

Heathfield Schools' Partnership Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



Rationale

As members of Heathfield Schools' Partnership (HSP), we are committed to working together to create an environment in which every child feels safe. Good safeguarding requires a continuing commitment from all staff and governors to ensure the safety and welfare of children is embedded in all of our processes and procedures. All members of staff recognise their responsibility for protecting all children with whom they have contact, especially children who attend Heathfield Nursery & Infant school and Heathfield Junior School.

This policy is part of the schools' KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE agenda. It should be read in conjunction with the DfE guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" and "Working Together to Safeguard Children", and HSP policies relating to the safety of children, including: Acceptable Use and E-Safety Policies, Anti-Bullying Policy, Attendance Policy (including Children Missing in Education), Health and Safety Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Online Safety Policy, Relational Behaviour Policy, Safe Working Practice Agreement (SWPA), Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions and Whistleblowing Policy. All adults regularly attending Heathfield Schools are expected to read, sign and adhere to the behaviours outlined in the schools' SWPA. All members of staff are responsible for recognising and responding to possible cases of abuse or neglect in a swift and appropriate manner, applying "professional judgement" as appropriate.

At all times, the safety and welfare of all children is paramount and should be the guiding factor in all decisions made. Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The school operates under Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges. All members of staff are expected to read and to adhere to the guidance: Part one- Safeguarding information for all staff; Annex B- Further information, alongside Heathfield Schools' Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Safe Working Practice Agreement.

Aims of the policy:

- To ensure that all children are protected from all 4 categories of abuse (physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect)
- To ensure that all members of staff are able to recognise the signs of suspected abuse, understand their own responsibility in safeguarding children and know how to act appropriately when concerns are raised
- To ensure that all staff understand the safeguarding issues which may affect children, including the four categories of abuse, Child on Child Abuse (Including Harmful Sexual Behaviour), FGM, CSE, CCE, Serious Violence, Mental Health, and Radicalisation
- To ensure that all staff are strongly committed to the wider safeguarding agenda in line with the DfE guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025).
- To ensure that all staff understand the significant and essential role that we have in making sure children are protected from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We consider online safety in every aspect of school life. To limit children's exposure to these categories of risk from the school's IT systems, we have strong and effective filtering and monitoring systems, following the government's 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges' guidance.

Definitions:

Abuse - a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child either by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the

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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. 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.

Physical Abuse – this is when a child is hurt or injured by another person causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer 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. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child and is therefore likely to coexist with other forms of abuse, although it can occur alone.

Sexual Abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily including violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can include inappropriate kissing and touching, as well as penetrative sex. It can also include encouraging or allowing a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online and/or offline. It can be perpetrated by men, women and other children (see peer on peer abuse).

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.

Safeguarding issues:

Child on Child Abuse – this refers to abuse from one child to another and it can happen both inside and outside of school or online. Child on Child abuse should be taken seriously and not as 'banter' or an inevitable part of growing up.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in school, it does not mean it is not happening, it may just be that it is not being reported. As such, it is essential that if staff have any concerns regarding Child on Child abuse, it is reported following school reporting procedures. Downplaying certain behaviours (e.g. dismissing sexual harassment) can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child on Child Abuse is likely to include (but not limited to): bullying; abuse in intimate personal relationships; physical abuse; sexual abuse/harassment/violence; sexting; upskirting; initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

N.B. Some incidents of bullying will be dealt with through the Anti-Bullying Policy however we will follow Safeguarding procedures (e.g. recording the incident as a safeguarding concern and informing Children's Social Care) when this is appropriate.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence for the purpose of exploitation.

Domestic Abuse – can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They hear, see, or experience the effects of abuse

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at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships. All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – this comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is recognised as a form of child abuse. To assist in and/or directly carry out a procedure is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to knowingly permit a child to travel to another country where a procedure is scheduled to take place. Staff should go through usual reporting procedures (via the DSL) with any concerns regarding FGM. However, there is a specific legal duty on *qualified teachers* (Section 5B (11) (a) of the FGM Act 2003), if they discover an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, they **MUST** report this to the police (supported by the DSL where possible).

Mental Health – All staff should be 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. Where children have suffered abuse or neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), this can have a lasting impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Radicalisation – this refers to the process by which a child or young person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Under the Government's **PREVENT** strategy, the school recognises its duty to prevent extremism, promote British Values and work in collaboration with other professionals when radicalisation is suspected.

Serious Violence – All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or involved with serious violent crime; and the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious crime.

These may include: increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals/groups, a significant decline in performance and/behaviour; signs of assault/injury or unexplained gifts/possessions.

N.B. Please see *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Information for all schools and college staff (Part One)*: Indicators of abuse and neglect and Annex B: Further Information for further details, examples and explanations.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Nikki Allman**.

The Headteachers, Helen Child (Head of Nursery & Infant school) and David Colenso (Head of Junior school), deputise when the DSL is unavailable. If none of these are available, concerns should be taken to another member of SLT. **However all staff are expected to follow procedures (as set out in this policy), and to use their initiative in an emergency.**

The DSL is responsible for maintaining this Safeguarding Policy and is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise and be available to all children, parents, staff and members of the public who wish to share a concern and to take these concerns seriously
- respond to any concerns in a timely and appropriate way and manage referrals
- liaise with the Headteachers to inform them of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- work with the Headteachers and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, child protection and safeguarding issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school

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- liaise with the Inclusion Manager/senior mental health lead, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health and/or children with SEND
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners and work closely with other professionals, sharing and seeking information as appropriate
- help promote the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker with teachers and senior leaders
- keep up to date records relating to all children considered vulnerable or at risk of harm
- keep their own safeguarding training up to date, including attending training on FGM, CSE, HSB, Online Safety and Radicalisation
- cascade training to all other staff to ensure that all staff are well informed about issues relating to safeguarding
- work closely with office staff and safeguarding governors to ensure that the Single Central Record (SCR) is kept up to date and that staff and volunteers are recruited in a safe manner, and all visitors are monitored and aware of the schools' safeguarding procedures.

Named Safeguarding Governors:

The Named Governors for Safeguarding are: **Jacqui Kelly and Martin Dean.**

It is the responsibility of these governors to ensure that the school adheres to the Safeguarding Policy and keeps it updated. The Named Governors are expected to meet with the Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Lead regularly (at least twice a year) to ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust.

All governors **must** receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction, which should be regularly updated. All governors are invited to take part in the schools' termly safeguarding training and local safeguarding training (including training on Safer Recruitment).

Procedure for dealing with abuse, or suspected abuse within Heathfield Schools' Partnership

If you have any reason to be concerned that a child may be being abused or at risk of harm, **you have a responsibility to act.**

If you suspect that a child is being abused, or if a child discloses to you that he is being abused, you should:

- listen carefully to the child without judging. Try not to ask leading questions or prompt the child, but give him time to explain what has happened
- avoid giving false promises of confidentiality: explain to the child that you have a duty to help him and that this will mean telling someone else about what he has said
- reassure the child that he has done the right thing by telling you and that he is not to blame
- record what the child said as soon as possible: stick to the facts, report on Edukey without delay. The designated person will be alerted and you will receive a confirmation that the concern has been received. In the majority of cases, the designated person will inform Children's Social Care (CSC) and take advice. Where possible, CSC should be informed before 3 p.m. on a school day, therefore passing a concern on immediately is paramount. The person making the phone call to CSC is responsible for following the phone call up in writing with an online referral
- inform the designated person as soon as possible. Best practice is to pass the information on verbally, so that you know that the message has been heard as well as writing up on "Edukey" (the school's concern reporting system) immediately
- continue to monitor the child after you have reported the suspected abuse
- maintain confidentiality and professionalism – share information only with people who need to know (usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Social Worker and/or police).

Remember: it is better to pass on information, however small it seems, as it may be a small part of a bigger picture of abuse.

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Behaviour of staff, including allegations against staff

All members of staff, volunteers and governors are required to read and sign our Safer Working Practice Agreement and Acceptable Use Agreement on a yearly basis. These documents cover expectations of staff in relation to their own conduct towards children and use of digital technology (see Appendix 2 Safer Working Agreement and Appendix 3 Acceptable Use Agreement).

The school follows the "Richmond Guidelines on Practice and Procedures regarding Education Staff and Child Protection" for any allegations of abuse made against staff. All concerns about members of staff are shared with the DSL/Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, staff members are expected to share concerns with the Chair of Governors. The school operates a whistleblowing policy and staff are expected to follow the procedures within the policy. All members of staff are in a position to escalate a concern if they feel they have not been taken seriously. Concerns may be escalated to the LADO when necessary.

Safer Recruitment

Our commitment to safeguarding children runs throughout the recruitment process for new members of staff and volunteers: reference is made to safeguarding within all job adverts and is always discussed at interview. It is our policy to ensure that at least one member of the interview panel for any job has completed Safer Recruitment Training. Full checks are carried out on all prospective members of staff before they are appointed and references are actively sought. All governors and all volunteers who support in school regularly are expected to have DBS clearance and are entered onto the SCR of the school in which they volunteer. Short term volunteers (e.g. parents helping on a trip or students on work experience) are expected to remain in sight of a member of staff at all times.

Visitors to the school

Contractors providing services to the school will sign an annual agreement stating relevant safety checks are carried out when vetting their employees.

Visitors who are attending in a professional capacity, must have their ID checked. If a visitor is not working for a company that has an agreement with the school in place, they will also need to provide the relevant DBS certificate.

Volunteers working in the school on a regular basis will need the appropriate DBS certificate unless it is felt a risk assessment would be more appropriate.

Governors are required to have an enhanced DBS check and school must also carry out a Section 128 check.

Records

A record of all conversations and meetings relating to safeguarding must be kept. A copy of all notes are kept securely in the child's Safeguarding folder and/or on Edukey. Hard copies are kept in a locked cupboard in the DSL's office. Staff are expected to pass a concern on in writing (using Edukey) to the Designated Safeguarding Lead even if they have shared the concern verbally.

Staff working within the school office are responsible for informing the DSL of any children starting or leaving the school so that appropriate records can be collected/passed on.

Single Central Record (SCR)

A Single Central Record is held and updated regularly, when new members of staff, governors and regular volunteers are appointed. It is the responsibility of Christine Bhika, with support from the DSL, to ensure that the SCR is kept up to date. The SCR is checked by a governor during termly Safeguarding Weeks.

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Support for Children who have been abused

All members of staff may be called upon to offer support to children who have been abused. We also have a small team of trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA's) and Drawing and Talking Practitioners on site who are available to work with children (and sometimes parents) within school. Through the PSHE curriculum, assemblies and Safeguarding Weeks, children are reminded of what to do if they are being hurt or abused and who they can talk to (including family members, school staff, Designated Safeguarding Lead, the NSPCC and Child-line). The school works closely with the NSPCC, following the NSPCC Schools' Programme, to ensure that all children are aware of how to stay safe and who to talk to if they are unhappy.

For further information, please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in person, or call: Nikki Allman 07776 997276, or refer to one of the following websites:
www.nspcc.org.uk or www.childline.org.uk

If you are concerned about a child and are unable to work within normal school procedures (e.g. during school holidays) *you have a responsibility to contact the **Single Point of Access (SPA)** yourself*: 0208 547 5008. You can also call the NSPCC (0800 0280285) who will be able to advise. In the case of immediate danger to a child, call 999.

**Updated by Nikki Allman
Designated Safeguarding Lead
September 2025**

Appendix 1: Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One - September 2025; Annex B: Further Information (including additional advice and support)

Appendix 2: Heathfield Schools' Safe Working Practice Agreement

Appendix 3: Acceptable Use Agreement

Other related policies and guidance:

The DfE guidance -

Teachers' Standards (teaching staff);
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

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Absence Policy; Acceptable Use Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; Anti Bullying Policy; Health & Safety Policy; Intimate Care Policy; Medical Conditions Policy; Online Safety Policy; Relational Behaviour and Physical Intervention Policy; Standards and Procedures for Club Providers; Visitors to the School guidance; Volunteer Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.