safeguarding and child protection concerns.

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

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

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

27.3 The designated teacher meets with students and carers regularly and supports meetings with outside agencies.

28. Designated Safeguarding Lead

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

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

28.3 As a smaller school we have a lead DSL and additional DSLs to support our students, named at the start of the policy

28.4 All DSLs have completed the required training and are overseen by the Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead, fulfilling your child protection responsibilities to meet the needs of the children/ young people on roll.

28.5 We acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead



will ensure there is a structured procedure within the school, which will be followed by all the members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.

29. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Expected To:

- 29.1 Manage Referrals:
 - 29.1.1 Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies.
 - 29.1.2 Support staff who make referrals to children's social care and other referral pathways.
 - 29.1.3 Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child and will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 29.2 Ensure arrangements are in place year-round for all staff and volunteers to seek advice, support and inform of safeguarding concerns, or incidents and disclosures that inform children are at risk of harm, or abuse, harm or bullying or sexual harm or harassment has occurred.
- 29.3 Ensure appropriate systems are in place to manage and address online safety, access to mobile phone networks, especially for those children who are potentially at greater risk of harm, abuse, and exploitation and refer concerns where required linked to the PREVENT duty. **Note: This preventing radicalisation section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14 March 2024.**
- 29.4 The DSL and team meet weekly to discuss issues and themes, and to ensure that all are effective in their role
- 29.5 The Senior DSL remains responsible for oversight children on placements or alternative education arrangements. From September 2022 Ofsted will inspect these arrangements as part of 'the child's journey' and form a judgement regarding the safeguards in place.

See KCSiE 2024 Annex C for clarity on the role and responsibilities of the DSL and team.

30. Work With Others

- 30.1 Liaise with the headteacher/principal (where the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead role is not carried out by the headteacher) to inform him/her of any issues and ongoing investigations.
 - 30.1.2 As required, liaise with the 'case manager' (as per Part Four of KCSiE 2024) and the LADO where there are child protection concerns/allegations that relate to a member of staff.
 - 30.1.3 Liaise with the case manager and the LADO/LADO Allegation Officer where there are concerns about a staff member.
 - 30.1.4 Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and deciding when to make a referral by liaising with other agencies and acts as a source of support, advice, and expertise for other staff.



- 30.1.5 Take part in strategy discussions or attend inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so and to contribute to the assessment of children.
 - 30.1.6 Liaise with the local authority and other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the local Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and practice guidance.
 - 30.1.7 The headteacher, designated safeguarding leads and governing body/trust are aware of the local arrangements put in place by Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) and know how to access the LRSCP website and training.
- 30.2 The DSL feeds back information to other staff in briefings and pastoral meetings to help to raise awareness of emerging threats and risks.
- The DSL contributes to developing the curriculum and learning experiences for students and staff, through staff meetings, bulletins, staff notice board, briefings, and arranging additional classroom learning opportunities. They discuss the PD curriculum with the HoD to ensure it is addressing needs in our school
- 30.3 The school has links with agencies such as the NSPCC, Police, etc.
- 30.4 Undertake training
- 30.4.1 Formal Designated Safeguarding Lead training will be undertaken at least every two years. Informal training and updating of knowledge and skills will be at regular intervals, undertaken at least annually.
 - 30.4.2 The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for their own training and should obtain access to resources or any relevant refresher training.
 - 30.4.3 The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is also responsible for ensuring all other staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities access up to date and timely safeguarding training and maintains a register or data base to evidence the training.

31. The Training Undertaken Should Enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead to:

- 31.1 Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention through the Thresholds to access to services.
- 31.2 Have a working knowledge of how the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership operates, the conduct of a child protection conference, and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- 31.3 Ensure that each member of staff has access to the child protection policy and procedures.



- 31.4 Understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes.
- 31.5 Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, including those with special educational needs and or disabilities and young carers.
- 31.6 Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns, rationale/decisions and referrals.
- 31.7 Understand the Prevent Duty and provide advice and support to staff on protecting and preventing children from the risk of radicalisation and being grooming into extremist behaviours and attitudes (KCSiE 2024 Annex A and B).
- 31.8 Understand the reporting requirements for FGM.
- 31.9 Understand and support children to keep safe when online and when they are learning at home.
- 31.10 Encourage a culture of protecting children, listening to children and their wishes and feelings.
- 31.11 Raise awareness:
- 31.12 Ensure that the child protection policies are known, understood, and used appropriately.
- 31.13 Ensure that the child protection policy is reviewed annually in consultation with staff members, and procedures are updated and reviewed regularly and implemented, and that the governing body is kept up to date and actively involved.
- 31.14 Work strategically to ensure policies and procedures are up to date and drive and support development work within the school.
- 31.15 Ensure that the child protection policy is available to parents and carers and uploaded to the school website and make parents/carers aware that referrals may be made about suspected abuse or neglect.
- 31.16 Ensure all staff receive induction training covering child protection before working with children and can recognise and report any concerns immediately as they arise.

32. Child Protection File - The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is Responsible:

- 32.1 for ensuring that when a child leaves the school or college their 'child protection,' 'child in need' file or 'confidential' file is transferred to the new school or college at the same time the child goes on roll of its new school or education provision.
- 32.2 for keeping a record of the number of children open and subject to CP, CiN and LAC concerns is maintained and shared with the governing body annually.
- 32.3 for keeping a record or data on the cohort of children having or have had a social worker and social care involvement will be maintained.



- 32.4 Our school/college will maintain, keep and storing records, where a concern about a child has been identified in accordance with statutory guidance in KCSiE 2024.
- 32.5 The Senior DSL and DSL team ensure all concerns and incidents are reported, recorded, responded to in CPOMS. The transfer of information and individual case files is completed confidentially and securely, in accordance with KCSiE 2024 Annex C page.
- 32.6 Availability - During term time the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) will always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Leads a member of the senior leadership team will be nominated to provide cover. Appropriate arrangements will be in place all year round for any out of school hours' activities in line with the guidance contained in DfE KCSiE 2024 Part Two and Annex C.

33. Headteacher

- 33.1 The Headteacher of the school will ensure that:
 - 33.1.1 The policies and procedures adopted by the Trust, (particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation), are understood, and followed by all staff.
 - 33.1.2 The school, academy or college maintains an up-to-date Single Central Record (SCR) which is reviewed regularly and is compliant with statutory guidance.
 - 33.1.3 Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children.
 - 33.1.4 All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies.
 - 33.1.5 The Headteacher will ensure all staff including supply teachers and volunteers have access to and read and understand the requirements placed on them through: - the school/college Child Protection Policy; the Staff Code of Conduct Policy.
 - 33.1.6 The Headteacher will ensure there are mechanisms in place to assist staff to fully understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in KCSiE 2024.
 - 33.1.7 Where there is an allegation made against a member of staff (either paid or unpaid, including volunteers) that meets the criteria for a referral to the LADO, then the headteacher or principal will discuss the allegation immediately with the LADO (within 24 hours) and ensure that cases are managed as per Part Four: Allegations made against/Concerns raised in



relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors in KCSiE 2022. If the allegation is against the Headteacher/Principal, then the Chair of the Governing Body will manage the allegation.

- 33.1.8 There is a chain of safeguarding of leadership from the school DSL and through the Trust supporting staff for escalation of issues

34. Governing Body and Multi-Academy Trust

- 34.1 We recognise our Local Governing body and Trust has a strategic leadership responsibility for our school's/college's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure they comply with their duties under legislation and must have regarding to KCSiE 2024, ensuring policies, procedures and training in our school/college are effective and always comply with the law.
- 34.2 The Local Governing Body and Trust will be collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day to day safeguarding practices by:
- 34.2.1 Ensuring there is an individual member of the governing body to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding and champion child protection issues in the school.
- 34.2.2 Ensuring that the school has effective policies and procedures in line with statutory guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023) as well as with local LRSCP guidance and monitors the school's compliance with them.
- 34.2.3 Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to promote a child's welfare.
- 34.2.4 Recognising the importance of information sharing between agencies through the statutory guidance provided within KCSiE 2024 Annex C page 166 to 170 and paragraphs 56 to 57, 115 to 121, 375, to 390, 476, 540 and 543 and page 158, the additional clarification about GDPR and withholding information.
- 34.2.5 Ensuring cooperation with the local authority and other safeguarding partners.
- 34.2.6 Appointing a Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead from the leadership team to take lead responsibility for child protection/safeguarding and that a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is appointed and appropriately trained.
- 34.2.7 Ensuring that all staff, supply teachers and governors read and fully understand at least KCSiE 2024 Part One and or Annex A as a minimum and ensure that there are mechanisms in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as required within the guidance.
- 34.2.8 Ensuring that the governing body understands it is collectively responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements, even though a governor will be



nominated as the 'Safeguarding Governor' and person who will champion all safeguarding requirements.'

- 34.2.9 All members of the governing body will undertake safeguarding training to ensure they have the knowledge and information needed to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of robust 'safeguarding arrangements and act as the 'critical friend'. This training must focus on their strategic role and not on operational procedures.
- 34.2.10 The Chair of Governors and named Safeguarding Governor will access role specific training to enable them to comply and discharge their child protection/ safeguarding responsibilities including should any allegations be made against the Headteacher/ Principal.
- 34.2.11 The Governing body will collectively ensure there is a training strategy in place for all staff, including the headteacher, so that child protection training is undertaken and refreshed in line with KCSiE 2024 and LRSCP guidance.
- 34.2.12 Ensuring that staff undergo safeguarding child protection training at induction and that there are arrangements in place for staff to be regularly updated to ensure that safeguarding remains a priority.
- 34.2.13 Ensuring that temporary staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.
- 34.2.14 Ensuring there are procedures in place to manage allegations against staff and exercise disciplinary functions in respect of dealing with a complaint KCSiE 2024 Part Four Section One.
- 34.2.15 Ensuring that arrangements/procedures are in place to manage and provide clarity on the process for sharing 'low level' concerns, which should be referred to within the school/college Staff Code of Conduct, (Allegations and concerns about a staff member that after initial consideration by the 'case manager' do not meet the criteria for a referral to LADO).
- 34.2.16 Ensuring a response if there is an allegation against the headteacher/principal by liaising with the LADO or other appropriate officers within the local authority.
- 34.2.17 Ensuring appropriate responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, including child sexual exploitation and going missing in future.
- 34.2.18 Be aware of the issues involving the complexity of serious violence and sexual violence and sexual harassment between children and ensure the school/college has policy, procedures and staff are trained (including the DSL and Senior Leadership) to recognise and respond to incidents and resources to manage actions and support for those involved.



- 34.2.19 Be alert and respond to harmful online challenges and hoaxes, including providing information and advice to parents and carer and informing where to get help and support.
- 34.2.20 Be alert to the growing concerns involving knife crime and ensure the school/college works closely with the police and safeguarding partners to raise awareness of the impact of such crime and adopt proactive practice to address concerns locally and within the community.
- 34.2.21 Ensuring appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children online and children are taught about keeping safe online through the curriculum.
- 34.2.22 Giving staff the opportunities to contribute and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.
- 34.2.23 When the schools/college premises are used for non-school/college activities the Governing body/trust will seek assurances that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place, and inspect them as needed, including liaising with the Headteacher/ trust. This will apply regardless of whether or not children who attend the provision are on the school or college roll.
- 34.2.24 Any safeguarding concerns involving outside organisations will be addressed through our school/college safeguarding policies and procedures and in line with Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
- 34.2.25 Prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, making decisions about additional checks and ensuring volunteers are supervised as required.
- 34.2.26 Ensure at least one person on an interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.
- 34.2.27 Inform any new prospective employees' candidate that our school/college will carry out online checks (KCSiE 2024 Part Three Safer Recruitment).
- 34.2.28 Recognising that certain children are more vulnerable than others, such as looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 34.2.29 Be open to accepting that child abuse and incidents can happen within the school/college and be available to act decisively upon them.

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

- 35.1 A teacher is appointed who has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who are looked after. They have the appropriate training. The



Designated Teacher will work with the Virtual School to ensure that the progress of the child is supported.

- 35.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also have details of the child's social worker and the name of the Assistant Head of the Virtual School. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with the Designated Teacher, as we recognise that children may have been abused or neglected before becoming looked after. We will ensure their ongoing safety and wellbeing as well as supporting their education, through linking with their social worker, carers, and parents where appropriate.
- 35.3 We also recognise those children who were previously Looked-After potentially remain vulnerable and all staff will be informed of the importance of maintaining support for them through our school, academy, or college pastoral system. As a school, academy, or college we will continue to recognise the importance of working with agencies and take prompt actions where necessary to safeguard these children, who may remain vulnerable.

36. Children with Special Educational Needs

- 36.1 We recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges on and offline. Children with SEN and or disabilities are especially vulnerable when identifying concerns due to their impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.
- 36.2 All staff are aware that additional barrier can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation for children with SEND and be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. They may not always show outward signs and may have communications barriers and difficulties in reporting challenges, especially involving exploitation or incidents involving child- on - child harm, abuse, or harassment and particularly where that harassment or harm is of a sexual nature. Our staff's vigilance will be a supporting factor to keeping all children safe.

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

- [SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years](#), and [Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions](#).

- 36.3 Our policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect, and exploitation in this group of children which include:
- 36.3.1 assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- 36.3.2 children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and



communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming their ability to disclose incidents or the risk of harm they feel subject to,

36.3.3 addressing individual behaviour concerns and incidents considering the child's SEN and disabilities.

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

36.4 Additional arrangements for pupils with SEND can be found in the following policies:

- SCH SEND Policy – Secondary

37. Acting Where Concerns are Identified.

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

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

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

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

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

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

37.4.3 Staff will stay calm and be available to listen.

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

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

37.4.6 Leading questions should be avoided as much as possible.

37.4.7 Questioning should not be extensive or repetitive.

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



- 37.4.9 A full written record will be kept by the staff duly signed and dated, including the time the conversation with the child took place, outline what was said, comment on the child's body language etc.
- 37.4.10 It is not appropriate for staff to make children write statements about abuse that may have happened to them or get them to sign the staff record.
- 37.4.11 Staff will reassure the child and let them know that they were right to inform them and inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on.
- 37.4.12 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be immediately informed unless the disclosure has been made to them.
- 37.4.13 Information should be shared with children's social care without delay, either to the child's own social worker or to First Response. Children's Social Care will liaise with the police where required, which will ensure an appropriate police officer response rather than a uniformed response.
- 37.4.14 The Police would only therefore be contacted directly in an emergency or if a child is in immediate risk of harm, abuse, or danger.

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

38. Confidentiality

- 38.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential; however, a member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to children; children will not be given promises that any information about an allegation will not be shared.
- 38.2 Where there is a child protection concern it will be passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or to children's social care. When a child is in immediate danger children's social care/the police will be contacted.
- 38.3 The Headteacher or Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff, including the level of involvement of other agencies, only on a 'need to know' basis.
- 38.4 All staff are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. They are aware that the Data Protection Act 1998 should not be a barrier to sharing of information where failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Staff should refer to the DfE Data Protection guidance for schools (DfE, 2024b).
- 38.5 We acknowledge further guidance can be found by visiting Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership website: <https://lrsb.org.uk/>

39. Information Sharing

- 39.1 Effective sharing of information between practitioners and local organisations and agencies is essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision



to keep children safe. Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) now known as Rapid Reviews (RRs) have highlighted that missed opportunities to record and thereby understand the significance of sharing information in a timely manner can have severe consequences for the safety and welfare and well-being of children (**Working Together to Safeguard Children, December 2023**).

- 39.2 We will adopt the information sharing principles detailed in statutory safeguarding guidance contained within:
- 39.2.1 DfE KCSiE 2024 has several sections which provide clarity on information sharing processes and GDPR including within Annex C which makes clear the powers to hold and use information when promoting children's welfare.
 - 39.2.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 paragraphs 28 to 33 and on pages 18 -20.
 - 39.2.3 Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, and carers (which has been updated to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018).
 - 39.2.4 Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Policy and Practice Guidance.
 - 39.2.5 All staff, governors and volunteers undertake annual data protection training. This is logged via our VLE. New staff undertake this training as part of their induction.

40. Records and Monitoring [KCSiE 2024 Paragraphs 68 to 70, Part Four, Part Five, Annex C]

- 40.1 The school uses CPOMS to record concerns and this is monitored through alerts to the DSL and Senior Team.
- 40.2 Any concerns about a child will be recorded in writing within 24 hours. All records will provide a factual and evidence-based account and there will be accurate recording of any actions. Records will be signed, dated and, where appropriate, witnessed. Where an opinion or professional judgement is recorded this should be clearly stated as such. As well as keeping records of concerns, discussions and decisions, designated safeguarding leads should keep record of the rationale for any decisions made.
- 40.3 At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school be asked to or consider taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person; this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being taken into managing allegations procedures. Body maps should be used in accordance with recording guidance and to support clarity for example of areas of injury, marks and bruising and or touching.
- 40.4 Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services e.g., First Response or the child's social worker if already an open case to social care.



- 40.5 Our school/college will ensure all our files will be available for external scrutiny for example by a regulatory agency or because of a serious case review or audit.

41. Why Recording is Important.

- 41.1 Our staff will be encouraged to understand why it is important that recording is comprehensive and accurate and what the messages from serious case reviews are in terms of recording and sharing information. It is often when a chronology of information is pieced together that the level of concern escalates or the whole or wider picture becomes known.
- 41.2 Our school/academy Uses CPOMs/My Concern to maintain electronic safeguarding files for all pupils.
- 41.3 We acknowledge without information being recorded it can be lost. This could be crucial information, the importance of which is not always necessarily apparent at the time. On occasions, this information could be crucial evidence to safeguard a child or be evidence in future criminal prosecutions.

42. The Child Protection (CP), Child in Need (CiN) or Confidential File

[KCSiE 2024 Annex C pages 166 to 170 and paragraphs 68,102,122, 123, 540 and 543].

Note: The establishment of a Child Protection, CiN or Confidential Safeguarding file, which is separate from the child's main school file, is an important principle in terms of storing and collating information about children which relates to either a child protection or safeguarding concern or an accumulation of concerns about a child's welfare which are outside of the usual range of concerns which relate to ordinary life events. It should be borne in mind that what constitutes a 'concern' for one child may not be a 'concern' for another and the child's particular circumstances will need to be taken into account for example if a child is subject to a child protection plan, CiN plan or has looked after status (LAC). Professional judgement will therefore be an important factor when making this decision and will need clear links between pastoral staff and those with Designated Safeguarding Lead responsibilities in school.

- 42.1 The school will keep electronic records of concerns about children even where there is no need to refer the matter to Starting Point/Children's Social Care (or similar) immediately, but these records will be kept within the separate concerns file.
- 42.2 Records will be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to evidence and support actions taken by staff in discharging their safeguarding arrangements. Original notes will be retained (but clearly identified as such) as this is a contemporaneous account; they may be important in any criminal proceedings arising from current or historical allegations of abuse or neglect.
- 42.3 The 'confidential' file can be active or non-active in terms of monitoring i.e., a child is no longer LAC, subject to a child protection plan or EHAF and this level of activity can be recorded on the front sheet as a start and end date. If future concerns arise, they can be re-activated and indicated as such on the front sheet and on the chronology as new information arises.



43. Transfer of Child's Child Protection File, Child in Need, LAC, or Confidential File (Statutory Requirement):

- 43.1 Our school/college will adopt the file transfer guidance contained in KCSiE 2024 and ensure when a child moves school/education provision their child protection/confidential file is sent securely to their new educational setting when the child starts/ leaves the school/academy.
- 43.2 For those children subject of social care and safeguarding agency involvement will ensure the file is able to evidence the child's journey and include key information as described in KCSiE 2024 should a child subject to social care involvement transfer schools, college, or education provider we will ensure the child's child protection or confidential file move is transferred within 5 days as required by KCSiE.
- 43.3 Our DSLs will liaise directly with the receiving school, college or alternative placement and hold a discussion to share important information to support the child's transfer to ensure the child remains safeguarded, has any 'reasonable adjustments' agreed, and put in place and to ensure the changes experienced by the child are as smooth as possible to enable a positive integration experience and engagement with new staff and learning.
- 43.4 In accordance with KCSiE 2024 we will maintain information on cohorts of children who have been open to social care, have had a social worker or who are closed to social care and may have returned to the family home. This information will only be considered for sharing 'if appropriate' with the new school or provider in advance of the child leaving to allow for the new school to continue supporting the children who have had a social worker or been victims of abuse, including those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme.

[KCSiE 2024 paragraph 123 and pages 150 to 152 and Annex C]

44. Recording Practice

- 44.1 Timely and accurate recording will take place when there are any issues regarding a child.
- 44.2 A recording of each and every incident or concern for the child will be made, including any telephone calls to other professionals. These will also be recorded on the chronology and kept within the child protection file for that child, as over time they are likely to help identify any patterns or emerging risks and needs. This will include any contact from other agencies who may wish to discuss concerns relating to a child. Actions will be agreed, and roles and responsibility of each agency will be clarified, and outcomes recorded.
- 44.3 The chronology will be brief and log activity; the full recording will be on the record of concern.
- 44.4 Further detailed recording will be added to the record of concern and will be signed and dated. Records will include an analysis of the event or concerns and will take account of the holistic needs of the child, and any historical information held on the child's file.



- 44.5 Support and advice will be sought from social care, or early help whenever necessary. In this way a picture can emerge, and this will assist in promoting an evidence-based assessment and determining any action(s) that needs to be taken.
- 44.6 This may include no further action, whether an Early Help Assessment should be undertaken, or whether a referral should be made to First Response/Children's Social Care in-line with the Threshold for access to services published September 2021, or any later edition made available by Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 44.7 Such robust practice across child protection and in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will assist the school and DSL team in the early identification of any concerns which may require addressing further and the prevention of future harm, risk, or abuse.
- 44.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm (through the concern file and through an ongoing dialogue with pastoral staff). They will ensure that we contribute to assessments of need and support multi-agency plans for those children.

45. Educating Young People – Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

[KCSiE 2024 paragraphs 124 to 140, Annex A & Annex C Online Safety paragraph 140 to 150].

- 45.1 As a school/academy/college we will teach children in an age-appropriate way about youth produced imagery, on-line risks associated with social networking to prevent harm by providing them with the skills, attributes, and knowledge to help them navigate risks, including covering online safety, remote learning, filters and monitoring, information security, cyber-crime, reviewing online safety platforms and use of mobile technology. We will ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.
- 45.2 The education we provide for online safety will take into account the need for children to learn using online technologies in a safe environment whether that be in school/college, in the home or in a community environment. This will also be taught as part of a wider RSHE programme, as well as through other subject areas and ICT.
- 45.3 We will ensure a whole school approach is in place to promote giving children the space to explore key issues in a sensitive way and the confidence to seek the support of adults should they encounter problems or online harms, hoaxes or harassment including involving incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children.
- 45.4 We will carefully consider mobile phone use and the new filtering and monitoring standard required by DfE and how this is managed in school/college and ensure it is reflected in our mobile and smart technology policy. This will include where children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e., 3G, 4G and 5G).



- 45.5 Our arrangements will be regularly reviewed to address this additional area of safeguarding as technologies change on a regular basis and having access to smart technology could mean some children, whilst at school/college, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content.
- 45.6 Online safety and RSHE will be addressed through our PD curriculum with additional support for small groups and individuals as needed
- 45.7 We will send out to parents/carers an e-safety newsletter each term to provide the latest information on how to keep children safe online.
- 45.8 Lightspeed monitors and tracks online usage at home

46. Helplines and Reporting

- 46.1 Children can talk to a Child Line counsellor 24 hours a day about anything that is worrying them by ringing 0800 11 11 or in an online chat at <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>
- 46.2 Where staff members feel unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feel they have a genuine concern that is not being addressed we acknowledge they may wish to consider whistleblowing channels. Likewise, if parents and carers are concerned about their child, they can contact the NSPCC Helpline by ringing 0800 028 028 0295, or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk
- 46.3 When children and families are vulnerable we can submit a SPOA and arrange meetings as needed with staff on site and external agencies
- 46.4 Advice and information for parents including weblinks:
<https://www.merciaacademy.org.uk/about-us/general/safeguarding/>
- 46.5 Parents can also use:

www.NSPCC.org.uk
www.Parentszone.org.uk
www.parentinfo.org
www.circularity.org
CEOP
Childline

The following appendices are a part of this policy:

Appendix 1	LCC LA Flow Chart 2024-2025 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or at risk of harm, neglect, or online harm.
Appendix 2	Low Level Concerns Policy.



Appendix 1

**Name of School/Academy/AP Child Protection & Safeguarding Flow Chart
'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, at risk of harm or neglect'**

Actions where there are concerns about a child's welfare in and outside of school.

- Be alert to signs of abuse, question unusual behaviour or changes to presentation.

Where a child discloses abuse, neglect, sexual violence, sexual harassment, online harm, exploitation.

- Listen to what they say, keep calm, reassure they are right to tell, and you will take action to help keep them safe.
- Inform them you need to share the information and what you are going to do next
- Do not promise confidentiality, you will need to share/ report the information to appropriate services.
- **DO NOT DELAY, take any immediate necessary action to protect the child and ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed or member of SLT in the DSL's absence.**

Discuss concerns with the Designated/Named Safeguarding Lead

- The DSL will consider further actions including consultation with First Response (if a new concern).
- Concerns and discussion, decisions and reasons for decision should be recorded in writing and a 'confidential concerns' or a 'child protection' file should be opened, stored in line with the school child protection policy.
- At all stages the child's circumstances should be kept under review and re-refer if concerned to ensure the child's circumstances improve – **the child's best interests must come first.**

Still have concerns - Refer to First Response (MARF)
Have child/families' personal details to hand and be clear about concern/allegations. Complete referral form.

Safeguarding concern Resolved /no longer held
Support has been agreed, record decisions and any follow up needed. actions.

First Response 0116 305 0005
Where safe consider **Early Help Service**

If the child is at immediate risk dial 101 and ask for assistance
Record all decisions and actions, working to agreed outcomes and within timescales. Escalate any emerging threats/concerns by adopting Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
lrsccb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm

NSPCC Whistle blowing
Tel: 0800 028 0285
Police Tel:101

Unmet needs identified
Decide what actions are needed to support the child.

Consult with the child young person, family, and relevant agencies: Agree support, refer to LRSCP guidance Thresholds for access to services (September 2021)

Contacts: For any allegations/concerns regarding an adult who works with (in either paid/voluntarily) employment with children contact the LA Designated Officer (LADO) professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk Outside of office hours, contact the Starting Point Team on [01629 533190](tel:01629533190)

LA Safeguarding and Compliance Lead *Miles Dent* 01332 642376



Appendix 2

Low-level Concerns Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out a framework whereby staff are expected to report concerns, no matter how small, about their own behaviour or that of another member of staff, volunteer, supply teacher, contractor or other person working in school. Its purpose is to help create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour set out in the “Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings” (Feb 2022) (sometimes called the safeguarding code of conduct) are lived, monitored, and reinforced.
- 1.2 The policy should be read in conjunction with the current statutory guidance – “Keeping Children Safe in Education” Part 4, Section 2.

2.0 Who does the policy apply to?

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

3.0 Definition of a low-level concern

- 3.1 A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’, that a person working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:
 - is inconsistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice” (Feb 2022), including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
 - does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to make a referral to the LADO

4.0 Reporting low-level concerns

- 4.1 Where a low-level concern has been identified this will be reported as soon as possible to the **headteacher**. However, it is never too late to share a low-level concern if this has not already happened.
- 4.2 Where the headteacher is not available, the information will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy (ie the most senior member of SLT acting in this role).
- 4.3 Low-level concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be reported to the headteacher and those about the headteacher will be reported to the Chair of Governors. A low-level concern about a supply teacher or contractor will be reported to their employer.
- 4.4 Where the low-level concern has been reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they will inform the headteacher of the details as soon as possible.



5.0 Recording concerns

- 5.1 A summary of the low-level concern should be written down, signed, timed, dated and shared by the person bringing the information forward.
- 5.2 Where concerns are reported verbally to the headteacher a record of the conversation will be made by the headteacher which will be signed, timed, and dated.

6.0 Responding to low-level concerns

- 6.1 Where a low-level concern has been raised this will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The headteacher will:
- Speak to the person reporting the concern to gather all the relevant information
 - Speak to the individual about the concern raised to ascertain their response, unless advised not to do so by the LADO or Police (HR advice may also need to be taken).
 - Where necessary further investigation will be carried out to gather all relevant information. This may involve speaking to any potential witnesses.
 - The information reported and gathered will then be reviewed to determine whether the behaviour,
 - i) is consistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings” (Feb 2022): no further action will be required,
 - ii) constitutes a low-level concern: no further action is required, or additional training/guidance/support may be required to rectify the behaviour via normal day to day management processes. The employee should understand that failure to improve or a repeat of the behaviour may lead to further action being taken, e.g. either via the Performance Management Policy or Disciplinary Policy.
 - iii) is serious enough to consult with or refer to the LADO: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the school’s Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.
 - iv) when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been raised about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO or Police: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the school’s Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.
- Records will be made of, i) all internal conversations including any relevant witnesses, ii) all external conversations eg with the LADO iii) the decision and the rationale for it, iv) any action taken

7.0 Can the reporting person remain anonymous?

- 7.1 The person bringing forward the concern will be named in the written record. Where they request to remain anonymous this will be respected as far as possible. However, there may



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

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

8.1 It may be the case that a person finds themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or might appear compromising to others; or they may have behaved in a manner which on reflection they consider falls below the standard set out in the “Guidance for safer working practice”. In these circumstances they should self-report. This will enable a potentially difficult situation to be addressed at an early opportunity if necessary.

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

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

10.0 Should the low-level concerns file be reviewed?

10.1 The records will be reviewed periodically, and whenever a new low-level concern is added, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and referred to the LADO if required. A record of these reviews will be retained.

11.0 References

11.1 Low-level concerns will not be included in references unless a low-level concern, or group of concerns, has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated.

12.0 What is the role of the Governing Body?

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