

# Mercia School

## Safeguarding Policy

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*Headteacher*

This policy has been approved by the Local Governing Body and has been signed by the Chair of Governors	
Approval date	September 2023
Date of Review	September 2024



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### Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.



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### 1. Safeguarding Team at Mercia School:

Role	Staff member	Responsibility
Headteacher	Dean F. Webster	Responsible for implementing policies and procedures, allocating resources to the safeguarding team and addressing staff safeguarding concerns.
Designated Safeguarding lead	Dean F. Webster	Senior member of staff responsible for dealing with safeguarding issues, providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with the local authority and other agencies.
Designated Safeguarding Deputies	Joshua G. Fisher Ruth Hollingsworth Emma Calcutt Jodi Green	To support the Designated Safeguarding Lead
Online Safety Officer	Jodi Green	Develops and maintains an e-safe culture within the school.
SENCO & School Mental Health Lead	Joshua G. Fisher	Provides advice and support for staff and other agencies working with pupils with special educational needs and their families.
Designated Teacher for LAC	Ruth Hollingsworth	Promotes the educational achievement of children who are 'looked after'.
Child Sexual Exploitation Lead	Emma Calcutt	Develops and maintains policies & staff awareness of CSE, the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board responsibilities and the Sexual Exploitation Service key priorities.
Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC)	Dean F. Webster	Leads within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism.
Safeguarding Governor	Rhona Dodds	Reviews the safeguarding policies and procedures and remedies any deficiencies or weakness in regard to child protection arrangements.

### 2. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Statement:

The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety, health and guidance. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance. Our school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support children by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate by:

- Providing a safe learning environment that builds their confidence and self-esteem;
- Where children's physical safety is protected;
- Where children can talk and are listened to;
- Where children do not experience bullying, harassment, racism or any other form of discrimination;
- Where children's medical and health needs are met,
- Providing a positive and preventative curriculum that teaches and supports young children;
- To make good choices about health, safe lifestyles, positive relationships, sex education and consent;
- To ask for help if their health or wellbeing is threatened, including their emotional wellbeing,



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### **3. Promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance by:**

- Encouraging children to know that their views count, to value each other's views and values and to talk about their feelings;
- Providing activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration;
- Supporting children to understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences and to learn to distinguish right from wrong;
- Providing activities that involve children in creating rules and codes of behaviour and developing understanding that the rules apply to everyone;
- Actively promoting a culture of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community;
- Promoting diverse attitudes and challenging stereotypes by providing resources and activities that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping.

### **4. This Policy and its implementation procedures set out the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and has been prepared in compliance with, and with regard to:**

- The Education Acts;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004;
- What to do if you're worried a Child is being Abused: Advice for practitioners DfE (March 2015);
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE (March 2015) - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023);
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 March 2015;
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and careers DfE (2015);
- DBS Referrals Guidance (as may be amended from time to time);
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings Ofsted (2015);
- Teacher misconduct: regulating the teaching profession March 2014 (and related guidance) Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2013;
- Information Commissioner's Office Data Sharing Code of Practice May 2011;
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2014;
- Prevent Duty Guidance, Channel Guidance, and Prevent Departmental Advice, 2015.

### **5. There are 3 main elements to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:**

#### **i. Prevention:**

Creating a positive ethos and culture where teaching and pastoral support systems are in place and Safeguarding is seen as the responsibility of everyone. We will ensure that all staff, pupils and volunteers and those who undertake work on our behalf, maintain a proper focus on safeguarding children and that this is reflected in both sound individual practice and our internal policies and guidance. All staff, pupils and volunteers working with children must:

- Give highest priority to children's welfare;
- Ask for advice and support to act on safeguarding concerns and take appropriate action;
- Access relevant, up-to-date safeguarding and child protection training;



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- Recognise, identify and respond to signs of physical/mental abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children;
- Respond appropriately to disclosures of abuse by a child;
- Respond appropriately to allegations against staff, other adults, and against themselves;
- Follow whistle blowing procedures to respond to concerns about potential wrongdoing in the setting;
- Act appropriately and understand safe practice in carrying out their duties;
- Be alert to the risks which abusers, or potential abusers, may pose;
- Be aware of the importance of the role of early years services in promoting the welfare of children;
- Contribute as necessary to all stages of the setting's safeguarding and protection processes.

### **ii. Protection**

Following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are properly recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns.

### **iii. Support**

Support for pupils and school staff and children who may have been abused.

This policy applies to teaching staff, non-teaching staff, support and volunteer staff, and anyone else who is responsible for or is in contact with children in our school.

## **6. School Commitment:**

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult help all children, and especially those at risk of, or suffering from, abuse. Our school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- Ensure staff are child-centered in their approach to supporting children;
- Include activities and opportunities for PSHE/Citizenship in the curriculum which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills;
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies;
- Ensure all staff and governors have up-to-date and regular safeguarding and child protection training;
- Create a culture of safe recruitment which includes the adoption of recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who may pose a risk to the safety of children and young people.

We ask and encourage any stakeholder to raise a safeguarding concern with the school directly using the following webpage. Equally, the page holds a wide range of documentation to support parents/carers to keep their children safe.

<https://www.merciaschool.com/safeguarding>



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### **7. Framework:**

Schools do not operate in isolation. The welfare of children is a corporate responsibility of the entire local authority, working in partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector and service users and carers. All local authority services have an impact on the lives of children and families, and local authorities have a particular responsibility towards children and families most at risk of social exclusion. Child protection is the responsibility of all adults, especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of Mercia School and Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

### **8. Effective Challenge and Escalation:**

Our school understands that when working in the arena of safeguarding and child protection, it is inevitable that from time to time there will be professional disagreement between agencies. We will take any action necessary to resolve disagreements in a timely and constructive fashion that promotes the best outcomes for the children involved. Where disagreements cannot be resolved between the practitioners involved we will use the process of challenge and escalation as set out in the Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership's *Effective Challenge and Escalation* procedure and will seek advice from the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Advisory Service. See Appendix 3 for more details.

### **9. Definition of Safeguarding:**

Mercia School adopts the definition used in the Children Act 2004 and in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2017. We also adhere to the updated 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023. The changes from the previous documentation have been duly noted and are shown in Appendix 6. Mercia's School's responsibility for safeguarding may be summarised as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental/physical health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is more than protecting children from deliberate harm. It relates to a number of aspects of school life that include health and safety, the use of reasonable force, meeting the needs of pupils and staff with medical or additional needs, first aid, educational visits, intimate care, online safeguarding and school security. Safeguarding involves a range of issues which can include:

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying);
- Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse;
- Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation or extremist behaviour;
- Child sexual exploitation;
- Sexting and social media;
- Substance misuse;
- Domestic violence;
- Child on child abuse;
- Issues specific to our local area and population e.g. anti-social behaviour, gang activity, youth violence. Particular issues affecting children and young people including domestic violence, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.





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### **10. Early Help:**

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising. All staff are equipped to identify children who may benefit from early help and are trained to spot the signs and indicators that can make children vulnerable.

At Mercia School all staff support pupils and appropriate intervention is administered by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. As part of this support, referrals to appropriate agencies may be necessary. These may include MAST, the Community Youth Teams and/or the school nurse service.

### **11. Supporting Children and Young People at Risk:**

Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school.

Some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

Children with behavioural difficulties, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, children missing from education and children who are looked after are most vulnerable to abuse. Staff who work with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

In a home environment, where there is domestic violence, drug/alcohol abuse or mental health issues, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

This school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- The curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued;
- The implementation of school behaviour management policies;
- A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting;
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the pupils and their families;
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's interests to do so;
- The development of a knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- Providing parents with effective support to help keep their children safe:

<https://www.merciaschool.com/safeguarding>



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### **12. Training and Support:**

Mercia School will ensure that the Headteacher (DSL), DSD and the governing body attend training relevant to their role. All staff will receive and be able to access Child Protection training relevant and appropriate to their role and as a minimum requirement attend compulsory induction training when joining the school and will complete local authority ran face-to-face training every 3 years.

All staff, whether paid or unpaid, have access to appropriate training in order that they are able to react appropriately should an incident occur. All staff will be trained to recognise and respond to situations where a child may be considered to be at risk.

Safeguarding and welfare concerns are taken in to account when restraint is used. Key members of staff are restraint trained to keep the school community safe.

### **13. Professional Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. Staff must make clear when talking to pupils that some issues relating to their safety cannot be kept confidential. All child protection/safeguarding issues should be dealt with in a confidential manner. The DSL and Headteacher will decide which members of staff, if any, need to be informed of the case. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child.

### **14. Records and Monitoring:**

Well kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies. CPOMS must be used to record safeguarding concerns and to inform the safeguarding team.

### **15. Recording Information:**

When expressing a concern, or relaying an allegation, you must enter a timed and dated report onto CPOMS and pass on to the DSL in person.

### **16. Attendance at Child Protection Conferences:**

Our school will follow the recommendations for good practice from the local area Child Protection Committee with regards attendance at Child Protection Conferences.

### **17. The Family Common Assessment Form (FCAF):**

This form should be used when we consider that a child has needs that cannot be met solely by Mercia School, and where, following an assessment of the situation, we believe coordinated intervention from the Children & Young People's Directorate is required to promote, safeguard or protect the welfare of the child.

In these circumstances, we will have records detailing what work has been undertaken by our school to support the child and family and why we believe that a more corporate and co-ordinated approach is needed. This information then provides the basis for the completion of the FCAF. The request for coordinated support services for a family should always be discussed with parents unless to do so would place the child or others at risk of harm.

Where, following an assessment of a situation, it is considered immediate protective action is required, a child protection referral must be made by the DSL. This referral will be by telephone to the relevant team at Social Care.





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### **18. Safeguarding Child Protection Roles and Responsibilities:**

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There are, however, key people within schools and the LA who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those carrying these responsibilities for the current academic year are listed on the cover sheet of this document.

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of appropriate procedures. The Senior Team act as the Headteacher's deputies.

Mercia School (Headteacher/Local Governing Body) will ensure that staff members have appropriate time and resources made available to them to enable them to fulfil their duties in this sensitive area.

### **Procedures**

Where it is believed that a child is suffering from, or is at risk of, significant harm, we will follow the procedures set out in the Area Child Protection Committees' Procedures. Staff in schools are ideally placed to notice changes in children's behaviour or to observe injuries, both of which could be indicators of abuse. As trusted adults, children may tell you they are being abused. Sheffield Local Authority has laid down guidelines to be followed in relation to child protection. It is important that we are all familiar with them and follow them rigorously.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Within each school in Sheffield there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL is responsible for the co-ordination of information on child protection within school and for liaison with external agencies. Please contact the relevant Safeguarding Team with any general or specific concerns relating to child protection issues.

### **Responding to Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse**

(Definitions of types of abuse and signs that may indicate a child is being abused are listed at the end of this document) We have clear procedures to respond to two situations:

- Suspicion of abuse
- Allegation of abuse

In both situations it is vital to make a detailed record, including pupil name, form and any relevant dates and times, any other people who were present when the allegation was made, the actions taken by you, anything which you have been told and soon.

The record should be factual, dated and should include the time at which it was written.

### **19. Suspicion of Abuse:**

You may develop a concern that a pupil may be suffering, or is likely to suffer harm. She/he may exhibit certain of the signs listed, or her/his behaviour may change with no satisfactory explanation. Record your concerns on CPOMS and report it to a member of the safeguarding team who will discuss the appropriate course of action.



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### 20. Indicators of abuse:

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty.

However children may have no physical signs or they may be harder to see (e.g. bruising on black skin) therefore staff need to also be alert to behavioural indicators of abuse. **All staff are made acutely aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.**

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- Display a mental health concern
- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;
- Show signs of pain or discomfort;
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather;
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming;
- Look unkempt and uncared for;
- Change their eating habits;
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships;
- Appear fearful;
- Be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety;
- Self-harm;
- Frequently miss school or arrive late;
- Show signs of not wanting to go home;
- Display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn;
- Challenge authority;
- Become disinterested in their school work;
- Be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- Be wary of physical contact;
- Be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol;
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

**It is very important that staff report and record their concerns – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk. Staff should always maintain an attitude of 'it can happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.**

### 21. If you have concerns about a colleague or safeguarding practice:

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague or safeguarding practice within the school are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation.

All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and staff should feel able to report all concerns about a colleague or the safeguarding practice within the school. The school's uses the Mercia Learning Trust's **Whistleblowing Policy** (which can be found on the trust website) which Enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.



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If you are concerned about safeguarding practices within school you must raise your concern through whistleblowing procedure or through the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline 0800 028 0285.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Headteacher.

### **22. Allegations against staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, supply teacher or volunteer (as per updated KCSIE 2020), set procedures must be followed. It is important to have a culture of openness and transparency and a consultation with the Designated Officer will happen if staff have;

- Behaved in a way which has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they would pose a risk of harm to children.

Allegations against the staff, supply staff or volunteers should be reported to the Headteacher. Allegations against the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors. Staff may also report their concerns directly to Police or Designated Officer or NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline (0800 028 0285) if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen. We recognise that a child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. However if a child is found to continually make false allegations this may be a sign of mental health issues and a referral to services such as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) may be required.

An uncomfortable fact is that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation. However staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. Staff will be advised to contact their trade union and will also be given access to a named representative.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)*.

**Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law.**

**Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites. We will communicate this to all parties.**

### **23. Helping children to keep themselves safe**

Children are taught to understand relationships, promote British values and respond to and calculate risk through our personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) Sex and Relationships (SRE) education lessons and in all aspects of school life.



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Children are taught to understand relationships, promote British values and respond to and calculate risk through our personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) Sex and Relationships (SRE) education lessons and in all aspects of school life. SRE is compulsory from September 2020 and will be taught through the school's mastery curriculum and science curriculum.

Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and have help to work out how those risks might be overcome and the support available to them. Discussions about relationships and risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are also reminded regularly about e-safety, including sexting and tackling bullying procedures including the legalities and consequences.

The school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and the emotional health and wellbeing of our students is important to us. Pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff in confidence about any worries they may have. However, all our pupils are aware that if they disclose that they are being harmed or that they have, or intend, to harm another that this cannot be kept secret and that information will need to be shared.

Ensuring young people are safe online is a key priority at Mercia School. Our Mastery programme and Online Safety programme (implemented from September 2021), seeks to protect and educate pupils on technology use and safe practice. We educate on harmful **content**, unwanted/coercive **contact**, appropriate and inappropriate **conduct** and dangerous **commercial risks**. The 4 Cs approach advocated by the DfE is implemented clearly at Mercia School. For more information please view the Mercia School Online Safety policy.

PSHE association <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/>

Parents/other visitors are supported to raise concerns. They are taken through the school's Visitor Policy, with safeguarding being a central component. Parents are encouraged to raise concerns about their own child directly, or other children via the school office or the school website:

<https://www.merciaschool.com/safeguarding>

### **24. Looked after Children LAC:**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements including contact. The designated teacher for Looked After Children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker. As well as the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care. They will work with the virtual head to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of LAC and meet the needs in their PEP (Personal Education Plan)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

### **25. Children absent from education:**

A child who is absent from education, which includes within the school day, is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation. Unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. All staff will be aware of the signs of risk and individual triggers including travelling to conflict zones, FGM, forced marriage CSE. All pupils will be placed on admission and attendance registers as required by law.



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We will only remove a child off our admission register when authorised by the local authority and only after following local authority guidelines. We will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend for a continuous period in line with local Sheffield procedures. The Children Missing from Education Team can be contacted on 0114 273 6462.

### **26. Private fostering arrangements:**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible. If any staff member becomes aware of a Private Fostering arrangement they will inform the DSL who will consult with the family and if appropriate will inform Social Care.

**It is a statutory duty for the school to inform the Local Authority when it is made aware of a child or young person being subject to private fostering arrangements.**

### **27. Staff training:**

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern. All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in e-safety and reporting concerns. Deliberate practice sessions on a weekly basis go over essential safeguarding reminders.

New staff and governors will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the schools child protection policy and staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL. All staff, including the DSL and governors, will receive training that is regularly updated. All staff will also receive a wide range of comprehensive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, e-bulletins website access and staff meetings throughout the year.

Staff understand the difference between a 'concern' and 'immediate danger or at risk of harm' ensuring appropriate action is taken through whole school training and weekly safeguarding bulletins. All members of staff, volunteers and governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse through delivery of whole school safeguard training.

### **28. Child on Child Abuse:**

This element of the policy relates to children harming other children, often through sexting/cyberbullying and sexual assaults. This will always be taken seriously and acted upon, under the appropriate policy e.g. safeguarding, bullying. not dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. These issues will be part of Mastery Time and discussions. Victims will be supported through the school's pastoral system. Any hate crime/incident will be reported through local reporting mechanism. All staff will be made aware through thorough training that:

- Children can abuse other children, inside and outside of school, and online
- Abuse can and may be happening even if there are no reports of it
- **Any** concerns about child on child must be raised with the DSL/DSD immediately.

For more information, please view the school's policy on reporting/dealing with child on child abuse.





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### **Sexting (Youth Produced Imagery)**

In the latest advice for schools and colleges (UKCCIS, 2016), sexting is defined as the production and/or sharing of sexual photos and videos of and by young people who are under the age of 18. It includes nude or nearly nude images and/or sexual acts. It is also referred to as 'youth produced sexual imagery'. 'Sexting' does not include the sharing of sexual photos and videos of under-18 year olds with or by adults. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police.

School will follow the updated guidance;

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/647389/Overview\\_of\\_Sexting\\_Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview_of_Sexting_Guidance.pdf)

### **Bullying**

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying will be recorded and reported and will be managed through our behaviour and tackling-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the tackling bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

Bullying incidents including discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour e.g. racist, disability and homophobic bullying and use of derogatory language will be recorded and analysed.

There will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

### **Children with sexually harmful behaviour**

Research suggests that up to 40 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.





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### 29. Forced Marriage:

**Arranged marriages** are those that are arranged by families of the two individuals concerned. The marriage is solemnised with the freely given consent of the individuals and all parties.

In **forced marriages** one or both parties do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved, that is either emotional or physical in nature. It may have been agreed when the child was very young.

A forced marriage of a young person under the age of 18 is a child protection issue, because it is likely to cause Significant Harm. Concerns around forced marriages must be reported to Sheffield Safeguarding Hub on 0114 273 4855.

**Online safety is exceptionally important and will continue to receive a high priority as an issue, as it is often how issues are facilitated CSE, radicalisation, bullying etc. Appropriate filters and monitoring are in place, as well as education of staff and pupils.**

### 30. Allegation of Abuse:

If a pupil tells you that she/he is suffering significant harm or his/her explanation of a physical injury is that it has been caused by someone else, this is an allegation of abuse. Any allegation will need to be investigated by the appropriate safeguarding authority and/or the Police.

#### **What to do:**

- Take the child seriously. It is rare for children to make false accusations, particularly of sexual abuse;
- Make time straight away for the child to talk to you in private. If this presents difficulties over cover for a class, inform the DSL or a DSD.

#### **When talking with the child:**

- Stay calm and reassuring;
- Explain that you cannot promise to keep what the child tells you a secret;
- Tell the child you might need to get someone else to help;
- Allow the child time and space to talk;
- Listen to, and take seriously, what the child tells you;
- Tell them that whatever the circumstances, they are not to blame;
- Do not interrogate the child, but check out in a non-leading way that you are receiving a correct message;
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling someone;
- Ask the child if they have told anyone else;
- Do not make any promises to the child;
- Inform a member of the safeguarding team or the Headteacher (DSL); <sup>[17]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Write down everything the child told you, date and time of the account and give it to



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As the person the child has entrusted in disclosing information it may be appropriate for you to continue to support the child, for example by being involved with any case conference that may follow. You will be kept informed as to the outcome of any disclosure.

Confidentiality is vital. The DSL will decide which other staff, if any, need to know of the case. Do not contact anyone with parental responsibility until agreed by the investigating agency. Any member of staff can make a referral to the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub, 01142734855, if they are concerned that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm.

### **31. Procedures for Designated Safeguard Deputy (DSD):**

Where a member of staff relays a suspicion that a pupil may be at risk:

- Establish clearly with the member of staff the identity of the child concerned;
- Record the name, form, address and date of birth of the pupil, where they are, who is with them and how they are;
- Ensure that there is a timed and dated record of any concerns from the member of staff. This should be recorded on CPOMS and the Headteacher should be informed in person

### **If the child is already known to be on the register:**

If we know that the child is on the register, then we should be aware of their current situation (e.g. who their key worker is). Depending on the nature of the suspicion, it may be appropriate to contact the key worker, via Social Care or do nothing other than reassure the teacher that we are aware that there is some basis to their concerns and that support is being offered to the child.

### **If the child is not known to the register:**

We will use our professional judgement in deciding on a course of action. Depending on the nature of the concern we may:

- Decide to keep a watching brief;
- Seek advice from Safeguarding Children Advisors (273 5655 or 205 3714);
- We will keep a record of all contacts with external agencies.
- Whether or not we decide to make a referral we will see the teacher concerned, inform them of what is happening and reassure them that they did the right thing in relaying and recording their concerns.

### **When a pupil alleges abuse:**

(Any allegation made will need to be investigated by one of the statutory agencies)

If appropriate, ensure that a trusted adult stays with the child. If this presents any difficulty over cover, inform any member of the Senior Team.

In the case of physical abuse injury, a first aider along with a member of the safeguarding team should see the pupil. If there is any evidence of bruising then make a sketch jointly with the first aider, being specific about location and size. NB involvement of a first aider must be done discreetly. Too much questioning of the child could prejudice any possible court case.

A member of the safeguarding team will take responsibility for the referral.

Before referral, ensure that we have the following information:

- Details of the child - name, address, date of birth, family doctor, names and addresses of anyone with parental responsibility;
- Details of the concern - description of injuries/circumstances which are causing concern;
- Details of any explanation or comment from the child;
- Condition, location and expectations of the child;
- Information given to parents, if any;



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- Any background information;
- Check the safeguarding files. If the child is known to social care, then the member of the safeguarding team will contact the appropriate key worker;
- If the child is not known to the register, a referral must be made to the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub who can be contacted on 0114 237 4855.

Following a referral, we will act on the advice of the Social Care Team.

If the safeguarding team are concerned about any response, or lack of response, from Social Care, a member of the safeguarding team will contact the Safeguarding Children Advisors and refer to the Resolution of Practitioner Disagreements as set out by Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

### **Procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff:**

If an adult in school receives an allegation of harm by a member of staff towards a child or young person, the allegation:

- Must be reported immediately to the Headteacher (DSL);
- If the allegation is against the Headteacher it must be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors;
- Must not be discussed with anyone else in the school or elsewhere, unless required to do so as part of an investigation or given permission to do so by the Headteacher;
- Must be investigated under the procedures as set in the DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' September 2023
- All such allegations will be discussed immediately with Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The Headteacher/Chair of Governors and the LADO will plan the best course of action to investigate the allegation and decide which other parties to involve where appropriate, e.g. Police, HR, etc. The purpose of these procedures is to:

- Improve consistency of reporting and investigation across all agencies;
- Enable long term recording of allegations and outcomes for the benefit of the child, young person and adults involved;
- Enable the Advisory Service to monitor allegations and determine if there are general issues to address.

Mercia School follows the statutory guidance as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education' DfE September 2023.

### **32. Filtering and monitoring**

With KCSIE (2023), three notable changes come in the form of new instructions and recommendations regarding online filtering and monitoring software used by schools to keep tabs on what sites pupils are visiting or trying to visit. Here is a brief summary of the school's arrangements:

- The school uses Smoothwall software to monitor pupil activity on school devices. This filters inappropriate material in real time, with no delay
- All 'hits' on the system are reported directly to the DSL. These are immediate and intervention is rapid
- Smoothwall covers all school devices; including Desktop PCs, Apple Macs, and Chromebooks

All staff are informed about the expectations and responsibilities they must follow in relation to filtering and monitoring. These are covered in regular safeguarding briefings, led by a member of the safeguarding team.

The school has a 'no mobile phones' policy which further aids the school's aim of keeping pupils safe online. Pupils are not able to access the school's WiFi.



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### **33. Summary of procedure if you have a safeguarding concern or you feel a pupil is at risk of harm from anybody.**

- If you think a pupil is at risk of harm or an allegation/disclosure has been made, you must inform the DSL or a DSD Immediately.;
- If you think an adult may have harmed or be at risk of harming a pupil or an allegation/disclosure has been made, you must inform the DSL or a DSD immediately;
- If you think a member of staff may have harmed or be at risk of harming a pupil or an allegation/disclosure has been made you must inform the Headteacher immediately; <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Record all concerns or disclosures on CPOMS even if you have informed the DSL or a DSD;
- Refer to the “What to do” section above;
- It is important to note that, in cases of emergency, anyone can make a referral to Children’s Social Care. The Sheffield Safeguarding Hub can be contacted on 0114 237 4855.



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### *Appendices*

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#### **Appendix 1**

Types of abuse and neglect

**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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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



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### **Further information on the Prevent Strategy (protecting children from the risk of radicalisation or extremist behaviour)**

From 1 July 2015 all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (“the CTSA 2015”), to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment;
- working in partnership;
- staff training;
- IT policies.

Schools are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them.

Schools and colleges should have clear procedures in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. These procedures may be set out in existing safeguarding policies. It is not necessary for schools and colleges to have distinct policies on implementing the Prevent duty. The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example, governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of Sheffield Children’s Safeguarding Partnership.

The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to according to the Prevent duty guidance ‘having due regard’ means that the authorities should place an appropriate amount of weight on the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions.

“Terrorism” for these purposes has the same meaning as for the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1) to (4) of that Act). Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils at the school of being drawn into terrorism.

As a minimum, however, schools should ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.

Schools must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. Schools should ensure that suitable filtering is in place. School staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme.





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### Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from other children to have sex, sexual bullying including cyber bullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practice FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 11-12 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines referred to above. Staff should

On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015, the ‘mandatory reporting’ in ‘regulated professions’ came in to force. This requires any professional to notify the police themselves if they discover an act of FGM appears to have taken place on a girl under 18. Any concerns must be discussed with the DSL. The duty does not apply where there is a suspicion that a girl is at risk. If this is the case, staff would follow normal procedure and speak to the DSL.

Further information on specific safeguarding issues can be found at:  
[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) [www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org.uk](http://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org.uk) [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Specific issues that staff should be aware of are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child sexual exploitation;</li><li>• Child criminal exploitation;</li><li>• Bullying including cyber bullying;</li><li>• Domestic violence;</li><li>• Drugs and substance misuse;</li><li>• Fabricated or induced illness;</li><li>• Faith abuse;</li><li>• Female genital mutilation;</li><li>• Forced marriage;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gangs and youth violence;</li><li>• Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG);</li><li>• Mental health;</li><li>• Private fostering;</li><li>• Radicalisation;</li><li>• Sexting;</li><li>• Teenage relationship abuse;</li><li>• Trafficking;</li><li>• Children missing from education;</li></ul>
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Guidance on all of these are available at the websites listed above and are available for staff in the safeguarding handbook.



# Mercia School

## Safeguarding Policy

### Appendix 2

#### Safer Recruitment at Mercia School

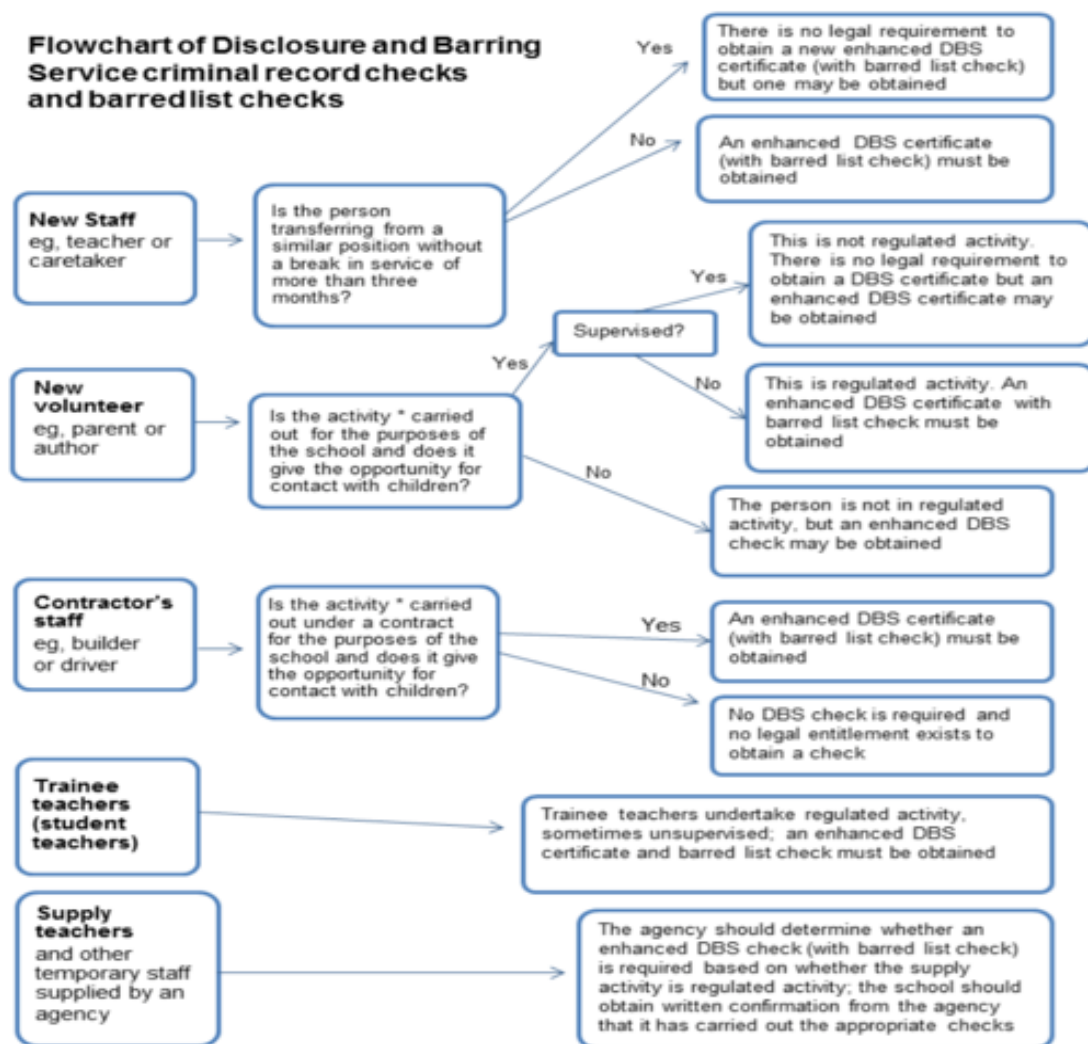
Mercia School creates a culture of safer recruitment which includes the adoption of rigorous recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who may pose risk of harm to or abuse children.

Governors understand their responsibility to ensure safe recruitment checks are made.

Mercia School keeps an up to date Single Central Record (SCR). This includes the following information:

- All staff (including supply staff) who work in the school
- All others who work in regular contact with children in the school including volunteers
- Local Governing Body governors

All recruitment includes members of the senior team, staff or governors who have completed 'Safer Recruitment' training. Recruitment checks are carried out in line with the statutory DfE guidance as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education' September 2023. Staff receive a comprehensive safeguarding induction from the DSL on appointment as part of their wider school induction as well as undertake basic/advanced safeguarding training as appropriate. The following flow diagram summarises the required DBS and barred list checks for those working in schools and colleges:



\* Activities listed under the guidance's definition of regulated activity and which are carried out 'frequently'



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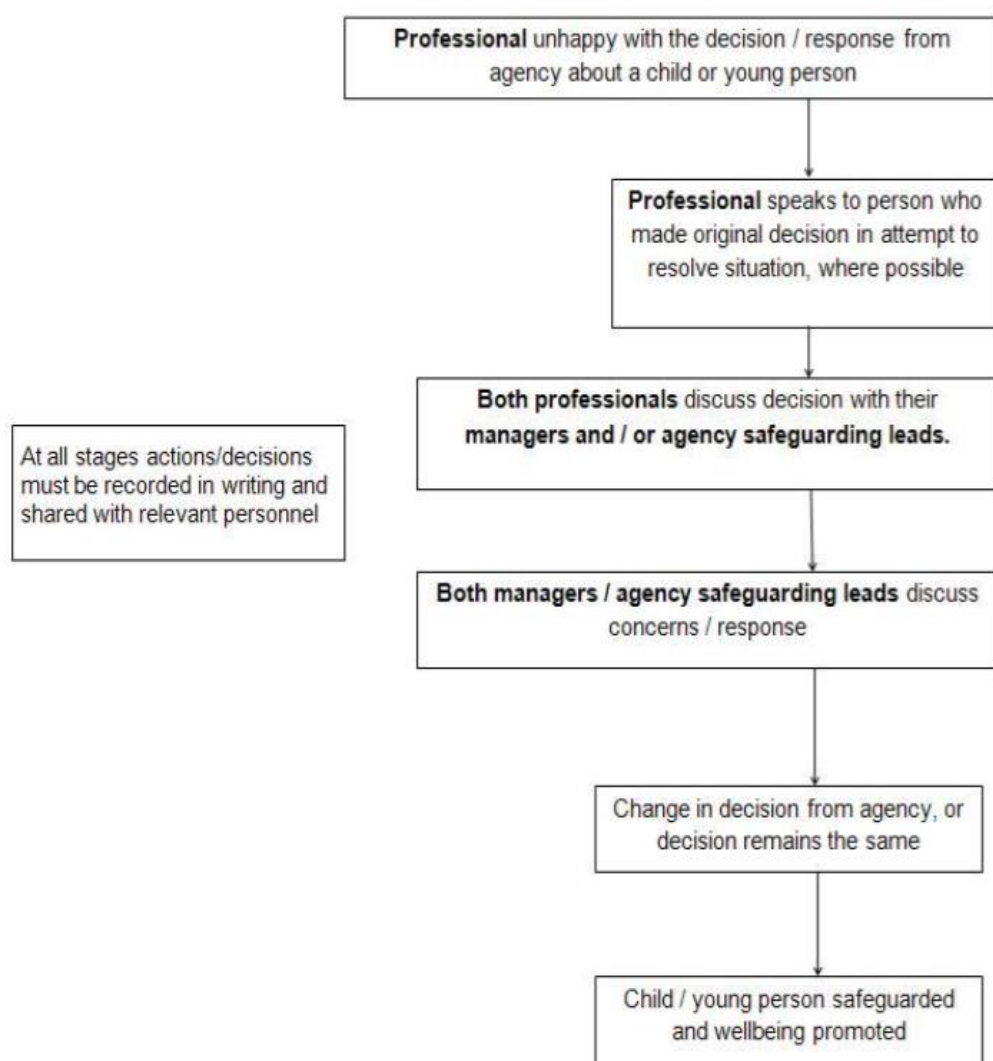
## *Safeguarding Policy*

### Appendix 3

#### Resolution of Practitioner Disagreements

Staff at Mercia School will always work collaboratively with partner agencies to best meet the needs of children and their families. If in the rare occurrence that a professional disagreement occurs, guidance from Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership will be sought. The following flow diagram summarises this process:

**Resolving professional disagreement flow chart (a): Quick decision required**



**This process does not have to be followed in full. Disagreements can be resolved at any stage**



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## Safeguarding Policy

### Appendix 4

#### DfE Statutory Guidance

Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2023)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1181955/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181955/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf)

Working together to safeguard children February 2017

[www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

### Appendix 5

Agency	Number
Safeguarding Children Advice Line	Tel: 0114 205 3535
LADO <sup>[1]</sup> <sub>SEP</sub> Sheffield Safeguarding Children Advisors	Tel: 0114 273 4850
Child Protection Enquiry Team (out of office via Healthcall)	Tel: 0114 273 5655 / 205 3714
Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership.	Tel: 0114 273 4450
Social Services Child Protection Co-ordinators: Fax: 0114 273 4628	Tel: 0114 273 4934
Child Protection Advisers:	Tel: 0114 226 2138/39/40/41/42/43
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:	Tel: 0808 800 5000
Parentline Plus:	Tel: 0808 800 2222
Careline (confidential crisis telephone line for children, young people and adults):	Tel: 0208 514 1177
Childline:	Tel: 0800 1111
Police:	In an emergency, ring 999.

Prevention and Assessment Team	Areas covered <sup>[1]</sup> <sub>SEP</sub> (by electoral ward)	Contact numbers
North PAT Sorby House 42 Spital Hill S4 7LG	Burngreave, Ecclesfield, Firth Park, Shiregreen & Brightside, Southey, Stannington, Stocksbridge & Upper Don	Tel: 0114 233 1189 MAST Fax: 0114 233 1042 MAST
		Tel: 0114 203 9591 Social Care Fax: 0114 233 1042 MAST & SC
East PAT 1st floor Shortbrook Primary Site Westfield Northway S20 8FB	Arbourthorne, Beighton, Birley, Darnall, Manor Castle, Mosborough, Richmond, Woodhouse	Tel: 0114 205 3635 MAST Fax: 0114 205 3639 MAST
		Tel: 0114 203 7463 Social Care Fax: 0114 203 7510 Social Care
West PAT Old Sharrow Junior School <sup>[1]</sup> <sub>SEP</sub> Southview Road S7 1DB	Beauchief & Greenhill, Broomhill, Central, Crookes, Dore & Totley, Ecclesall, Fulwood, Gleadless Valley, Graves Park, Hillsborough, Nether Edge, Walkley	Tel: 0114 250 6865 MAST Fax: 0114 250 6713 MAST
		Tel: 0114 273 4491 Social Care Fax: 011 273 6370 Social Care



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## Safeguarding Policy

### Appendix 6

Substantive changes within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

<b>Part one</b>	<b>Safeguarding information for all staff</b>
<b>Paragraph 13</b>	Updated link to Behaviour in schools' guidance.
<b>Paragraph 14</b>	New text added to raise awareness of the existing expectation for relevant staff to understand filtering and monitoring.
<b>Part two</b>	<b>The management of safeguarding</b>
<b>Paragraph 103</b>	Added reference to filtering and monitoring.
<b>Paragraph 124</b>	New text added to make clear staff training should include understanding roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
<b>Paragraph 138</b>	Reference to child protection policies and appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks.
<b>Paragraph 142</b>	Added new section referencing the new published filtering and monitoring standards. The standards are to support schools meet their duty to have appropriate/effective filtering and monitoring systems in place, this is not a new burden.
<b>Paragraph 144</b>	Reference to cyber security standards.
<b>Paragraph 167</b>	Updated to reference Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings.
<b>Paragraph 175</b>	Clarification provided on the difference between children missing education and children absent from education.
<b>Paragraph 202</b>	Additional signpost to specialist organisations for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
<b>Part three</b>	<b>Safer recruitment</b>
<b>Footnote 221</b>	Clarification that it is good practice for schools to inform shortlisted candidates that online searches will be carried out.
<b>Paragraphs 276-277</b>	Paragraph re-ordered to flow better.
<b>Part four</b>	<b>Allegations/Concerns</b>
<b>New heading and paragraph</b>	Organisations or individuals using school premises.
<b>Part five</b>	<b>Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment</b>
<b>Throughout the guidance</b>	Revised to reflect wording in behaviour guidance.
<b>Annex A</b>	<b>Safeguarding information for school and college staff</b>
	Revised to reflect changes in Part one.
<b>Annex B</b>	<b>Further information</b>
<b>Children absent from education</b>	Revised to reflect the difference between children absent from education and children missing education.
<b>Forced Marriage</b>	Reflects change in law from February 2023.
<b>Child Exploitation</b>	New reference to multi-agency practice principles.