HCAT

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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HCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Aims of this Policy

To ensure that children in HCAT schools are safeguarded effectively from harm and that their safety, welfare and wellbeing are central to all aspects of our work. We aim to maintain a culture where children, staff, parents, governors and trustees feel confident to raise concerns, knowing that they will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers, governors and trustees have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action to protect children. Our approach is child-centred and focused on the best interests of the child at all times.

No single professional can have a complete picture of a child's needs and circumstances. Effective safeguarding relies on timely identification of concerns, appropriate information sharing and collaborative working to ensure children receive the right help at the right time

Purpose of this Policy

This policy aims to ensure that all members of the school community:

- understand their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities and receive appropriate training;
- are aware of the safeguarding systems, policies and procedures in place, including the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- know how to recognise, report and respond to safeguarding concerns;
- understand the role of early help and their responsibilities within it;
- are able to recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- understand that children may not always be able to recognise or disclose abuse and that professional curiosity is essential;
- are able to reassure children that concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe; and
- contribute to a proactive safeguarding culture across the Trust.

1 Principles

1.1 This policy is written in accordance with the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the Children and Families Act 2014 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes.

1.2 HCAT recognises its legal and moral duty to safeguard children, protect them from harm and promote their welfare.

1.3 We believe every child has the right to feel safe, be protected from harm and have their voice heard. Children's views, wishes and feelings will be sought, listened to and considered in safeguarding decisions. Victims will always be taken seriously, supported and reassured that they are not responsible for the abuse they have experienced.

1.4 All staff, volunteers, governors and trustees share responsibility for safeguarding children. This responsibility extends to all aspects of school life, including learning, enrichment activities, pastoral care and extended provision.

1.5 HCAT seeks to create a culture in which children and families feel able to discuss concerns openly and access support when needed.

1.6 Children's concerns will always be taken seriously. Staff will listen carefully, record concerns appropriately and take action in accordance with safeguarding procedures. While staff will be honest and supportive, they cannot promise confidentiality where information needs to be shared to safeguard a child..

1.7 Where there are concerns that a child may be suffering, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation, staff will act immediately in line with Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. Staff recognise that children may communicate concerns in different ways, including through behaviour, indirect disclosures, friends or changes in presentation, and will not wait for a direct disclosure before taking action.

1.8 To fulfil these responsibilities, HCAT will:

- ensure safeguarding is a shared responsibility across the Trust;
- provide appropriate safeguarding training and updates for all staff, volunteers, governors and trustees;
- appoint suitably trained Designated Safeguarding Leads and deputies;
- maintain effective arrangements for identifying, recording and reporting concerns;
- work effectively with safeguarding partners and other agencies;
- promote the welfare of children through a safe and inclusive school environment;
- operate safer recruitment practices to ensure adults working with children are suitable to do so;
- act swiftly where concerns or allegations are raised about adults working with children; and
- ensure staff understand their role in identifying and supporting children who may benefit from early help.

2 Designated Member of Staff

2.1 The designated senior member(s) of staff (designated person) for safeguarding protection in this Trust is: **Tom Banham and for The Mill Academy is Lisa Clayton and Leyan Jones.**

2.2 In the absence of the CEO, or where concerns relate to the CEO, matters will be dealt with by:

Mr S Gallagher (Vice Chair of Trust)

In the absence of the Principal/Head of School, or where concerns relate to the Principal/Head of School, matters will be dealt with by:

Mr T Banham (CEO)

2.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the Trust. The DSL acts as a source of advice, expertise and support for staff and coordinates safeguarding activity within the school, including working with external agencies. Robust arrangements are in place to ensure appropriate safeguarding cover is available whenever the DSL is unavailable.

2.4 The Trust recognises that the DSL:

- must be a senior member of staff with the status and authority to carry out the duties of the role;
- is the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns raised by staff and volunteers;
- will coordinate safeguarding and child protection arrangements within the school;
- will work closely with children's social care, safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies;

- will receive appropriate training, support and regular updates to fulfil the role effectively; and
- is not responsible for managing allegations against staff. Such allegations will be managed by the Principal/Head of School or, where appropriate, the CEO.

2.5 The DSL will:

- provide advice, support and expertise on safeguarding matters;
- manage referrals and work with children's social care, the police and other agencies as appropriate;
- promote effective multi-agency working and implement guidance from the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- ensure all staff, volunteers and regular visitors understand safeguarding procedures and can access relevant policies;
- maintain accurate, confidential and secure safeguarding records;
- ensure safeguarding policies are reviewed annually and made available to parents and carers;
- oversee the secure transfer of child protection records when pupils move schools, in line with statutory timescales;
- notify the local authority when a child leaves roll and their destination is unknown or where appropriate safeguarding concerns exist; and
- ensure the views, wishes and feelings of children are understood and taken into account when making safeguarding decisions.

2.6 The DSL is also responsible for ensuring that safeguarding training and updates are provided to staff, volunteers, governors and trustees. The DSL will:

- undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and receive regular updates;
- maintain an up-to-date knowledge of local safeguarding procedures and multi-agency working arrangements;
- attend and contribute to child protection conferences and other multi-agency meetings where required; and
- ensure all staff, including new starters, governors, trustees, volunteers and supply staff, understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to report concerns.

3 Designated Governor and Trustee

The Designated Trustee for Safeguarding is: Mr SJ Gallagher

3.1 The Board of Trustees and Local Governing Bodies have strategic responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. They will ensure that:

- safeguarding arrangements are effective and comply with statutory requirements;
- sufficient resources are available to support safeguarding responsibilities;
- all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction and regular updates thereafter;
- their duties under the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are fulfilled.

3.2 Governors and Trustees will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is provided with sufficient time, funding, training, resources and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

3.3 Governors and Trustees will review safeguarding arrangements regularly, and at least annually, to ensure that:

- the school fulfils its safeguarding and child protection responsibilities;
- the Designated Safeguarding Governor meets termly with safeguarding leaders and maintains appropriate records of these meetings;

- staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training and updates;
- safeguarding forms part of the induction process for all staff and volunteers;
- the school follows the procedures and guidance of the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership and Local Authority;
- safer recruitment procedures are implemented and only suitable adults work with children; and
- safeguarding concerns or allegations relating to staff are managed appropriately in line with local and national guidance.

4 Designated Member of Staff for Looked after Children

4.1 The designated senior member of staff (designated person) for Looked after Children in this Trust is: Tom Banham and for The Mill Academy Georgina Shipp

4.2 The Trust will appoint an appropriately trained Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement, attendance, progress and wellbeing of children who are looked after and previously looked after, in accordance with statutory guidance and the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship orders, child arrangements orders, or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. Further information is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children

4.3 Virtual school heads

The Designated Teacher will work with the Virtual School Head and other relevant professionals to promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children and previously looked after children, including the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding.

Virtual School Heads also provide strategic support and advice in relation to children with a social worker and children in kinship care. Where a child has, or has previously had, a social worker, this will be considered when making decisions about safeguarding, attendance, pastoral support and educational provision.

5 Recruitment

5.1 HCAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We will ensure that all employees, trustees, governors, volunteers and contractors who work with children are recruited and selected using safer recruitment procedures.

5.2 In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the Trust Recruitment Policy, appropriate pre-employment checks will be completed before any individual commences work. These may include:

- verification of identity, right to work and professional qualifications;
- references and employment history checks, including consideration of any gaps in employment;
- enhanced DBS and barred list checks where required;
- prohibition, Section 128 and other relevant regulatory checks;
- childcare disqualification checks where applicable;
- online searches as part of the recruitment process;
- overseas checks and additional vetting for individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK, including, where appropriate, criminal record and professional conduct checks; and
- any other checks required by statutory guidance or legislation

5.3 Those involved in recruitment will receive appropriate safer recruitment training, and all recruitment processes will be undertaken in accordance with statutory guidance and Trust procedures.

5.4 The Trust maintains a Single Central Record in accordance with statutory requirements.

6 Volunteers

6.1 Volunteers play an important role within our schools and, as such, all volunteers will be recruited, vetted and managed in accordance with the Trust Recruitment Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. [

6.2 Appropriate safeguarding checks will be undertaken based on the nature of the role and the level of contact with children. Where a volunteer is undertaking regulated activity, the required DBS and barred list checks will be completed before they commence their role.

6.3 For volunteers who are not engaged in regulated activity, the school will undertake a risk assessment and determine what checks and level of supervision are appropriate. Volunteers will not be left unsupervised with children unless all required safeguarding checks have been completed.

7 Induction and Training

7.1 All new staff, volunteers and regular visitors will receive an appropriate induction, including safeguarding and child protection procedures, staff responsibilities, reporting concerns, confidentiality, the Staff Code of Conduct and the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs.

7.2 On induction, staff will be provided with access to this policy, Part One (and where appropriate Annex B) of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Children Missing Education Policy and any other safeguarding information relevant to their role.

7.3 All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection training appropriate to their role. This will be regularly updated and supplemented by safeguarding briefings and updates throughout the year to ensure staff remain aware of current safeguarding issues and local procedures.

7.4 The DSL and Deputy DSLs will undertake training in accordance with statutory requirements and maintain appropriate knowledge, skills and professional development to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

7.5 Supply staff, contractors and other regular visitors will be provided with safeguarding information appropriate to their role and length of placement, including details of safeguarding contacts and reporting procedures.

7.6 Governors, trustees, volunteers and other adults who work regularly with children will be encouraged to undertake safeguarding training relevant to their role.

7.7 All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves through child-on-child abuse, including bullying (including cyberbullying), sexual violence, sexual harassment, physical abuse, upskirting, the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, and initiation or hazing-type behaviours. Staff must understand that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and that such behaviour is never acceptable.

7.8 All staff should be aware of indicators that a child may be at risk of serious violence, criminal exploitation or involvement in gangs. Warning signs may include changes in behaviour, poor attendance, unexplained injuries, self-harm, declining wellbeing, unexplained gifts or possessions, or association with individuals involved in criminal activity. Staff should also understand the risk factors associated with serious violence and criminal exploitation and act on any concerns in line with this policy.

7.9 The Trust will have regard to relevant government guidance relating to serious violence, criminal exploitation and county lines and will ensure staff are aware of emerging safeguarding risks.

8 Dealing with Concerns

8.1 All staff, volunteers and visitors have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns. Staff are not expected to investigate concerns themselves. If a child is suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, harm, the concern must be reported immediately in line with Trust procedures. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm, a

referral should be made immediately to Children's Social Care and/or the Police. Anyone can make a referral, but where this is not completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the DSL must be informed as soon as possible.

A 'Cause for Concern' is any action, observation, disclosure or discussion that raises concerns about a child's safety, welfare or wellbeing. Any incidents or allegations involving Foundation Stage children will be managed in accordance with EYFS requirements.

8.2 All safeguarding concerns must be recorded promptly on CPOMS. Where this is not possible, concerns must be recorded in writing and shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL at the earliest opportunity.

The DSL or Deputy DSL will determine and record any actions taken. Safeguarding records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved; and
- a record of actions taken, decisions reached and outcomes.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely and reviewed regularly by safeguarding leaders to monitor progress, evaluate impact, agree next steps and quality assure record keeping.

Where appropriate, staff will consider the wider context of safeguarding concerns, including incidents occurring outside school and extra-familial harms such as child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, financial exploitation and serious youth violence.

8.3 If a member of staff believes that a safeguarding concern has not been dealt with appropriately, they should raise the matter with the DSL. If concerns remain, they should follow the Trust's escalation procedures, including contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.

8.4 The Trust will ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities for recording, reporting and sharing safeguarding concerns in accordance with Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and this policy.

8.5 Failure to report a safeguarding concern or follow safeguarding procedures may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

9 Safeguarding in our Schools

9.1 HCAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. In addition to responding to child protection concerns, we take a proactive approach to creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment in which children can learn, develop and thrive.

9.2 This policy should be read alongside the Trust's other safeguarding-related policies and procedures, including:

- PSHE and Relationships Education/RSE policies;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Child-on-Child Abuse (including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment) Policy;
- Recruitment and Selection Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Equality Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Use of Reasonable Force and Restraint Policy;
- Allegations Against Staff Policy;
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policies;

- Information Governance and Data Protection Policies;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Induction Policy; and
- Children Missing Education Policy.

Through these policies and the wider curriculum, schools promote children's safety, wellbeing and understanding of safeguarding issues, including online safety, bullying, discrimination, extremism, healthy relationships and child-on-child abuse.

10 Photographing Children

10.1 Parents and carers are welcome to take photographs or videos of their children at school events and performances for personal use. The school may place reasonable restrictions on photography where there are safeguarding, privacy or health and safety concerns.

10.2 Visitors, volunteers, contractors and external professionals must not photograph or film pupils without prior authorisation from the school and, where required, appropriate parental consent.

10.3 Images of pupils will only be used on school websites, social media, publicity materials or press releases where appropriate consent has been obtained and in accordance with the Trust's data protection and information governance procedures.

10.4 Whilst the school will take reasonable steps to promote the safe use of images, it cannot be held responsible for photographs or video recordings taken by parents or members of the public at school events.

11 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

11.1 The school, and all members of staff, will process, store and share safeguarding information in accordance with data protection laws, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling abuse, neglect, exploitation and promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Staff will be proactive in sharing information at the earliest opportunity where there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

11.2 The Trust recognises the importance of effective information sharing between schools, colleges, children's social care, safeguarding partners, health services, the police and other relevant agencies. Arrangements are in place to ensure staff understand when, why and how information should be shared to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

11.3 When deciding what information to share, staff will ensure it is relevant, necessary, proportionate and appropriately contextualised to support safeguarding decision-making. Professional judgement will be used to ensure that information shared is focused on the needs and safety of the child.

11.4 Any member of staff who has access to sensitive information about a child or their family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only shared with those who need to know. Relationships and associations that staff have in school and outside of school (including online) which may have implications for safeguarding must be disclosed to the school.

11.5 Staff should be confident that data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Consent is not always required where there is a lawful basis to share information and where doing so will protect a child from harm. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to prevent appropriate action being taken to safeguard children.

11.6 Regardless of any duty of confidentiality, if a member of staff believes that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm, they must share this information immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy

DSL. The DSL will determine appropriate next steps, including any referrals to external agencies. Parents will normally be informed unless doing so would place the child at increased risk of harm.

11.7 Where a child leaves the school, the DSL (or Deputy DSL) will ensure that the child protection file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file to the receiving school or college as soon as possible, and within statutory timescales. Where appropriate, information may also be shared in advance to support effective safeguarding, risk assessment and pastoral support arrangements. Where known safeguarding concerns or risks to others exist, relevant information will be shared to enable the receiving school or college to undertake appropriate risk assessments and implement suitable safety and support plans.

11.8 Online Safety

As schools increasingly work online, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online content. The Trust ensures that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and regularly reviewed. Whilst filtering and monitoring form an important part of online safety, we adopt a whole-school approach which includes education, staff training, effective policies and appropriate use of mobile technology.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools

Further information is provided in Appendix 4.

12 Conduct of Staff

12.1 The Trust expects all staff, volunteers, governors and trustees to maintain high standards of professional conduct and appropriate boundaries when working with children. All adults must act in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct and safeguarding procedures.

12.2 Staff should be aware of the risks associated with:

- working alone with children;
- physical intervention;
- cultural and gender stereotyping;
- handling sensitive information;
- gifts and personal relationships with pupils and families;
- communication with pupils outside approved school systems;
- inappropriate disclosure of personal information; and
- contact with pupils outside school duties.

12.3 Any member of staff who has concerns that a child may be suffering harm must act in accordance with this policy and local safeguarding procedures. Failure to do so may be treated as misconduct.

12.4 All staff are required to adhere to the HCAT Staff Code of Conduct. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct or safeguarding procedures may result in disciplinary action.

12.5 The Trust operates a Whistleblowing Policy to support a culture in which staff and pupils can raise concerns confidently, knowing they will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

12.6 Schools provide a range of opportunities for pupils to raise concerns, including through trusted adults, pastoral and wellbeing services, school councils, pupil voice activities and other established reporting mechanisms.

13 Physical Contact and Restraining

13.1 On occasion, staff may need to use reasonable and proportionate physical intervention to prevent a child from harming themselves or others, damaging property, or causing serious disruption. Any use of physical intervention will

be lawful, necessary, proportionate and carried out in accordance with the Trust's Use of Reasonable Force and Restraint Policy.

14 Safeguarding concerns and Allegations made about Staff, including Supply Teachers, Trainee Teachers, Volunteers and Contractors

14.1 Any concern or allegation that an adult working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers, governors, trustees or contractors) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children,
- will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

14.2 The Principal/Head of School will manage allegations against staff. Allegations concerning the Principal/Head of School will be managed by the CEO. Concerns regarding the CEO will be referred to the Chair/Vice Chair of Trustees.

14.3 All allegations that meet the harm threshold will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay. The school will follow the advice of the LADO and work with relevant agencies throughout any investigation.

14.4 The school will ensure that allegations relating to supply staff are managed appropriately and in partnership with the supply agency. The use of a supply teacher will not be ceased solely because of safeguarding concerns without first establishing the facts and consulting the LADO.

14.5 Where required, the Trust will make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and, where appropriate, the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

14.6 HCAT promotes an open and transparent culture in which concerns about adults working with children are addressed promptly, appropriately and proportionately.

14.7 Low-level concerns are concerns about an adult's behaviour that do not meet the harm threshold but may be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct. Such concerns will be reported, recorded, reviewed and managed appropriately in accordance with Trust procedures.

14.8 Staff are encouraged to self-report any incident which may be perceived as a breach of professional standards or which could be misinterpreted by others.

14.9 Staff must inform HR of any personal social care involvement. This will be shared with the Principal/Head of School where appropriate to assess any potential safeguarding implications.

15 Allegations made by a Child against another Child

15.1 Allegations, reports or concerns relating to child-on-child abuse, including where a child may have committed an offence against another child or placed another child at risk of harm, will be taken seriously and managed promptly, sensitively and in accordance with national and local safeguarding procedures. The safety and wellbeing of all children involved will remain paramount.

Where appropriate, the school will work with Children's Social Care, the Police and other relevant agencies to assess and manage risk, support those affected and determine appropriate next steps.

As part of our commitment to prevention and early intervention, students may be signposted to appropriate support services, including Shore Space, which provides confidential support for young people concerned about sexual thoughts, feelings or behaviours.

Any allegation involving a child in the Early Years Foundation Stage will be managed in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework.

16 Before and After School Activities

16.1 Where school premises are used by external organisations to provide activities for children outside normal school hours, the Trust will ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection arrangements are in place. Safeguarding expectations will be reflected in contracts or service level agreements, and failure to comply may result in the termination of the arrangement.

17 Contracted Services

17.1 Where services are provided by external organisations, the Trust will ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection arrangements are in place. Safeguarding requirements will be included within contracts or service level agreements, and any failure to meet these expectations may result in termination of the agreement.

18 Alternative Provision

18.1 Where a school places a pupil in alternative provision, it remains responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of that pupil and must be satisfied that the placement is safe, suitable and able to meet the pupil's needs. Schools will obtain written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed and that the provider will notify the school of any changes that may affect safeguarding arrangements.

18.2 Schools will undertake appropriate due diligence and maintain oversight of all placements. Alternative provision placements will be reviewed regularly, and at least half-termly, to ensure that the pupil remains safe, attends regularly and that the provision continues to meet their needs. Any safeguarding concerns will be reviewed immediately and appropriate action taken.

The Trust follows DfE guidance relating to Alternative Provision and Education for Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school.

19 Elective Home Education

19.1 Whilst many parents choose Elective Home Education (EHE) in their child's best interests, the Trust recognises that some children educated at home may become less visible to the services that help keep them safe.

Where a child is removed from roll, the school will notify the Local Authority in accordance with statutory requirements and work with parents, carers and relevant agencies where appropriate. Referrals to other services will be made where safeguarding concerns are identified.

20 Parents and Carers

20.1 This policy is available on the school website and paper copies are available on request.

21 Provision to help Pupils stay safe

21.1 Safeguarding is embedded throughout the curriculum and wider life of the school. Children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, healthy relationships, mental wellbeing, bullying, discrimination and how to seek help when needed.

Through PSHE, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, pupils are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to keep themselves and others safe.

Additional support is provided for pupils who may require it through targeted pastoral, social and emotional interventions, alongside partnership working with families and external agencies.

Schools also promote safeguarding through pupil leadership opportunities, pupil voice activities, anti-bullying work and a range of enrichment activities which encourage children to contribute positively to school life and develop safe, responsible behaviours.

Further information can be found in the statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

Appendix 1 - Safeguarding Children: Whistle Blowing

All staff have a responsibility to raise concerns about poor practice, inappropriate behaviour or safeguarding issues. This is particularly important where the welfare or safety of a child may be at risk. Staff should not allow concerns about loyalty, relationships, fear of repercussions or uncertainty to prevent them from raising a concern.

Remember: don't think "What if I'm wrong?" – think "What if I'm right?"

Why Raise Concerns?

Staff should raise concerns to:

- safeguard children and young people;
- prevent harm or further risk;
- address poor practice or misconduct;
- support a culture of openness and accountability; and
- avoid becoming implicated in unsafe practice.

Raising a Concern

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible.

Staff should:

- discuss the concern with the Principal/Head of School;
- contact the Chair of Governors, CEO or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if the concern relates to senior leaders or they feel unable to raise it internally;
- provide as much factual information as possible, including relevant dates, times and circumstances; and
- continue to escalate concerns if they do not believe appropriate action has been taken.

Staff are not expected to prove an allegation but should have reasonable grounds for concern.

What Happens Next?

The Trust will:

- take concerns seriously and investigate appropriately;
- provide feedback where possible and appropriate;
- protect staff from harassment, victimisation or detrimental treatment where concerns are raised in good faith; and
- treat malicious or deliberately false allegations as a potential disciplinary matter.

Self-Reporting

Staff should inform their line manager of any personal circumstances, including physical or mental health difficulties, that may affect their professional practice or ability to safeguard children effectively. Appropriate support will be offered wherever possible.

Advice and Support

The Trust recognises that raising concerns can be difficult. Advice and support are available from line managers, HR, trade unions and professional associations.

Staff who do not feel able to raise concerns internally, or who are concerned about the way a safeguarding issue has been handled, can contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:

Telephone: 0800 028 0285

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/

Challenge poor practice wherever it occurs. Failing to act can allow concerns to escalate and place children at greater risk.

Appendix 2 – Safeguarding Issues affecting children.

Further information regarding these and other safeguarding issues can be found within Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and associated government guidance.

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can overlap and that children may be vulnerable to multiple forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation at the same time. Staff should always consider the wider context of a child's circumstances when assessing concerns.

Children and the Court System

Children may be required to give evidence in criminal or family court proceedings. Age-appropriate guidance is available to support children through the court process. Family court proceedings can be stressful for children and may impact their wellbeing.

Children Missing Education

Children who are absent from education, particularly repeatedly or for prolonged periods, may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health concerns, substance misuse, county lines involvement, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) or honour-based abuse.

HCAT operates robust attendance procedures, including first-day absence contact and appropriate follow-up where concerns arise. Where a child cannot be located, safeguarding procedures will be followed in line with the Attendance Policy and local safeguarding arrangements.

Children with Family Members in Prison

Children with a parent or close family member in prison can experience a range of challenges including stigma, isolation, poverty and poor mental health. Schools should consider how best to support these children.

Homelessness

Homelessness or the risk of homelessness can significantly impact a child's welfare and wellbeing. Staff should be alert to indicators such as debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour or housing instability. Appropriate referrals should be made to housing services and children's social care where necessary. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

Children with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities or Health Conditions

Children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Staff should be aware that barriers to communication and differing presentations may make abuse or neglect harder to identify.

Children who are LGBT+

Being LGBT+ is not in itself a safeguarding concern. However, LGBT+ children may be at increased risk of bullying, prejudice or discrimination. Staff should ensure that all children feel safe, included and supported, and have access to trusted adults should they need help or advice

Appendix 3: Definitions and Symptoms of Abuse

Appendix 3 provides a high-level overview of the main categories of abuse, common indicators and other safeguarding concerns that staff may encounter. It is not intended to be an exhaustive guide. Staff should refer to Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 for detailed information about specific safeguarding issues, harm indicators and statutory guidance. All staff are expected to be familiar with Part One of KCSIE and should access Annex A where further information is required.

There are four main categories of abuse: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. Abuse can occur online or offline and children may experience more than one type of abuse at the same time. The indicators listed below are not exhaustive and should always be considered alongside the child's circumstances and wider context.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also occur where a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child.

Possible indicators include:

- unexplained injuries, bruising or burns;
- frequent injuries or changing explanations;
- fear of physical contact;
- aggressive behaviour or use of threats;
- withdrawal, regression or anxiety; and
- reluctance to go home.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Possible indicators include:

- poor hygiene or inappropriate clothing;
- persistent hunger or tiredness;
- unmet medical needs;
- poor supervision;
- low self-esteem; and
- concerns regarding attendance, behaviour or development.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening. It can occur online and offline and may be perpetrated by adults or other children.

Possible indicators include:

- age-inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language;
- sudden changes in behaviour;
- over-familiarity with adults;
- physical signs of abuse;
- inappropriate sexual knowledge; and
- excessive secrecy around online activity.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse.

Possible indicators include:

- prolonged absence from school;
- difficulty walking, sitting or standing;
- spending longer in bathrooms;
- reluctance to participate in physical activities; and
- emotional or behavioural changes following travel abroad.

Teachers have a statutory duty to report known cases of FGM in girls under 18 directly to the police.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe and lasting adverse effects on their emotional development.

Possible indicators include:

- low self-esteem;
- withdrawal from peers;
- anxiety or fearfulness;
- aggression or challenging behaviour;
- self-harm; and
- difficulty forming relationships.

Children who witness domestic abuse may also experience emotional abuse.

Other Safeguarding Concerns

All staff should be aware of a range of safeguarding issues that may place children at risk of harm. These include:

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines;
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE);
- Child-on-Child Abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Serious Violence;
- Mental Health difficulties;
- Missing Education;
- Online Safety and the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (including AI-generated images);
- Modern Slavery and Trafficking;
- Honour Based Abuse, including Forced Marriage and FGM;
- Radicalisation and Extremism;
- Homelessness;
- Private Fostering; and
- Substance Misuse.

Staff should remain alert to safeguarding indicators and report concerns immediately in accordance with this policy.

Operation Encompass

HCAT participates in Operation Encompass, which enables schools and police to work together to provide early support for children affected by domestic abuse.

Information received through Operation Encompass will be handled confidentially, stored securely and used only for safeguarding purposes. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will oversee all notifications and ensure appropriate support is offered to affected children and families.

Mental Health

Good mental health is fundamental to children's wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

All staff should be aware that mental health difficulties may become safeguarding concerns and may also be indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation. This may include self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide.

Staff should be alert to:

- significant changes in behaviour;
- withdrawal from social situations;
- sleep difficulties;
- self-harm;
- neglect of personal care; and
- loss of interest in usual activities.

Where mental health concerns are also safeguarding concerns, staff must follow safeguarding procedures and speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Children can abuse other children and all allegations or concerns will be taken seriously.

Child-on-child abuse can include:

- bullying and cyberbullying;
- physical abuse;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- upskirting;
- initiation or hazing behaviours; and
- the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes.

HCAT maintains a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and will never dismiss harmful behaviour as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". Victims will be supported and all incidents will be managed in accordance with our Child-on-Child Abuse Policy.

Appendix 4 – The Use of Technology

Technology plays a significant role in many safeguarding concerns, including child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, online abuse and harmful sexual behaviour. HCAT adopts a whole-school approach to online safety, ensuring children are protected and educated in their use of technology, and that concerns are identified, reported and managed appropriately. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

Online risks can be grouped into four key areas:

- Content – exposure to harmful, inappropriate or illegal content, including extremism, pornography, violence, self-harm, misogyny, racism, misinformation and disinformation.
- Contact – harmful interactions with others online, including grooming, exploitation, coercion and online bullying.
- Conduct – behaviours that increase the likelihood of harm, including cyberbullying and the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
- Commerce – financial risks including scams, phishing, inappropriate advertising and online gambling.

Protecting children

The Trust will take all reasonable steps to limit children's exposure to online risks through:

- appropriate filtering and monitoring systems;
- effective cyber security arrangements;
- age-appropriate online safety education;
- staff training and awareness;
- acceptable use and mobile technology policies; and
- regular review of online safety arrangements.

Filtering and monitoring form one part of a wider safeguarding approach. The Trust recognises that children may access the internet through personal devices and therefore promotes safe and responsible online behaviour both in a Staff Training.

All staff receive online safety training as part of safeguarding induction and ongoing professional development. Staff are expected to understand their responsibilities in relation to online safety, filtering and monitoring, and to respond appropriately to online safeguarding concerns.

Additional Guidance and Resources

Further information can be found through:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- Thinkuknow (NCA/CEOP)
- Education for a Connected World Framework
- NSPCC Online Safety Resources
- PSHE Association Guidancend outside school.