

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

Key Contact Details:-

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Rebecca Heritage, Safeguarding Officer Tel: 01202 847210
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs. Cath Mason, Senior Health Centre Nurse Tel: 01202 847503
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Designated Governor for Safeguarding & Child Protection	Prof. Jane Portlock Contact via Bursary: 01202 857551
Local Authority Designated Officer & Children's Social Care MASH	01202 817600 (LADO) or 01202 123334 (MASH) lado@bcpcouncil.gov.uk childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
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CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Canford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Safeguarding refers to measures implemented to prevent any harm to children and young people's health and development, and to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals, which allow people — especially children, young people and vulnerable adults — to live free from abuse, harm and neglect

The School does not distinguish in principle between its pupils on grounds of age, in that it does not consider that its child protection responsibilities should end once a pupil attains the age of 18, (albeit the referral pathways will differ at this point). As such, any reference to a "child" in this policy or any others includes any child who is a pupil of the school and includes any pupil aged 18 years and over.

We take seriously our duty to safeguard and protect the welfare of the children and young people in our care including those who are visiting the school, for example on a short course, for interview or a taster day. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, we define safeguarding 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
- Making sure 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

This policy can be viewed on the school website and the Gateway. It can also be made available in larger print or more accessible format if required.

Policy principles:

- The School's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn
- Canford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and Governors to share this commitment
- If a member of staff has any concerns about a child (but there is no risk of immediate harm), the DSL must be informed and they will decide what action to take.
- All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. If early help is appropriate, the DSL will liaise with other agencies as appropriate. Staff should also consult the Mental Health policy.
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review
- If, at any point, a child is suffering or at risk of suffering serious harm, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care immediately, and if a crime may have been committed, the police will be

informed at the outset. **Anybody can make a referral, although it is most like that this will be completed by the DSL or deputy DSLs.**

- If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some stage. Staff should also consult the domestic abuse policy.
- All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.
- All children, regardless of age, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership have equal rights to protection
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges, such as communication barriers, difficulties in managing and reporting these challenges, and staff missing indicators of possible abuse. For example, it is possible to assume that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's condition without further exploration; these pupils are more prone to peer group isolation or bullying than other pupils; and pupils with SEND or certain medical conditions may be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without showing any signs. Staff must recognize this increased vulnerability when dealing with children with special educational needs.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home, in the community or in school. Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

The procedures in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and Governors and are consistent with those of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and have regard to guidance issued by the Department for Education:

Policy aims:

- To afford protection for all pupils
- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities
- To promote a culture which makes the school a safer place to learn and live

Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of abuse, neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the School's Anti Bullying & Online-safety policies. (See Appendix 2 for further detail about the types and signs of abuse.)

Canford School will take all reasonable measures to:

- Ensure we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, Governors, volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people in accordance with the guidance given in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025), Working together to safeguard children (2018), the Education (Independent School Standards)

(England) Regulations 2014 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2015). See also the School's separate Safer Recruitment Policy.

- Ensure that where staff from another organisation are working with our pupils on another site, we have received assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to those staff
- Follow the inter-agency procedures of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil
- Be alert to signs of abuse both in the School and from outside
- Deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse
- Design and operate procedures which promote this policy
- Design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations
- Support pupils who have been abused in accordance with their agreed Child Protection, Child in Need or Team Around the Family plan
- Be alert to the needs of pupils with physical and mental health conditions
- Identify any concerns early and provide appropriate help to prevent them from escalating, involving parents/carers appropriately (Housemasters/Housemistresses, Matrons, Tutors, the Health Centre and the School Counsellor are likely to be involved at an early stage)
- Operate robust and sensible health and safety procedures
- Play an active role in the Operation Encompass procedures when notified.
- Assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, based on an understanding of the potential risk in the local area
- Identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified
- Identify children who may be vulnerable to FGM and know what to do when they are identified
- Teach pupils about safeguarding, for example through use of online resources, through the curriculum and PSME, together with guidance on adjusting behaviours to reduce risks including the safe use of electronic devices and the internet, building resilience to protect themselves and their peers, and information about who they should turn to for help
- Help pupils understand and follow the guidance given in the Canford online safety policy
- Ensure that the School premises are as secure as circumstances permit
- Operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse
- Consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual pupils in our School or in our local area, such as 'so-called honour-based violence'. This includes dealing with the issue of forced marriages, the statutory guidance for which is available from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or can be found at www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage; and
- Have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education (DfE) in accordance with section 94 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 and sections 29 and 38 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and associated regulations.

The *Prevent Duty Guidance for England & Wales* emphasizes that the duty to have due regard to the need to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism is an aspect of safeguarding. Being drawn into terrorism includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularize views which terrorists exploit. Schools should be safe spaces in which children and young people can stand and discuss sensitive topics, including

terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas.

The following policies and procedures are also relevant to the School's safeguarding practices:

- (a) Staff Code of Conduct
- (b) Whistleblowing Policy
- (c) Safer Recruitment Policy
- (d) Communications Policy
- (e) Anti-bullying Policy
- (f) Attendance and Missing Pupil Policy
- (g) ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- (h) E-safety Policy (Online safety)
- (i) Behaviour & Reasonable Force Policy
- (j) Administration of medicines policy
- (k) Low-level Concerns Policy

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The School's Governing Body has appointed a member of staff of the School's senior leadership team with the necessary status and authority, Designated Safeguarding Lead, to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. This includes taking the lead on online safety and having knowledge of filtering and monitoring systems the school have in place.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead shall be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to enable him/her to support other staff on safeguarding matters, to contribute to strategy discussions and/or interagency meetings and to contribute to the assessment of children.

Schools have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies should liaise with the three safeguarding partners (health, social care and police) and work with other agencies in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018). The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) should help Designated Safeguarding Leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.

The main responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are set out in Appendix 3. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable his/her duties will be carried out by one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. In this policy, reference to the Designated Safeguarding Lead includes the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead where the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable.

Duty of employees, the Governing Body and volunteers

Every employee and Governor of the School as well as every volunteer who assists the School is under general legal duty:

- To safeguard & protect children from abuse
- To be aware of the terms and procedures in this policy and follow them
- To know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary

- To keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event in accordance with this policy; and
- To report any matters of concern in accordance with this policy

The Governing Body ensures that the School's safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Governing Body has nominated one of its members to manage child protection incidents on behalf of the Governing Body and to liaise with external agencies where this is required, including in the event of allegations of abuse made against the Headmaster or a member of the Governing Body. The nominated Governor is Prof. Jane Portlock

Training

Induction

All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, will be provided with induction training that includes:

- (a) this policy;
- (b) the Staff Code of Conduct;
- (c) the Pupil Code of Conduct
- (d) the Whistleblowing Policy;
- (e) the identity and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies together with details about their role;
- (f) the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- (g) online safety
- (h) child protection training in accordance with Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures;
- (i) a copy of Part I & Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025). Governors may allow staff who do not work directly with children to read only Annex A, which is a condensed version of Part I.

Child Protection Training

All staff, volunteers and Governors including the Headmaster, will receive a copy of this policy and Part I & Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025) and will be required to confirm they have read these.

The Headmaster, all staff members, volunteers and Governors will undertake appropriate and regular child protection training in line with Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership recommendations. Update training is delivered annually with the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership recommending an approved/outside trainer every third year. In addition, all staff will receive updates as required to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Training will include guidance on the duties of staff in relation to both children in need and children at risk of harm.

Staff development training will also include training on online safety and, where they have not been able to access other Prevent training assessed as appropriate for them by the School, the online general awareness training module on Prevent & Channel.

Additionally, the School will raise awareness of and make an assessment of the appropriate level and focus for further staff training and responsiveness to specific safeguarding concerns such as radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, female genital mutilation, cyberbullying, child on child abuse (sexual violence and harassment), upskirting and 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. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, the DSL should be informed immediately.

The Nominated Child Protection Governor and the Chair of Governors will receive appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has undertaken child protection training and training in inter-agency working and Prevent, and will attend refresher training at two-yearly intervals. The DSL will receive regular informal updates from the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership. For further information about the training of the Designated Safeguarding Lead see Appendix 3.

All training will be carried out in accordance with Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.

School Leaders

All school leaders who hold positions of responsibility over other pupils will be briefed on appropriate action to take should they have or be informed of any safeguarding concerns.

Procedures

Where a child or young person is thought to be at risk, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with Children's Social Care and where appropriate an inter-agency assessment will take place in accordance with the Children's Act 1989.

Children In Need (CIN) are legally defined as children and young people who have been identified and assessed by a social worker as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their health or development, or who are disabled. This assessment is undertaken in accordance with Section 17 of The

Children's Act 1989 and children, young people and families will be supported under a Child in Need Plan.

Child Protection refers to enquiries undertaken by a social worker where a child or young person is deemed to be suffering or at risk of suffering from significant harm, in accordance with Section 47 of The Children's Act 1989. Section 47 enquiries may lead to a child, young person and family being supported under a Child Protection (CP) plan. In circumstances where a pupil has not suffered and is not likely to suffer significant harm but is in need of additional support, they may be supported by Early Help services which includes an interagency assessment known as an Early Help Assessment (EHA), followed by support from a Team Around the Child (TAF).

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 involves support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Safeguarding lead will consult with children's social care on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral to children's social care will be made without delay (and in any event within 24 hours). All further responsibility for gathering information and deciding what happens next rests primarily with Children's Social Care.

Early help is available within the school via pastoral care teams, the school counsellors, the chaplain and the health centre.

Early help indicators are detailed in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025*. They include where a pupil:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

Children at risk of harm will be subject to local procedures, and reported to Children's Social Care within 24 hours (one working day).

Initial Complaint: A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- must listen carefully to the pupil and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place
- must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer
- must reassure the pupil but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass on the information in accordance with this policy so that the correct action can be taken; and
- must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed and dated by the person making it and should use names, not initials.

Preserving evidence: The written record and all other evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be kept securely and passed on when reporting the matter. No copies must be kept.

Reporting: All suspicions, or complaints of abuse or concerns about a child must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, unless the complaint involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead or any other member of staff, Governor or volunteer, in which case the procedure set out in Appendix 4 should be followed.

If, at any point, a child is suffering or at risk of suffering serious harm, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care immediately, and if a crime may have been committed, the police will be informed at the outset.

Anybody can make a referral, although this is most likely to be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re- consideration.

Members of staff must, as soon as reasonably practicable after making a report, complete and pass on to the DSL, the Disclosure Proforma which can be found in Appendix 1 and on the Gateway. No copies must be kept.

Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead: On being notified of a complaint or suspicion of abuse, the action to be taken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead will take into account:

- the local inter-agency procedures of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- where relevant, local information sharing protocols relating to Channel referrals;
- the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence, including the identification of someone who may already be engaged in illegal terrorist-related activity, will always be referred to Children's Social Care and, if appropriate, the police
- the child's wishes or feelings bearing in mind the responsibility not to keep secrets and

- duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable.

Where relevant, the School will co-operate with the Channel panel and the police in providing any relevant information so that each can effectively carry out its functions to determine whether an individual is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The School will respond to requests for information from the police promptly and in any event within ten working days.

Dealing with allegations against staff, Governors and volunteers

The School has procedures for dealing with allegations that may meet the harms threshold against staff, Governors and volunteers who work with children that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures are set out in Appendix 4 and follow Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025).

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed immediately and in any event within one working day of all allegations against staff, Governors and volunteers that come to the School's attention and appear to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 1 of Appendix 4. Staff and volunteers should feel able to follow the School's separate Whistleblowing Policy to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the School, potential failures by the School or its staff to properly safeguard the welfare of pupils or other wrongdoing by staff in the workplace that does not involve the safeguarding and welfare of children.

The school also has procedures for allegations or concerns that do not meet the harms threshold, otherwise known as "low-level concerns".

Low-level concerns The school encourages everyone affected by its operation to report to the DSL any concern - even if no more than one which causes a sense of unease or a "nagging doubt" - they may have that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with expected professional standards and/or the staff code of conduct.

Where a low-level concern is raised about the DSL, it should be reported to the Headmaster. All members of staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors are themselves encouraged to self-refer where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe that they have behaved in a way that falls below the expected standards.

The DSL will usually share the concern with the Headmaster and they will address it in a proportionate manner. They will gather as much evidence as they can by speaking where possible with the person who raised the concern, to the individual involved and to any witnesses. They will consider whether it is indeed a low-level concern or whether it is sufficiently serious to meet the harms threshold.

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing by the DSL. The record will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken, together with the rationale for all decisions and actions. The name of the individual sharing the concern will also be noted: if the individual wishes to remain anonymous, that will be respected as far as is reasonably possible.

Records of low-level concerns will be regularly reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the Headmaster and DSL will decide on a course of action but the Headmaster is the ultimate decision maker. They will consider if any wider cultural issues in the school enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training given to minimise the risk of recurrence.

The purpose of the Low-level Concerns Policy is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour which are set out in the Staff Code of Conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

Low-level concerns will not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance. Those that relate exclusively to safeguarding will not be referred to in a reference unless they meet the threshold for referral to the LADO and are found to be substantiated.

Where a low-level concern relates to supply staff or a contractor, their employer will be notified about the concern, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Staff guidance: Guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. The School's policy on behaviour and use of reasonable force is available on the Gateway.

Appropriate Conduct with Pupils: Staff must be aware of appropriate conduct with pupils in order to avoid allegations and misunderstandings:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the School's child protection policy, code of conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact and information sharing
- avoiding physical contact with pupils wherever possible
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort and in compliance with School procedures and Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership guidance.

- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL or, if necessary, directly to the police or children's social care.
- following the School's rules with regard to communication with pupils and use of social media and online networking

Please refer to the School's Safeguarding Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers which can be found on the School's intranet, the Gateway.

All School staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

The following areas are designated as shared spaces in boarding house staff residential accommodation, the Chaplain's house, the Assistant Chaplain's house and the Headmaster's house:

- sitting room
- dining room
- kitchen
- downstairs toilet
- garden

These areas may be used for pastoral gatherings and social events involving pupils. At any gathering there will always be two adults present to supervise. All other areas of staff accommodation are private and must not be used by pupils.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence and will lead to disciplinary action even if that pupil is over the age of consent. N.B. please refer to the first paragraph on p2 of this policy.

The School's code of conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is issued to all staff annually.

Allegations against pupils: Allegations against pupils should be reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy. All staff should recognize that children can abuse other children, including online. This is generally referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); gender based violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment; abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; consensual & non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals and upskirting (a criminal offence) which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

There may be different gender issues involved. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. [The Lucy Faithfull Foundation's](#) "Shore Space" is a confidential chat service to assist young people who are concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts or behaviour.

Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT or 'gender questioning' children are at greater risk. Even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up, all staff must take a zero tolerance approach;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Canford School takes the following steps to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- Taking a whole school approach to safeguarding & child protection
- Providing training to staff
- Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum.
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

Time is allocated in assemblies and PSHE to discussions of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and on why bullying and lack of respect for others is never right.

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Concerns must always be shared as no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and what might appear to one member of staff as a one-off minor incident may very well not be. Everyone has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action so as to act in the best interests of the child.

All incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to the HSM, DHP and the DSL.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply. The School will take advice from children's social care on the investigation of such allegations and will take

appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the pupil or pupils accused of abuse. If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of children's social care, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupil is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult. In the case of pupils whose parents are abroad, the pupil's education guardian will be requested to provide support to the pupil and to accommodate them if it is necessary to suspend them during the investigation. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) will be appropriately supported in order to reduce any additional barriers that may prevent the recognition and discussion of abuse and neglect and exploitation. Where an allegation is made against a pupil, both the victim and the perpetrator and any other pupils affected will be treated as being at risk and safeguarding procedures in accordance with this Policy will be followed in order to provide appropriate support. The DSL will keep secure written and electronic records of all incidents.

Missing child procedures: All staff are informed of the separate procedure to be used for searching for, and if necessary, reporting, any pupil missing from the School. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing. Please see the School's separate Missing Pupil Policy for further details.

Children Missing from Education: A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and for no explainable reason. We follow the DfE legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination and will report to the relevant local authority where a child is going to be deleted from the pupil roll in the applicable circumstances. Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps* have been taken by the School to establish their whereabouts without success, we will make a referral to the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

*reasonable steps include:

- Communication with parents/carers
- Telephone calls to all known contacts
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family
- All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

Informing parents: parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures. There might be rare occasions, however, when we have to provide information to or consult other agencies such as Children's Social Care before we contact parents. This will include situations where we judge that to tell parents first will or might put the child at risk of significant harm.

Where a strategy discussion is required, or police or Children's Social Care need to be involved, the DSL or Headmaster will not contact parents until all agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed. Parental consent is not required for a referral where the DSL believes a pupil is at risk of significant harm.

Parents or carers will be informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. In relation to Channel referrals, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider seeking the consent of the pupil (or their parent/guardian) when determining what information can be shared. Whether or not consent is sought will be dependent on the circumstances of the case but may relate to issues such as the health of the individual, law enforcement or protection of the public.

See also Appendix 4 for details about the disclosure of information where an allegation has been made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Gender Questioning Children

- Caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and that children may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Canford will recommend that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible.

Canford will take a cautious approach to support a gender questioning child and:

- Consider the broad range of the individual's needs
- Do this in partnership with their parents (except in rare circumstances where involving parents would bring a significant risk of harm to the child)
- Include any clinical advice that is available
- Consider how to address wider vulnerabilities, such as the risk of bullying

It's also important for staff to 'create a culture' where pupils can speak out or share any concerns with staff (previously it was to 'provide a safe space' for pupils to do this).

Online Safety

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, the Designated Safeguarding Lead has overall responsibility in ensuring online safety is paramount. This includes understanding the filtering and monitoring systems that are in place and the DSL will have access to ongoing training to ensure that this is up to date. The school has several measures in place to ensure that pupils are safe online. This includes filtering and monitoring systems that block inappropriate websites and publishes reports of any website attempting to be accessed which is reviewed by the DSL. Canford also works to prevent potential harms that may be caused by generative AI. We also have an E-Safety Policy which has more information on how we keep pupils safe online. At Canford we view misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories as safeguarding harms.

Confidentiality & Information Sharing

The School will keep all safeguarding & child protection records confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The School will co-operate with police and social care to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 in accordance with

the requirements of *Working together to safeguard children* (2018), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2015) and Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism (2015).

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL or DDSL for child protection, the Headmaster or Chair of Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will keep all records confidential and ensure they are kept securely in a locked location. Staff, pupils and parents should be aware, however, that disclosure may be necessary in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

It is reasonable for staff to discuss day-to-day concerns about pupils with colleagues in order to ensure that children's general needs are met in School. However, staff should only refer child protection concerns in accordance with the procedures in this policy. The person receiving the referral will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in schools failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Sept 2025) emphasizes that anyone can contact Children's Social Care if they are concerned about a child.

Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance on information sharing is contained within Section 1.1.2 of the 'Pan-Dorset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Manual' and can be accessed at <https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/>

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child/parent to keep secrets.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 principles. Information is:

- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Kept no longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Secure

Disclosure proformas and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access to sensitive information. Any sensitive information that needs to be stored on portable devices such as laptop computers or tablets or on portable media such as a flash drive will be password protected or encrypted and kept in locked storage. Any loss or compromise of such portable devices or media should be reported immediately to the DSL and school ICT manager.

The School's Data Protection Policy is available to parents and pupils on request.

Monitoring

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that the procedures set out in this Policy and the implementation of these procedures are updated and reviewed regularly, working with the Governors as necessary. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will update the Senior Leadership Team regularly on the operation of the School's safeguarding arrangements.

Any child protection incidents at the School will be followed by a review of these procedures by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a report made to the Governing Body. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the LADO will be asked to assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the School's procedures. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements at any time will be remedied without delay.

The full Governing Body will undertake an annual review of this Policy and the School's safeguarding procedures, including an update and review of the effectiveness of procedures and their implementation and the effectiveness of inter-agency working. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with the Nominated Child Protection Governor, preparing a written report commissioned by the full Governing Body. The written report should address how the School ensures that this Policy is kept up to date; staff training on safeguarding; referral information; issues and themes which may have emerged in the School and how these have been handled; and the contribution the School is making to multi-agency working in individual cases or local discussions on safeguarding matters.

The full Governing Body should also consider independent corroboration, such as inspection of records or feedback from external agencies including the LADO.

The full Governing Body will review the report, this Policy and the implementation of its procedures and consider the proposed amendments to the Policy before giving the revised Policy its final approval. Minutes recording the review by the Governing Body will be made.

Appendix I

Child protection disclosure form

This form is intended for completion by any member of staff, volunteer or Governor who receives information raising child protection concerns either through observation or direct disclosure, from a pupil or from another source. The purpose of this form is to ensure that an adequate amount of information is recorded at the outset. This form must be completed as soon as possible after the information is received even where this happens away from the School, for example on an educational visit. Alternatively, this information may be communicated through myconcern, the School's online safeguarding records system.

Do not allow the completion of this form to delay notification of the concerns to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead but pass the completed form to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Headmaster or Chairman of the Governing Body as appropriate, as a matter of urgency.

The School's **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is Richard Redwood (Deputy Head Pastoral)

To be completed by a member of staff Remember:

Ask "open" questions and not leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer

Listen carefully and keep an open mind

Do not take a decision as to whether or not the alleged abuse or neglect has taken place

Please complete in black pen	
Date	
Time	
Place	
Member of staff present & position	
Full name of pupil(s)	
Before proceeding have you reassured the pupil that you are there to help them but you cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality? Have you explained that in some cases you may be able to keep it a secret, but that you may need to pass the information on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Richard Redwood and/or the Headmaster who will ensure the correct action is taken?	
Yes	No
Ask the pupil to explain their concern or allegation and record details of the matter in the space below. Use a separate sheet if necessary and then attach to the form.	

A non-exhaustive list of the details to be included:

- what was said or done, by whom, to whom and in whose presence
- when the incident(s) took place and where
- whether the pupil wishes their parents and/or guardian to be informed

Any additional comments or evidence

Details may include, for example, any concerns you may have about signs of abuse, emotional ill-treatment or neglect from outside of School.

Please also include a note of any other evidence, for example, written notes, items of clothing or mobile phone messages relating to the matter.

Any suspicion or complaint of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Richard Redwood, or in his absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, Rebecca Heritage, Cath Mason, Andrew Farbridge or Julia Bird, or if the complaint involves a member of staff or volunteer, to the Headmaster or in his absence the Nominated Child Protection Governor, Prof. Jane Portlock.

DO NOT investigate the matter, as this could prejudice the investigations of outside agencies. Where the concern or allegation is made against the Headmaster, you must immediately inform the Chair of the Governing Body, Sir Gary Coward, or in their absence the Nominated Child Protection Governor without first notifying the Headmaster.

Where the concern or allegation is made against the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, you must immediately inform the Headmaster.

Please record what action you have taken and when

Full name of member of staff	
Signature	

Appendix 2: Types and signs of abuse

I. Types of Abuse

Abuse is 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of this environment. **All** staff, but especially the DSL (& deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

Part one of *Keeping children safe in education (Sept 2025)* defines the following types of abuse.

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.

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

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 nonpenetrative 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. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as

a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate 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.

Keeping children safe in education (Sept 2025) also acknowledges the following as specific safeguarding issues:

- child abduction and community safety incidents
- children and the court system
- children missing from education
- children missing from home or care
- children with family members in prison
- modern slavery and the national referral mechanism
- cybercrime
- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic violence
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- forced marriage
- homelessness
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- 'honour-based' abuse/violence (HBA or HBV)
- mental health
- private fostering
- sexting
- consensual & non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
- trafficking

Domestic abuse: 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 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.

Operation Encompass: Operation Encompass is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Violence and Abuse and which is in place in every police force in England and Wales.

Children were recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our school about all police attended Domestic Abuse incidents which involve any of our children prior to the start of the next school day. Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass school and we ensure that when a new child joins our school the parents/carers are informed about Operation Encompass.

The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the children or the non-abusing adult at risk.

Youth produced sexual imagery (sexting): making, possessing and distributing sexual photos and videos of under-18's is illegal. The relevant legislation is contained in the Protection of Children Act 1978 (England and Wales) as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales). Schools should have regard for guidance issues by The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS). When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to a school's attention the following steps should be taken:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately

Adults should **not** view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is a good and clear reason to do so. Wherever possible responses to incidents should be based on what the DSL has been told about the content of the imagery. The decision to view imagery should be based on the professional judgement of the DSL and should always comply with the school's child protection policy and procedures. Imagery should never be viewed if the act of viewing will cause significant distress or harm to the pupil. Further details on searching, deleting and confiscating devices can be found in the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation advice. This advice highlights that schools have the power to search pupils for devices, search data on devices and delete youth produced sexual imagery.

Viewing youth produced sexual imagery can be distressing for both young people and adults and appropriate emotional support may be required.

If any devices need to be seized and passed onto the police, then the device(s) should be confiscated and the police should be called. The device(s) should be turned off and placed under lock and key until the police are able to come and retrieve it.

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 organized 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 peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognize that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE): county lines; is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal drug activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (National Crime Agency Human-Trafficking) should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;

- can affect any vulnerable adult of the age of 18 years
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults

Common signs of county lines involvement are where a pupil:

- go missing (from school or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim, perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Female genital mutilation: 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 already have taken place, can be found at Section 2.2.8. of the 'Pan-Dorset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Manual'. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

All staff must be aware of the requirement for teachers to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face serious disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils. This mandatory reporting duty commenced in October 2015. Teachers must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Protecting Children from Radicalisation

The school is committed to preventing pupils from being radicalized and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. The School promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing pupils with the opportunity to learn how to discuss and debate points of view and to understand a range of faiths; and by ensuring that all pupils are valued and listened to within school. The School has adopted the Government's definitions for the purposes of compliance with the **Prevent duty** and the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Extremism: "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas."

Radicalisation: 'the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence'.

All staff are made aware of the importance of identifying indicators of children being radicalized and all concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL. The School will make appropriate referrals in respect of any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalized and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views. School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately. In particular, outward expressions of faith, in the absence of any other indicator of vulnerability, will not be regarded as a reason to make a referral to Channel.

Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism (2015) notes the following:

“36. There is no single way of identifying who is likely to be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Factors that may have a bearing on someone becoming vulnerable may include: peer pressure, influence from other people or via the internet, bullying, crime against them or their involvement in crime, anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self-esteem or identity and personal or political grievances.

51. Example indicators that an individual is engaged with an extremist group, cause or ideology include:

- spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists;
- changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group;
- day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause;
- loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause;
- possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. the swastika for far-right groups);
- attempts to recruit others to the group/cause/ideology; or
- communications with others that suggest identification with a group/cause/ideology.

52. Example indicators that an individual has an intention to cause harm, use violence or other illegal means include:

- clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills;
- using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group;
- speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now;
- expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology;
- condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others; or
- plotting or conspiring with others.”

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the School's wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

The DfE's briefing note *The use of social media for on-line radicalisation* (2015) includes information on how social media is used to radicalize young people and guidance on protecting pupils at risk.

The School expects all staff, volunteers, Governors, visiting professionals, contractors or individuals or agencies that hire school premises to behave in accordance with the School's Staff Safeguarding Code of Conduct. The School will challenge the expression and/or promotion of extremist views and ideas by any adult on school premises or at school events and, when necessary, will make appropriate referrals in respect of any such adult.

Where there are any concerns the MASH police or anti-terrorist hotline must be contacted as per the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Safeguarding policy guidance.

2. Signs of Abuse

Possible signs of abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Children who say they have been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a child's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries
- The child's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the child's behaviour – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or cling, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed
- Onset of self-harming behaviour
- The child asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons
- The child is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by their parents or carers
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty
- Children with consistently poor hygiene
- Children who lose or gain weight
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends without an obvious reason
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry
- Children who talk about being left at home, with inappropriate carers or with strangers
- Children who reach developmental milestones late, such as learning to speak or walk, with no medical reason
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why
- Children who talk about running away
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of **Physical Abuse**:

- Children with frequent injuries
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones
- Children with unexplained bruises or cuts; burns or scalds; or bite marks

Some of the following signs may be indicators of **Emotional Abuse**:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful or anxious about doing something wrong

- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons

Some of the following signs may be indicators of **Sexual Abuse**:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games
- Children with physical sexual problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy

Some of the following signs may be indicators of **Sexual Exploitation**:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of **Neglect**:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe
- Children who are left hungry or dirty
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence
- Children who are often angry, aggressive, or self-harm
- Children who fail to receive basic health care
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

The Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership can provide advice on the signs of abuse and the DfE advice *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)* provides advice in identifying child abuse. The NSPCC website is also a good source of information and advice.

Appendix 3: The Designated Safeguarding Lead

- I. In accordance with Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025), the main responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are:

I.1 Managing referrals

- (a) To take the lead responsibility for referring all cases of suspected abuse of any pupil in the School to children's social care.
- (b) To take the lead responsibility for referring to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) all child protection concerns which involve a member of staff or volunteer.
- (c) To take the lead responsibility for making referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where a member of staff, student, volunteer or Governor is dismissed or resigns in circumstances where there has been actual harm, or risk of harm, to a child.
- (d) To take the lead responsibility for making referrals to the police where a crime may have been committed.
- (e) Liaising with the Headmaster in respect of police investigations or investigations under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 which involve the School.
- (f) To take the lead on referrals to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals.
- (g) To act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- (h) To take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or supporting other staff to do so.
- (i) To liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO's) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically
- (j) To liaise with the senior mental health lead where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health
- (k) To promote supportive engagement with parent and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- (l) To keep all child protection files up to date, confidential and stored securely. Files should include a clear summary of the concern, details of how it was followed up and resolved and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

I.2 Raising awareness

- (a) Ensure this policy is reviewed annually, and updated whenever needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt; and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the Governing Body regarding this.

- (b) Ensure this policy is available publicly.
- (c) Ensure that parents are aware that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made to children's social care and the School's role in this.
- (d) Maintain links with the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure staff are aware of training opportunities and the local policies on safeguarding.
- (e) Facilitate induction training for new staff to include:
 - this policy;
 - the Staff Code of Conduct;
 - the Pupil Code of Conduct
 - the Whistleblowing Policy;
 - the identity and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies together with details about their role;
 - the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
 - online safety
 - child protection training in accordance with Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures;
 - a copy of Part 1 & Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025)
 - understanding of the unique risks associated with online safety, ensuring confidence that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability to keep children safe while they are online at school
- (f) Where children leave the School ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible. This will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt obtained.
- (g) In accordance with the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales and Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism (2015) the Designated Safeguarding Lead has, in addition, the following responsibilities:
 - (i) Acting as the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters relating to the Prevent duty;
 - (ii) Co-ordinating Prevent duty procedures in the School;
 - (iii) Liaising with local Prevent co-ordinators, the police and local authorities and through existing multi-agency forums, including referrals to the Channel Police Practitioner and/or the police where indicated;
 - (iv) Undergoing WRAP or other appropriate training;
 - (v) Maintaining an ongoing training programme for all school employees including induction training for all new employees and keeping records of staff training; and
 - (vi) Monitoring the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to the Prevent duty.

1.3 Training, knowledge and skills

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated every two years. They should:

- (a) Understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including any local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements
- (b) A working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- (c) Understand the importance of the role the Designated Safeguarding Lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- (d) 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
- (e) Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
- (f) Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- (g) Understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- (h) Be able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school
- (i) Be able to recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online
- (j) Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, and encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

2. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will carry out this role where the Designated Safeguarding lead is unavailable

Appendix 4: Allegations against staff, Governors or volunteers

Allegations against staff (including supply teachers and volunteers): The LADO should be informed within 24hrs (one working day) of all allegations that come to the School's attention and appear to meet the criteria. Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Designated Safeguarding Lead or any other member of staff or a volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the Headmaster or in his absence the Nominated Child Protection Governor. Where appropriate, the Headmaster will consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and all allegations will be discussed with the LADO before further action is taken. Where there would be a conflict of interest in reporting the allegation to the Headmaster, the matter should be taken directly to the LADO.

Allegations against the Headmaster: Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Headmaster, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, or in her/his absence the Nominated Child Protection Governor, without notifying the Headmaster. The allegation will be discussed with the LADO before further action is taken. The Head must not be informed of the allegation prior to contact with the chair and the LADO. The Chair of Governors will consult the Nominated Child Protection Governor, and vice versa.

Allegations against Governors: Where an allegation is made against any Governor, the matter should be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors or the Nominated Child Protection Governor. If either the Chair of Governors or the Nominated Child Protection Governor are the subject of an allegation, the matter should be reported to the other. Again, any such allegations will be discussed with the LADO before further action is taken. Where appropriate, the Chair of Governors will consult the Nominated Governor, and vice versa.

If it is not possible to report to the Headmaster or Chair of Governors or the Nominated Child Protection Governor in the circumstances set out above, a report should be made immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, if unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take action in accordance with these procedures and will as soon as possible inform the Headmaster or, where appropriate, the Chair of Governors and the Nominated Child Protection Governor.

The person taking action in accordance with the procedures in this Appendix is known as the "case manager".

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation but will be considered where the circumstances warrant it, including:

- where there is cause to suspect a child, or other children at the school, to be at risk of significant harm
- the allegation warrants investigation by the police
- the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal
- where it is necessary to progress the investigation.

Any allegations not meeting one of these criteria will be dealt with in accordance with the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. Advice from the LADO will be sought in borderline cases.

All such allegations must be dealt with as a priority without delay.

Allegations against a teacher or other member of staff who is no longer teaching and historical allegations will be referred to the police.

If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justifications will be recorded by the school and the individual will be notified of the reasons usually within one working day.

The school recognises it has a duty of care towards its employees and will ensure support is in place for individuals facing an allegation. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations and given an explanation of the likely course of action as soon as possible, unless external agencies object to this. A representative will be appointed by the school to keep the individual informed of progress of the case and to consider what other support is available and appropriate for the individual. Where a member of boarding, or other accommodated staff, is suspended pending an investigation of a child protection nature, arrangements for alternative accommodation away from children will be made for the member of staff.

The school will keep a clear and comprehensive record of all allegations made (unless they are found to be malicious), the action taken and decisions reached. The school will provide the accused person with a copy of the record following consultation with the appropriate agencies to agree what information can be disclosed. The record will be kept confidentially on the personnel file.

The Headmaster will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy where an allegation by a pupil is shown to be malicious or deliberately invented. The police may also be informed if there are grounds for believing a criminal offence may have been committed. Allegations found to be malicious will be removed from the personnel records; and any that are unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in references.

Disclosure of information: The case manager will inform the accused person of the allegation as soon as possible after the LADO has been consulted. The parents or carers of the pupil/pupils involved will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. Where the LADO advises that a strategy discussion is needed, or the police or the local authority's social care need to be involved, the case manager should not inform the accused or the parents or carers until those agencies have been consulted and it has been agreed what information can be disclosed. The parents or carers should be kept informed of the progress of the case, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The timing and extent of disclosures, and the terms on which they are made, will be dependent upon and subject to the laws on confidence and data protection and the advice of external agencies. The reporting restrictions preventing the identification of a teacher who is the subject of such an allegations in certain circumstances will be observed.

The School has a duty of care towards its employees and as such, it must ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. The School will take action in accordance with Part 4 of

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025) and Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

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 the law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025)*, the School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

Ceasing to use staff: If the School ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or Governor or volunteer) because they are unsuitable to work with children, a settlement/compromise agreement will not be used and a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be made as soon as possible if the criteria are met. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School, with a report being presented to the Governing Body without delay.

Reporting: The School will report promptly to the DBS any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to a child and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) with children, or would have been removed had he or she not left earlier.

A referral will also be made to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) where a teacher has been dismissed for misconduct (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned first). The reasons for such an order are: unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, or a conviction at any time for a relevant offence.

Unfounded, false or malicious allegations: Where an allegation by a pupil is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Headmaster will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the School's behaviour and discipline policy.

Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation the Headmaster will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children from the school on the basis that they have treated the School or a member of staff unreasonably.

Whether or not the person making the allegation is a pupil or parent (or other member of the public), the School reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

Record keeping: Details of an allegation will be recorded on the employee's file and retained at least until the employee reaches normal pension age or for a period of ten years from the date of the allegation, if this is longer, unless the allegation was found to have been malicious, in which case it will be removed from the employee's records. An allegation proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be referred to in employer references. In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025)* a history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will also not be included in any reference.



Low Level Concerns Policy

Rationale

This policy should be read in conjunction with Canford School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Staff Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy, to enable staff to share their concerns, no matter how small, about their own or another member of staff's behaviour.

The purpose of the policy is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour which are set out in the school's Code of Conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff. The school deals with all concerns about adults working in or behalf of the school appropriately and promptly.

The school seeks to create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below expected professional standards.

This policy seeks to

- ensure that staff are clear about, and confident to distinguish between, expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour – in themselves and others, and the delineation of professional boundaries and reporting lines
- empower staff to share any low-level concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- help staff address unprofessional behaviour and help the individual to correct such behaviour at an early stage
- identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour – including any patterns – that may need to be consulted upon with (on a no-names basis if appropriate), or referred to, the LADO
- provide for responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- help identify any weaknesses in the organisation's safeguarding system.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and Governors at Canford School.

Defining a Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is one that **does not** meet the harm threshold as stated in the school's Safeguarding Policy. That is, when anyone working in a school (including volunteers, supply staff and contractors) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or

- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (which includes behaviour that may have happened **outside** school posing a transferable risk to children).

Responses and actions to behaviours that may meet the harm threshold are contained specifically within the School's Safeguarding Policy. These should be reported to the Headmaster without delay. The Headmaster is the ultimate decision maker.

A low-level concern is **any** concern – **no matter how small**, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' (i.e. they believe it could be a concern) – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Responsibilities of staff

It is important that **all** staff are clear of the expectations the school stipulates from them as contained in the Staff Code of Conduct. This is covered annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and as part of the school's induction for new staff.

It is crucial that **any** concerns in relation to a staff member's behaviour, including those which do not meet the harm threshold, are shared responsibly and with the DSL. This should be done without delay. Where there are concerns/allegations about the Headmaster, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors (whose contact details can be found in the School's Safeguarding Policy document).

Staff members who are concerned about how their own behaviour may have been interpreted, or, on reflection, re-evaluate their own behaviour as contrary to the school's code of conduct and expectations, should feel able to self-refer to the DSL.

Dealing with Low-Level Concerns

All low-level concerns may be shared verbally with the DSL in the first instance, but must then be recorded in writing. The record should include:

- details of the concern
- the context in which the concern arose
- action taken

The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, but if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible. Where the low-level concern is provided verbally, the DSL should make an appropriate record of the conversation, either at the time or immediately following the discussion, paying heed to the details above. Records will be signed, timed and dated.

Records will remain confidential in accordance with the school's Data Protection policies and GDPR.

Responding to a Low-Level Concern

The DSL will in the first instance satisfy themselves that it is a low-level concern and should not be reclassified as a higher-level concern/allegation and dealt with under the appropriate procedure below.

The circumstances in which a low-level concern might be reclassified are where:

- (a) the threshold is met for a higher-level concern/allegation
- (b) there is a pattern of low-level concerns which collectively amount to a higher-level concern/allegation or
- (c) there is other information which when taken into account leads to a higher-level concern/allegation.

Where the DSL is in any doubt whatsoever, advice will be sought from the LADO, if necessary, on a 'no-names' basis.

Having established that the concern is low-level, the DSL will discuss it with the individual who has raised it and will take any other steps to investigate it as necessary. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the DSL should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help them to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All of this needs to be recorded, along with the rationale for their decisions and action taken. Reports about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Most low-level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor and will be dealt with by means of management guidance, training etc. In dealing with a low-level concern with a member of staff, this will be approached in a sensitive and proportionate way. In many cases, a low-level concern will simply require a conversation with the individual about whom the concern has been raised.

Details of the concern will be recorded along with the rationale for decisions and action taken. Any conversation with a member of staff following a concern will include being clear with the individual as to why their behaviour is concerning, problematic or inappropriate, what change is required in their behaviour, enquiring what, if any, support they might need in order to achieve and maintain that, and being clear about the consequences if they fail to reach the required standard or repeat the behaviour in question. Ongoing and transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour may be appropriate. An action plan or risk assessment may be required. Some concerns may trigger the school's disciplinary, grievance or whistleblowing procedures, which will be followed where appropriate. Some concerns may be related to performance management and advice may be sought from the school's HR manager.

Monitoring of Low-Level Concerns

The DSL will securely retain confidential files on low-level concerns. A central log will be shared and monitored by the school's Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis to ensure that all such concerns are being dealt with promptly and appropriately, and that any potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour are identified. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the Headmaster and DSL will decide on a course of action but the Headmaster is the ultimate decision maker. They will consider if any wider cultural issues in the school enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training given to minimise the risk of recurrence.

No record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file (and no mention made in job references) unless either:

- (a) the concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as a higher-level concern, or
- (b) the concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious to result in formal action under the school's grievance, capability or disciplinary procedure.

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing body in line with legislative changes, following an incident which may require us to amend certain aspects of the policy, and/or on an annual basis.

Staff are therefore asked to report any concerns with the procedures to one of the designated staff or the Headmaster immediately they become apparent.

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Signed by the Chair of Governors:

Date: 1st September 2025