



THE ROWANS SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It should be read in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage Policy.

The Rowans School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

School contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Mrs Rachel Hood Deputy Head and Year 2 Class Teacher	Tel: 0208 946 8220 Mob: 07592774933 Email: r.hood@rowans.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Miss Camilla Walters Year 1 Class Teacher and Assessment Lead	Tel: 0208 946 8220 Email: c.walters@rowans.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Miss Rose Fookes Head	Tel: 0208 946 8220 Email: r.fookes@rowans.org.uk
Chair of Governors The Rt Hon Lord (Edward) Vaizey	Tel: 0208 946 8220 Email: vaizeye@stpaulsschool.org.uk Mail: c/o The Rowans School, 19 Drax Avenue, Wimbledon, SW20 0EG
Nominated Safeguarding Governor Mrs Naomi McLaughlin	Tel: 0208 946 8220 Email: njm@stpaulsschool.org.uk Mail: c/o The Rowans School, 19 Drax Avenue, Wimbledon, SW20 0EG

Key contact details

Police (emergency) 999

Local Police (non-emergency) 101

Merton Children and Families Hub
12th Floor, Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden, SM4 5DX

Tel: 020 8545 4226 or 020 8545 4227
Outside of normal working hours: 020 8770 5000
E-mail: candfhub@merton.gov.uk

Merton general schools advice
(School Standards and Quality)

Tel: 020 8545 3922
ssq@merton.gov.uk

Merton LADO

lado@merton.gov.uk
Tel: 020 8545 3179
Tel: 0208 247 8900

Merton Prevent police officer

christopher.duffield@met.pnn.police.uk

Merton vulnerable children contact

Tel: 020 8545 3922
vctmanager@merton.gov.uk

Kingston and Richmond Single Point of Access
(SPA)

Tel: 0208 547 5008
Outside of normal working hours: 020 8770 5000
E-mail:
spa.referrals.richmond@achievingforchildren.gov.uk

Wandsworth

Tel: 020 8871 6622
Outside of normal working hours: 020 8871 6000
Email: mash@wandsworth.gov.uk

Hammersmith and Fulham

Tel: 020 8753 6600
Outside of normal working hours: 020 8748 8588
Email: Familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk

Westminster

Tel: 020 7641 4000
Out of hours: 020 7641 2388
Email:
accesstochildreancesservices@westminster.gov.uk

Channel Non-Emergency Advice

Tel: 0207 3407264

Other useful resources and websites

Prevent: The Department of Education dedicated telephone helpline (0207 340 7264).

Concerns can also be raised by email to: counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

OFSTED Safeguarding Children

Tel: 08456 404046 (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)
Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

Tel: 0800 028 0285 (M-F, 8am-8pm)
Email: help@nspcc.or.uk (email)

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.

The Teaching Regulation Agency Tel: 0370 000 2288

Related policies and procedures

- Safe Touch Guidance
- Sun Protection Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Visitors and Signing In Procedures
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Computing Policy
- Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- PSHE/SMSC Policy
- Behaviour & Discipline Policy

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1. Introduction and purpose

This policy has been authorised by the Governors, is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers, is available to parents on request and is published on the school website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils even when this is away from the school, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit. It also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2024) (KCSiE) defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge, protecting children from maltreatment, inside or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and the best interests of the child are paramount. The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires everyone who comes into contact with children and their families to share this commitment.

It is also important that all relevant agencies involved in child protection cooperate together for the benefit of the child. All schools have a designated person or people responsible for safeguarding and child protection, who liaises with Children's Services departments, other external agencies and with all staff in school. For this procedure to work, it relies on the skills and expertise of every teacher, teaching assistant and adult within school to recognise or report concerns. All staff should have total commitment to child protection.

All staff, through their care of children, try to ensure that children keep safe, remain healthy and are able to say "No". Suspected cases are reported, procedures adhered to and subsequent actions are left to the appropriate agencies. We also care for children who have been abused and understand their problems.

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) (Sept 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023)
- EYFS Statutory Framework (January 2024)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (February 2015, updated August 2018)
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (March 2015, updated December 2023)
- Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism (2015)
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM (2016, updated July 2020)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners (2015)
- Information sharing: Her Majesty's Government advice for professionals providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2015, updated July 2018)
- UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) guidance: Sexting in schools and colleges (2016) (title updated to Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for settings working with children and young people (2020)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- Meeting digital technology standards in schools and colleges (2023)
- DfE Data Protection guidance for schools (DfE, 2024b)

The Governing Body takes seriously its responsibility to both safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering harm.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
- to equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm, including online, and to know to whom they should turn for help;
- to provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, valued and respected, and feel confident and to know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be listened to;
- to raise awareness among all teaching and non-teaching staff, including supply staff, of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse;
- to provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children;
- to maintain an 'it could happen here' attitude towards safeguarding;
- to develop a structured procedure within the school which, in cases of suspected abuse, will be followed by all members of the school community;
- to develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Children's Services;
- to ensure that all adults within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The school's Governing Body has appointed a member of staff of the school's leadership team with the necessary status and authority to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) shall be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to enable him/her to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children. The DSL and DDSL receive Level Three training every two years, plus termly updates at DSL Forums.

The name and contact details of the DSL and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) are set out in the School Contacts list at the front of this policy. If the DSL is unavailable, the activities of the DSL will be carried out by the DDSL. In this policy, references to the DSL includes the DDSL where the DSL is unavailable.

Parents are welcome to approach the DSL if they have any concerns about the welfare of any child in the school, whether these concerns relate to their own child or any other. This includes concerns related to online behaviour. If preferred, parents can discuss concerns in private with the child's form teacher or the Head who will notify the DSL in accordance with these procedures.

The duties of the DSL and DDSL are laid out in details in their job description and include Online Safety. In accordance with Annex C of KCSiE, the main responsibilities of the DSL are:

Managing referrals: The DSL is expected to:

- DSLs should help promote educational outcomes by working closely with their teachers and sharing information about their welfare, safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- Take a holistic approach to support the child's needs, ensuring their wishes and feeling are considered.
- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- support staff who make referrals to the local authority children's social care;
- refer cases to the Channel Programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- support staff who make referrals to the Channel Programme;
- in conjunction with Human Resources Department, refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosures and Barring Service as required; and,
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the police as required.

Work with others: The DSL is expected to:

- liaise with the Head to inform him/her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Guidance – [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C revised 2019](#) - Code of Practice for the detention, treatment and questioning of persons by Police Officers.
- as required, liaise with the Case Manager and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member); and
- liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that the children's needs are considered holistically
- Ensure that the school will be included in statutory discussions in cases of child on child abuse.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff;
- work closely with other Mental Health Leads.
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances;
- work with the Head and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school.

This includes:

- ensuring that the school knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; and,
- support teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.
- be in regular contact with parents and carers. These communications will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the Shrewsbury House School Trust Online Safety Policy
- Provide support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online which currently includes:
 - Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - London Grid for Learning - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - Net-aware - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
 - Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
 - UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers
 - National Online Safety website

Raising awareness: The DSL should:

- ensure this policy is known, understood and used appropriately;
- ensure this policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the Governing Body regarding this;
- ensure this policy is available publicly;
- ensure that parents are aware that referrals about suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation may be made to children's social care and the school's role in this; and
- maintain links with the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

DSL Training: The DSL should:

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training will be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead will undertake Prevent awareness training. Training will provide designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care, so they:

- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- 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;
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and within the SHS Trust, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners;
- keep records of concerns, discussions and decisions and a record of the rationale for any decisions made
- The DSL and Deputy DSL receive Level Three training every two years and termly updates at DSL meetings.
- are 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;
- understand and support the school and SHS Trust 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;
- are 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 either in school or at home
- take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place at the school
- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online
- 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. In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role
- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements;
- have 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;

Child protection file

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and is stored securely in a locked filing cabinet. Each child has their own file containing referrals and /or concerns raised.

Where children leave the school, to ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible and within 5 days for an in year transfer or 5 days at the start of a new term. This will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

Prevent Duty

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 DSL has, in addition, the following responsibilities:

- to act 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;
- to coordinate Prevent Duty procedures in the school;
- to complete and action the Prevent Duty Risk Assessment/Action Plan;
- to liaise with local Prevent co-ordinators, the police and local authorities and through existing multiagency forums, including referrals to the Channel Police Practitioner and/or the police where indicated;
- to undergo Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) and other appropriate training;
- to maintain an on-going training programme for all school employees including induction training for all new employees and keeping records of staff training;
- to monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to the Prevent Duty.

The DSL and the DDSL have undertaken training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training includes Prevent awareness training and will be updated at least every two years. In addition, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing Early Help and intervention, for example through the current locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as Early Help assessments;
- have a working and current 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;
- ensure each member of staff has access to and understand this policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff;
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs in particular and young carers;
- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- understand and support the school with regard 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;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses;
- encourage among staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings and a willingness to act upon any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

4. Duties of staff, Governors and volunteers

The Governing Body ensures that:

- there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare;
- the school's safeguarding arrangements take into account the current procedures and practice of the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, including understanding and reflecting local protocols for assessment and the referral threshold document: Merton CC Children's Services Threshold Document – Safeguarding Children Unit, particularly as they evolve.
- all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction which will be regularly updated and in line with advice from the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership; and
- the school contributes to inter-agency working, including providing a co-ordinated offer of Early Help when additional needs of children are identified and support to children subject to child protection plans.
- The whole governing body has ownership of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including people who lease parts of the school. The Governing Body has nominated one of its members to take leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements. The name and contact details of the Nominated Safeguarding Governor are set out in the School Contacts list at the front of this policy.
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place. Governors will ensure that the Senior Leadership Team and relevant staff are aware of the systems, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.
- Termly Safeguarding Committee meetings review the DSLs report and information is feedback to the full Governing Board by the Nominated Safeguarding Governor as appropriate.
- A risk assessment analysing the risk of radicalisation at The Rowans School has been completed.
- All members of staff and the Nominated Safeguarding Governor know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse (see procedures below)
- Our selection and recruitment of staff includes checks for their suitability with the Disclosure and Barring Service (See The Rowans School Safer Recruitment Policy).
- A Curriculum Vitae (CV) will not be accepted, unless alongside a full application form from anyone applying for a vacancy. As part of the background checks carried out, the school will consider an online search for shortlisted candidates.
- Pre-employment checks are carried out on all employees including supply and peripatetic staff.
- The obligation to complete a risk assessment on any volunteers to establish if an enhanced DBS check is required is understood.
- Where appropriate, in the case of the Head or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, an S128 would be completed, even if this individual was promoted internally.
- Where staff from another organisation are working with our pupils on another site, we require written confirmation that appropriate safe recruitment checks and procedures have been completed on those staff.
- Whilst this does not currently apply, the School understands our obligations to establish appropriate assurances from any alternative provider that they have completed all the vetting and barring checks that are necessary on their staff. The school understands that they continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil.

- The School will comply with The Human Rights Act 1998 setting out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the United Kingdom is entitled to. It is unlawful for schools to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, specifically:
Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination,
Article 2: protects the right to education.
- The School is aware that it will contravene the Equality Act 2010 by discriminating against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).
- All staff receive a copy of the Staff Code of Conduct.
- All staff will receive a copy of this policy and Part 1 and, where appropriate, Annex B of KCSiE, and will be required to confirm that they have read these.
- Any staff who do not directly work with children will be issued with Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.
- All Governors will receive appropriate safeguarding training at induction and then at regular intervals. Training should provide them with the knowledge to ensure their school's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective.
- The booklet "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" (March 2015) is available for all staff to read on the internal electronic I:drive.
- The DSL's and DDSL's names are clearly displayed around the school.
- All staff have a wallet-sized "What to Do" card to use, if they suspect or are told about abuse.
- The Registrar, through the Admissions process ensures that a minimum of two emergency contact details are recorded for each child joining The Rowans.

5. Training

All training will be carried out in accordance with the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

All new staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with induction training that includes:

- this policy;
- the Staff Code of Conduct including the Whistleblowing Procedure and Acceptable Use Policy;
- the role of the DSL and his/her identity and contact details, together with that of the DDSL;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection training in accordance with Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures;
- Part 1 and Annex B of KCSiE and
- appropriate Prevent Duty training
- Online Safety
- The Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Missing Child Policy

All staff that work at The Rowans School receive integrated Safeguarding and Child Protection training to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse. Training is annual and updates are given on a regular basis. All staff are taught the procedure for referring concerns. Training will include guidance on the duties of staff in relation to both children in need and children at risk of harm, including when required the use of restraint and any particular guidance relating to SEND children within the setting.

Staff training will also include Online Safety and the Prevent Duty.

Staff and governors will have training to understand what filtering and monitoring is, to understand that it is in place to prevent children accessing inappropriate and harmful content online while pupils are in school.

Additionally, the school will make an assessment of the appropriate level and focus for staff training and responsiveness to specific safeguarding concerns such as radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, cyber-bullying and mental health.

The Governing Body will receive appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

The school has mechanisms in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities and to ensure that they have the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively, including questionnaires, staff meetings, professional development reviews.

6. Reasons for following procedures

- It protects the child to the best of our ability.
- It avoids delay.
- It provides consistency.
- It ensures that, if further action is taken by another agency then the school has followed the correct procedures.

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. They must not think that by voicing concern they are necessarily starting procedures. The criteria should be that they have 'reasonable suspicion' under the Children Act 1989, this definition has been extended to include or 'may suffer in future'.

Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the school will be taken seriously. It is very important in these cases that prompt and correct procedures are followed under the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.

7. Procedures

Types of abuse: The child protection training provided to staff considers the types and signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation of which staff should be aware. Further details are set out in Appendix 1.

Staff members working with children should 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. The particular vulnerability of children who have a social worker is recognised by staff.

Guidance for staff: A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse, neglect or exploitation:

- must listen carefully to the child 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 child 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 must be signed by the person making it and should use names not initials and their name should also be printed as the signature may not be easily identified.

8. Recording the concern

Staff must record all concerns about a child in writing. Records should be factual and signed and dated, with the name of the signatory clearly printed in writing.

Records should include:

- the child's details: name, date of birth, address and family details;
- date and time of the event/concern;
- the action taken and by whom; the name and position of the person making the record.
- details on follow up and resolution

The school has a pro forma record which should be completed and passed on when reporting the matter in accordance with this policy. This pro forma is available on the school's internal, electronic teachers' I drive. The record can be completed before or after an initial discussion with the DSL and, where appropriate, completed with the DSL.

If members of staff are ever unsure, they must always speak to the DSL.

9. Early Help

The school understands that "Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area" – Working together to safeguard children, December 2023.

The school's safeguarding training includes guidance about the Early Help process and prepares all staff to identify children who may benefit from Early Help. Staff are mindful of specific safeguarding issues and those pupils who may face additional safeguarding challenges.

Professionals should be alert to the need for early help for a child who:

- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care

- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
- has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending.

A member of staff or volunteer who considers that a pupil may benefit from Early Help should, in the first instance, discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will consider the appropriate action to take in accordance with the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership referral threshold document and will support staff in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

If Early Help is appropriate, the matter will be kept under review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving.

10. Concerns about a pupil's welfare

If a member of staff is concerned about a pupil's welfare, the matter should be reported to the DSL or DDSL immediately. See Section 13 for procedures when dealing with allegations against teachers, the Head, governors, supply staff, volunteers and other staff. On being notified of a concern, the DSL will consider the appropriate course of action in accordance with the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership referral threshold document. Such action may include Early Help or a referral to Merton Council's children's social care.

We are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened.

This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This will not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

If it is decided that a referral is not required, the DSL will keep the matter under review and consideration will be given to a referral to children's social care if the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving.

Staff are reminded that normal referral processes must be used when there are concerns about children who may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

In accordance with these procedures, if a member of staff has a concern about a child, there should be a conversation with the DSL to agree a course of action where possible. However, any member of staff can make a referral to children's social care. If a referral is made by someone other than the DSL, the DSL should be informed of the referral as soon as possible.

11. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm

If a pupil is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Anybody can make a referral directly in these circumstances. See below for details on making a referral.

If a referral is made by someone other than the DSL, the DSL should be informed of the referral as soon as possible.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): Teachers must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out in under 18s. See Appendix I Types of abuse and specific safeguarding issues, for further information about FGM and this reporting duty. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL and involve Children's Services as appropriate.

12. Making a referral

The relevant contact information is set out at the front of this policy. If the referral is made by telephone, this should be followed up in writing. Staff are made aware that parental consent is not required for referrals to statutory agencies.

Confirmation of the referral and details of the decision as to what course of action will be taken should be received from the local authority within one working day. If this is not received, the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should contact children's social care again.

If, after the referral, the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should press for reconsideration to ensure their concerns are addressed and that the pupil's situation improves.

Where relevant, the school will cooperate with the Channel Panel and the police in providing any relevant information so that each can effectively carry out its function to determine whether an individual is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The school will respond to requests for information from the police promptly.

13. Procedures when a Member of Staff, Voluntary Staff, Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Head Faces Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations of Abuse

All school staff and volunteers should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

All staff should be aware of the school's own Discipline Policy, a copy of which is available on the school's internal electronic I: drive.

The School has procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns and allegations against teachers, the Head, Governors, volunteers and other staff 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. We have an approach that recognises concerns tend to grow and may be apparent before someone makes an allegation. These procedures follow the guidance in Part Four of KCSiE and should apply to anyone working in the school, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors where the individual has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This includes behaviour that may have happened outside school. In such circumstances, an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken and LADO advice sought if there is any doubt about the next steps to follow.

Allegations against staff are dealt with urgently, with all necessary delays eradicated. Allegations will be immediately referred to the Head who will report these to the LADO. If there is any concern regarding a conflict of interest in reporting allegations to the Head, the LADO should be contacted directly.

Allegations that a member of staff, voluntary staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Head, has abused a pupil or pupils either inside the School premises or during a school trip or visit could be made by:

- Parents
- The abused pupil
- Other members of staff
- Other pupils
- Former pupils who are longer on the School roll
- The Police or Social Services
- A third party

If the allegation concerns the Head, the recipient of the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, (the Case Manager), without notifying the Head first. In a case of serious harm or an allegation of a serious criminal offence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should inform the Police immediately and allow the Police to make investigations without carrying out any investigations him/herself.

Restrictions in relation to the reporting or publishing of allegations prior to any charge being made will be fully respected and every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity to protect the integrity of the investigation. Any allegations raised by a former pupil would be investigated with the same respect and care as any other allegation. The investigation would be led by the DSL, or one of her deputies, involving whichever agencies were necessary or appropriate to involve, following LADO advice.

a) Anonymous Allegations

If the School receives an allegation of child abuse from an anonymous source, we will handle it in exactly the same way as if we knew the identity of the person making the allegation and will contact the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership for advice.

b) The First Response

We will respond promptly and sensitively to the legitimate concerns of the alleged victim and their family. We undertake to:

- take any allegation of abuse, involving a member of staff, volunteer, Governor or contractor very seriously, even if the person raising the concern indicates they feel it is of a 'low level' nature;
- contact the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership LADO for advice;
- establish the facts before jumping to any conclusion;
- Inform the member of staff or volunteer concerned honestly of the allegation that has been made, and advise him or her to contact their Trade Union or Professional Association for advice and support;
- Inform the child's parents in confidence, inviting them to maintain confidentiality whilst the investigation takes place, unless the allegation involves the parents, in which case we will contact the Social Services before making contact.

c) Next Steps

We recognise that a formal investigation is a matter for specialists, so where the facts suggest that there may be reasonable grounds for suspecting actual abuse, or grooming of a child, or other criminal behaviour, we will always:

- Invite the Police to conduct the investigation;
- Involve the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership under current guidelines;
- Consider suspending the member of staff or volunteer concerned whilst the investigation is progressed to its conclusion.

d) Support of Pupils

Our priority is to safeguard the young people in our care. We will give all the support that we can to a pupil who has been abused. The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider how best to support and monitor the pupil concerned through any process of investigation, liaising closely with parents, guardians (if appropriate), the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, or other agencies involved to identify the support strategies that will be appropriate.

e) Suspension and Alternatives

Suspension of a member of staff is a neutral act and does not imply that the member of staff is guilty of the conduct alleged. Even so, it is a serious step, and we will take advice from the LADO, as well as legal advice beforehand, and will normally only suspend a member of staff where:

- there is a serious risk of harm, (or further harm), to the child; or
- the allegations are so serious as to constitute grounds for dismissal, if proven; or
- there is the need for a full and fair investigation which cannot be carried out unless the member of staff is suspended; or
- the police are investigating allegations of a criminal offence.

We recognise fully that we have a duty of care towards all of our staff, and we will always:

- under current protocols, contact the LADO and Local Safeguarding Children Partnership for advice;
- keep an open mind until a conclusion has been reached;
- interview a member of staff before suspending him or her;
- Keep him or her informed of progress of the investigation.

Any member of staff who is invited to a meeting whose outcome is likely to result in his or her suspension, is entitled to be accompanied by a friend, who is not legally qualified, or Trade Union Representative.

We will always consider whether an alternative to suspension might be appropriate. Possibilities include:

- sending the member of staff on leave;
- giving him or her non-contact duties;
- ensuring that a second adult is always present in the classroom when he or she teaches/ensuring supervision is in place for non-teaching staff.

f) If the Member of Staff Resigns

The resignation of a member of staff or volunteer mid-way through an investigation would not lead to the investigation being abandoned. Our policy is always to complete every investigation into allegations of child abuse.

g) Settlement Agreements

The policy at the School is to follow the Department for Education guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, (September 2023), and if the criteria are met, a referral must be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service and where applicable the Teaching Regulation Agency. It is illegal to reach a Settlement Agreement which prevents such a referral being made should this be required.

h) Allegations against a supply teacher and all contracted staff

As a School, we rarely employ the services of supply staff however when we do, we fully recognise that they are not our employees. Any allegations must be dealt with following the correct procedures. Advice would be sought from the LADO and their agency would be fully involved in any investigation. When using a supply agency, we would inform the agency of our procedures for managing allegations, whilst also taking into account the agency's own policies and their duty to refer to the DBS as personnel suppliers.

i) Length of Investigatory Process

We recognise that everyone's interests are served by the School facilitating the completion of any investigatory process it is undertaking as swiftly as possible. It will therefore aim to complete any investigation as soon as is practicable, consistent with a fair, full and impartial investigation.

j) Referring and Recording Allegations

Like all schools, we have a statutory legal duty to refer an individual, where there is the risk that he or she may harm, or has caused harm to children, to the Disclosure and Barring Service as soon as possible following the individual's dismissal or resignation because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. Reports concerning members of staff or volunteers are normally made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Head of Human Resources. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head is involved, the report is made by the Chair of Governors.

The School plays no part in the subsequent process of barring individuals from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. We also have a legal duty to respond to any requests for information that we receive from the Disclosure and Barring Service at any time.

The Rowans School is aware of our duty to consider making a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency. Where a dismissal does not reach the threshold for a Disclosure and Barring Service referral, The Rowans School gives separate consideration as to whether a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency is appropriate.

We will record all founded allegations of abuse, and the manner in which we have dealt with the matter, including any disciplinary actions, on an individual's file. A copy will be given to the individual and he or she will be told that the record will be retained in accordance with the School's Data Retention Policy in relation to safeguarding matters.

k) Handling Unfounded or Unsubstantiated Allegations

The Child

A child who has been the centre of unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse needs professional help in dealing with the aftermath. We will liaise closely with the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Partnership to set up a professional programme that best meets their needs, which may involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and an Educational Psychologist. We shall be mindful of the possibility that the allegation of abuse was an act of displacement, masking abuse that is actually occurring within the child's own family and/or community.

However much support the child may need in such circumstances; we need to be sensitive to the possibility that the aftermath of an unfounded allegation of abuse may result in the irretrievable breakdown of the relationship with the member of staff or volunteer. In such circumstances, we may conclude that it is in the child's best interests to move to another school. We would do our best to help them to achieve as smooth a transition as possible, working closely with the parents or guardians.

The Member of Staff

A member of staff or volunteer could be left at the end of an investigation into an allegation of child abuse which has been found to be unsubstantiated or without foundation with severely diminished self-esteem, feeling isolated and vulnerable, all too conscious that colleagues might shun him/her on the grounds of "no smoke without fire". If issues of professional competency are involved, or despite allegations of child abuse not being substantiated, disciplinary issues are raised; we recognise that he or she is likely to need both professional and emotional help. We will undertake to arrange a mentoring programme in such circumstances, together with professional counselling outside the school community. A short sabbatical or period of re-training may be appropriate. Where an allegation has been found to be malicious, all references to it shall be removed from the individual's personnel records. Any allegations that are not substantiated, are unfounded or are malicious will not be referred to in employer references.

l) Allegation of Abuse of a Child Who is not a Pupil at the School

If we were given information that suggested that a member of staff or volunteer was abusing a child who was not a pupil at the School, we would immediately pass such information to the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership to handle and would take advice from the LADO as to how to deal with the member of staff or volunteer. We would consider whether the member of staff or volunteer should be suspended from work or what steps should be taken in relation to him or her in a similar manner to an allegation involving a member of staff or volunteer and a school pupil. If the allegation is subsequently proved to be unfounded, he or she would be given full support by the School in resuming his/her career.

m) Allegations Involving the Head or the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Chair of Governors should be told at once by the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any allegation involving the Head who will report this to the LADO before taking any other action. The Head will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process and the Deputy Head will be made acting Head until the conclusion of the investigation and resolution of the issue. The Chair of Governors and the Head should similarly be told at once of any allegation involving the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Chair of Governors should normally be informed on the same day, and LADO advice obtained. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead would be Acting Designated Safeguarding Lead in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's absence until the conclusion of the investigation and resolution of the issue.

n) Allegations against a Governor

Where an allegation is made against any Governor, the matter should be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors, or the Nominated Safeguarding Governor. If either the Chair of Governors or

the Nominated Safeguarding Governor are the subject of the allegation, the matter should be reported to the other. The allegation will be discussed with the LADO before further action is taken. Where appropriate, the Chair of Governors will consult the Nominated Safeguarding Governor and vice versa.

The person taking responsibility for ensuring the procedures are followed is known as the Case Manager.

o) 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 child(ren) involved will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. They may also 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.

Where the LADO advises that a strategy discussion is needed, or the police or children's social care need to be involved, the Case Manager will not inform the accused or the parents or carers until these agencies have been consulted and it has been agreed what information can be disclosed.

The reporting restrictions preventing the identification of a teacher who is the subject of such an allegation in certain circumstances will be observed.

p) Record Keeping

In accordance with KCSiE, 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.

The school will retain all safeguarding records and relevant personnel records for so long as reasonably required¹.

q) Ceasing to use staff

If the school ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a Governor, supply teacher or volunteer) because they are unsuitable to work with children, a settlement agreement (formally known as a compromise agreement) will not be used and a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made promptly if the criteria for referral 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 Governors without delay.

¹ *In accordance with the terms of reference of the Goddard Inquiry, (now the IICSA Inquiry) all schools are required to retain information which relates to allegations (substantiated or not) of organisations and individuals who may have been involved in, or have knowledge of child sexual abuse or child sexual exploitation; allegations (substantiated or not) of individuals having engaged in sexual activity with, or having a sexual interest in, children; institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse or other exploitation.*

r) Staff Guidance on Their Own Behaviour and Actions

It is crucial that staff ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. For example, special care must be taken in one-to-one tuition such as music lessons, supervision of changing pre and post games sessions and individual meetings with pupils. Where possible, staff are advised to avoid physically touching a pupil, unless it is absolutely necessary. Engaging in social electronic communication with a pupil is considered inappropriate, for example by text message or contact through social network sites. If, at any stage, a member of staff is concerned that their own actions or an incident that has occurred, could in any way lead to a risk of an allegation, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, including the Head. Full details and guidance on expectations of staff conduct can be found in the School's 'Staff Code of Conduct'.

s) Low Level Concerns

Staff should support the School's open and transparent culture and understand that all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the School will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. This applies even when this is a 'low level' concern.

What is a Low Level Concern?

A low level concern does not mean that the concern is insignificant; it means that the behaviour which has raised the concern does not meet the threshold of harm i.e. where the person has not actually:

- 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 he or she 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.

A 'low level' concern is any concern, no matter how small and even if the concern is no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt', that an adult working in or on behalf of the Trust may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with this Code of Conduct for staff, including any inappropriate behaviour outside of working hours; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold as set out above, or is not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of behaviour that could be considered of 'low-level' concern, might include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with pupils or other children;
- showing favouritism towards pupils or other children;
- taking images of children using a personal mobile device;
- 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.

It is possible for this conduct to be inadvertent, simply thoughtless, or behaviour that presents as inappropriate, whilst it may not actually be so within a specific context, through to conduct which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. It is crucial that staff understand that these concerns, even those which do not meet the harm threshold as outlined above are shared responsibly with the right person, i.e. the DSL and Head of each school and that they in turn ensure these concerns are recorded and dealt with appropriately. The effective management of such concerns should also protect those working in or on behalf of any of the Trust schools from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Section 2 of part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 deals with low level concerns. These will not be treated as insignificant but will require a report to the Head and/ or DSL or the LADO. If the low level concern is reported to the DSL, then the DSL will inform the Head in a timely fashion according to the nature of the concern who will make the ultimate decision on how to respond.

Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If there is any doubt whether the information shared about a member of staff, supply staff or contractor then they must consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

14. Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. 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, or potential failures by the school or its staff to properly safeguard the welfare of pupils, and that such concerns will be taken seriously. The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns about child protection failures internally (see the Key Contact Details section at the end of this policy for further information).

15. Allegations against pupils

The conduct of pupils towards each other will, in most instances, be covered by the school's behaviour and discipline policies. However, some behaviour by a pupil towards another may be of such a nature that safeguarding concerns are raised. Examples of behaviour by a pupil which may raise safeguarding concerns may include:

- violence, including gender-based violence;
- threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- blackmail;
- misconduct of a sexual nature, including indecent exposure or touching or serious sexual assaults;
- sharing of nudes and semi nudes;
- encouraging others to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- any form of inappropriate behaviour by an older pupil towards a younger or more vulnerable pupil;

- bullying, including cyber-bullying.

The school has a zero tolerance towards child on child abuse and takes steps to minimise the risk. The school has robust anti-bullying procedures in place (see the school's Anti-bullying Policy) and pupils are taught at all stages of the school about acceptable behaviour and how to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to protect pupils identified as being at risk.

Abusive behaviour by pupils must be taken seriously. Behaviour should not be dismissed as being normal between young people, as "banter" or simply "part of growing up", or 'having a laugh'. Behaviour such as initiation violence or any form of sexual harassment is not acceptable.

Allegations against pupils should be reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the school during the investigation and the school's Behaviour, Discipline and Sanctions Policy will apply. The school will take advice from Children's Services on the investigation of such allegations and will take all 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 Services, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupil is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

Where an allegation is made against a pupil, both the victim and the perpetrator will be treated as being at risk and safeguarding procedures in accordance with this policy will be followed. Appropriate support will be provided to all pupils involved, including support from external services if necessary.

16. 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 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 Child Policy for further details.

17. Informing parents

Parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, there may be circumstances when the DSL will need to consult the LADO, the police and/or the Head before discussing with parents. In all cases, the DSL will be guided by the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership referral threshold document.

In relation to Channel referrals, the DSL 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 Section 13 for details about the disclosure of information when dealing with allegations against teachers, the Head, governors, volunteers and other staff.

18. Supporting children

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.

We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

Our school will support pupils by:

- encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as through our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying;
- promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school;
- liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children;
- providing continuing support to a pupil, about whom there have been concerns, who leaves the school, by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school.
- Developing a good knowledge and understanding of their family circumstances and any context which may apply to any safeguarding concerns which have been raised.
- Reassuring all children who are victims of abuse that they will be taken seriously and will be supported. They should never be made to feel ashamed or that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment.
- We will ensure that following any safeguarding concern the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

19. Supporting staff

We recognise that staff working in the school, who have become involved with the child who has suffered harm or appears to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to seek further support as appropriate.

20. Secure school premises

School Premises: The school will take all practicable steps to ensure the school premises are as secure as circumstances permit.

Visitors' book: The school keep a Visitors' Book in the school office. All visitors must sign in on arrival and out on departure and are escorted whilst on school premises by a member of staff. All visitors will be given a name badge with the title 'Visitor' which must be clearly displayed and worn at all times whilst on the school premises.

21. Use of mobile phones and cameras

The school's policy on the use of mobile phones and cameras in the school, including within the EYFS setting, is as follows:

- The school's Acceptable Use Policy and Computing Policy set out the expectations of pupils. At The Rowans School, pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones or any other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, onto the premises;
- Staff and volunteers should use mobile phones and cameras in accordance with the guidance set out in the Staff Handbook, Acceptable Use Policy and EYFS mobile phone and electronic devices policy.

Parents may bring mobile phones onto the premises but may only take photographs during events such as plays, concerts or sporting events for personal use. Parents should be reminded that the publication of such images (including on personal social media networking sites, even where access to the image may be limited) may be unlawful.

22. Record keeping, confidentiality, information sharing and record retention

All concerns, discussions and decision made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing.

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential where this is practicable and lawful. The DSL will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.

The school will keep all 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 cooperate with police and Children's Services to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

When pupils leave The Rowans, relevant information is shared with the pupil's future schools, once similar assurances have been established regarding its secure storage and the confidentiality applied to the sharing of any safeguarding information. Where applicable, copies of safeguarding records are retained securely by the school for the following periods:

- in the case of low level concerns with no multi-agency involvement or action, for 25 years from the date of birth of the child;
- when the child has been the subject of a multi-agency plan, these records are retained indefinitely.

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 to keep secrets which might compromise a child's safety or wellbeing.

23. Safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff

Where safeguarding concerns and/or allegations have been made against staff, the school will consult the LADO and, where appropriate, the police and Children's Services to agree the information that should be disclosed and to whom.

24. Information sharing

The School has signed up to the Merton Multi-Agency Information Sharing Protocol (MAISP). This is intended to facilitate the exchange of personal or sensitive information sharing between signatories for the appropriate purpose.

25. Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

- establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to;
- ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- include across the curriculum, including within Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC) development, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm, including online, and to know to whom they should turn for help;
- place a strong emphasis on the promotion of good mental health. We have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our children. We have clear systems and processes in place to identify these needs, and to consider when they become a safeguarding concern.

The safe use of technology is a focus in all areas of the curriculum and key Computing safety messages are reinforced as part of assemblies and circle times/pastoral activities. The School has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place (see the Acceptable Use Policy) and is mindful that this should not lead to unnecessary restrictions on learning.

26. Monitoring and review

Any safeguarding and child protection incidents at the school will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures by the DSL and a prompt report to the Governors. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the LADO will assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the school's procedures.

In addition, the DSL will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures regularly, working with the Governors as necessary and seeking contributions from staff. The DSL will update the Senior Leadership Team regularly on the operation of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

The Governors 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 DSL will work with the Nominated Safeguarding 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; details regarding 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 an 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. Detailed minutes recording the review by the Governing Body will be made.

The Governors will ensure that any weakness or deficiency in safeguarding and child protection arrangements, are remedied without delay.

27. School closed during holiday periods

During the holidays, the school email is checked regularly and therefore, should it be necessary, there is the ability for agencies to contact the school. Outside of school hours and during school holidays, any Safeguarding concerns should be reported to relevant local authority for the child's home address.

28. Lettings

When services or activities are provided by the Governing Board, under the direct supervision or management of our school staff, the safeguarding procedures listed in this policy will apply. This may not be the case when we hire or rent out our school to other organisations or individuals, such as community groups, sport associations and extra-curricular activities providers. We will make sure there are arrangements in place to keep children safe, regardless of whether they are pupils at our school.

To make sure the provider has the appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place, we will follow the government's Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition non-statutory guidance. This includes checking that they complete the essential pre-employment checks on their staff and that their staff are suitable to be around children. Where appropriate, we will seek assurance and check their safeguarding policies and procedures, as well as establish what the arrangements are for the provider to liaise with our school on safeguarding matters. We will terminate our agreement with the provider if they do not follow the safeguarding requirements listed in the agreement.

This document will be reviewed annually
Policy Owner: DSL (DH), DDSL (TR Head)
Approved: Board of Governors
Date of last review: January 2026
Next review: January 2027

Appendix 1: Types of abuse and specific safeguarding issues

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 (e.g. via the Internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. The harm can include children witnessing the ill-treatment of others and that this is particularly relevant when children see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its effects.

Part 1 of KCSiE defines the following types of abuse, however, staff should be aware that abuse, neglect or safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label and in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

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 over protecting and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

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

Neglect

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

a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent 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.

Abuse of Trust

All staff need to know that inappropriate behaviour with or towards children is unacceptable. In particular, under the Sexual Offence Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over 18 to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. This applies where the child is in full-time education and the person works in the same establishment as the child, even if he/she does not teach the child.

Signs of Abuse

This is intended as guide. Please remember that the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily give proof that child abuse has occurred. It may however, indicate that further investigation should take place.

- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment which is needed
- Incompatible explanations
- Repeated minor injuries
- Unexplained bruising
- Bruise marks in or around mouth
- Black eyes, especially if both eyes are black and there are no marks to the forehead or nose ☒
- Grasp marks
- Finger marks
- Bruising to ears
- Linear bruising (particularly buttocks or back)
- Differing age bruising
- Bite marks
- Burns and scalds
- Cigarette burns
- General physical disability
- Unresponsiveness in the child
- Soiling and wetting
- Change in behavioural patterns
- 'Frozen' look
- 'Tummy pains'
- Eating problems
- Attention seeking
- Apprehension
- Anti-social behaviour
- Unkempt appearance
- Sexually precocious behaviour
- Sexualised drawings and play

- Sudden poor performance in school
- Poor self-esteem
- Self-mutilation
- Withdrawal
- Running away
- Reluctance to return home after school
- Resistance to P.E. (undressing)
- Difficulty in forming friendships
- Confusing affectionate displays
- Poor attendance – repeated infections, etc

The Merton Local 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.

Specific safeguarding issues KCSiE acknowledges the following as specific safeguarding issues:

- Child abduction and community safety incidents (see below)
- Children and court system (see below)
- Children with family members in prison (see below)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines (see below)
- Children missing or absent, or with unexplainable and or/persistent absences in education (see below)
- Children missing from home or care
- Child sexual exploitation (see below)
- Domestic abuse (see below)
- Drugs
- Elective Home Education (see below)
- Fabricated or induced illness (see below)
- Faith abuse
- So called ‘honour-based’ abuse, including Female genital mutilation (see below), breast ironing and forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence / violence against women and girls
- Hate
- Homelessness (see below)
- Mental health
- Missing children and adults strategy
- Online Safety
- Child on Child Abuse, including bullying & cyber-bullying, physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, upskirting, sharing of nudes and semi nudes, hazing & initiation type rituals
- Private fostering
- Preventing radicalisation (see below)
- Relationship abuse

- Serious Violence (see below)
- Trafficking

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff. It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11 year olds and 12-17 year olds. The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Children missing or absent or with unexplainable and or/persistent absences in education

The school shall inform the applicable local authority (within which the pupil resides when not at the school) of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the school's admission register at non-standard transition points in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended). This will assist the local authority to:

- fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing or absent, or with unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education; and
- follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or radicalisation.

The school shall inform the local authority of any pupil who:

- fails to attend school regularly, or
- has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of ten school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. Action should be taken in accordance with this policy if any absence of a pupil from the school gives rise to a concern about his/her welfare.

Child Trafficking

Child trafficking is defined as recruiting, moving, receiving and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation. Child trafficking is a form of modern slavery. Many children are trafficked into the UK from overseas, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

Traffickers may use grooming techniques to gain the trust of a child, family or community. They may trick, force or persuade children to leave their homes. Child trafficking can also be organised by individuals and children's own families.

Children who are trafficked are intentionally hidden and isolated from the services and communities who can identify and protect them. While identification may be difficult, there will be signs that you can watch for. Children who have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked may:

- spend a lot of time doing household chores
- rarely leave their house, have no freedom of movement and no time for playing
- be orphaned or live apart from their family, often in unregulated private foster care
- live in substandard accommodation
- not be sure which country, city or town they're in
- be unable or reluctant to give details of accommodation or personal details
- not be registered with a school or a GP practice
- not have any documents (or have falsified documents)
- not have access to their parents or guardians
- be seen in inappropriate places - such as brothels or factories
- possess money or goods they can't account for
- be permanently deprived of a large part of their earnings, for example if they're required to earn a minimum amount of money every day or pay off an exorbitant debt
- have injuries from workplace accidents
- give a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children.

Signs an adult may be trafficking a child include:

- making multiple visa applications for different children
- acting as a guarantor for multiple visa applications for children
- travelling with different children who they aren't related to or responsible for
- insisting on remaining with and speaking for the child
- living with unrelated or newly arrived children
- abandoning a child or claiming not to know a child they were previously with.

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns with the DSL. Further

guidance on responding to child trafficking can be found at <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-trafficking-and-modern-slavery/>

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

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation. In some cases the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator. Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim. Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions;
- associate with other children involved in exploitation;
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- misuse drugs and alcohol;
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or

threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home;
- have been the victim or 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.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office.

Domestic abuse

The effect of domestic abuse on children is such that it must be considered as abuse. Either witnessing it, or being the subject of it, is not only traumatic in itself, but is likely to adversely impact on a child and it should be treated as physical or emotional abuse as appropriate. Staff refer to National Domestic Abuse Helpline, NSPCC, Refuge and SafeLives.

Domestic abuse represents one quarter of all violent crime. It is actual or threatened physical, emotional, financial, psychological or sexual abuse. It involves the use of power and coercive control by one person over another. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, religion, mental or physical ability. Domestic abuse can also involve other types of abuse.

The term domestic abuse is used to reflect that several abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence. Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships, including impacting upon their own personal, intimate relationships. Children who witness domestic abuse are at risk of significant harm and staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse.

Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will work together with key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to

ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) is a rare form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. If suspected, child protection procedures should be followed and reported to the DSL.

FII is also known as "Munchausen's syndrome by proxy" (not to be confused with Munchausen's syndrome, where a person pretends to be ill or causes illness or injury to themselves).

FII covers a wide range of symptoms and behaviours involving parents seeking healthcare for a child. This ranges from extreme neglect (failing to seek medical care) to induced illness.

Behaviours in FII include a parent or other carer who:

- persuades healthcare professionals that their child is ill when they're perfectly healthy
- exaggerates or lies about their child's symptoms
- manipulates test results to suggest the presence of illness – for example, by putting glucose in urine samples to suggest the child has diabetes
- deliberately induces symptoms of illness – for example, by poisoning their child with unnecessary medication or other substances

Warning signs include:

- symptoms only appear when the parent or carer is present
- the only person claiming to notice symptoms is the parent or carer
- the affected child has an inexplicably poor response to medication or other treatment
- if one particular health problem is resolved, the parent or carer may then begin reporting a new set of symptoms
- the child's alleged symptoms don't seem plausible – for example, a child who has supposedly lost a lot of blood but doesn't become unwell
- the parent or carer has a history of frequently changing GPs or visiting different hospitals for treatment, particularly if their views about the child's treatment are challenged by medical staff
- the child's daily activities are being limited far beyond what you would usually expect as a result of having a certain condition – for example, they never go to school or have to wear leg braces even though they can walk properly
- the parent or carer has good medical knowledge or a medical background
- the parent or carer doesn't seem too worried about the child's health, despite being very attentive
- the parent or carer develops close and friendly relationships with healthcare staff, but may become abusive or argumentative if their own views about what's wrong with the child are challenged
- one parent has little or no involvement in the care of the child
- the parent or carer encourages medical staff to perform often painful tests and procedures on the child (tests that most parents would only agree to if they were persuaded that it was absolutely necessary)

Further guidance is available from the NSPCC and '*Safeguarding children in whom illness is fabricated or induced*' (*Supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children*)

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis. In most cases school staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

Honour-based abuse

All forms of so-called honour-based violence are abuse (regardless of motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Staff should speak to the DSL if they have any doubts.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in England and Wales and is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons or other injury to the female genital organs.

There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM. Guidance on the warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 38-41 of the Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM (pages 59-61 focus on the role of schools).

The FGM mandatory reporting duty requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18. The report should be made orally by calling 101, the police's single non-emergency number. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary

sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining the pupils.

The duty is a personal duty which requires the individual professional who becomes aware of the case to make a report; the responsibility cannot be transferred. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

If the teacher is unsure whether this reporting duty applies, they must refer the matter to the DSL in accordance with this policy. See the Home Office guidance 'Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation: procedural information' for further details about the duty. Guidance published by the Department of Health also provides useful information and support for which will be taken into account by the school as appropriate.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

Guidance on the warning signs that forced marriage may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 13-14 of the Multi-agency guidelines: Handling case of forced marriage. Staff should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns. Pages 32-36 of the Multi-agency guidelines: Handling case of forced marriage focus on the role of schools in detecting and reporting forced marriage and the Forced Marriage Unit can be contacted on 020 7008 0151 or fm@fco.gov.uk for advice and information.

Mental Health

All staff are also 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. Staff recognise that where children have suffered abuse, neglect, exploitation or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by following the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and speaking to the DSL/DDSL.

Online safety

Children and young people commonly use electronic equipment including mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN, Tumblr, Snapchat and Instagram.

Those technologies and the internet are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. Unfortunately, however, some adults and young people will use those technologies to harm children. That harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access those sites in school. Many pupils own or have access to hand held devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community.

How to keep SAFE online:

1. Only use devices you're **ALLOWED** to
2. **CHECK** before using new sites, games or apps
3. **ASK** for help if stuck
4. **KNOW** that people online aren't always who they say
5. Don't keep **SECRETS** just because someone asks you to
6. Don't change **CLOTHES** in front of a camera
7. Be **RESPONSIBLE** - don't give out personal information
8. I don't have to do **DARES OR CHALLENGES**, even if someone tells me I must.
9. Be **KIND** and polite to everyone
10. **TELL** a trusted adult if upset, worried, scared or confused

The Rowans School online safety policy explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and protect and educate pupils in the safe use of technology. The Rowans School follows the DfE guidance regarding teaching online safety in schools (2019) Teaching online safety in schools

Cyberbullying and the sharing of nudes and semi nudes by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Child on Child Abuse

The school is aware that children can abuse other children and all staff maintain an 'it could happen here' attitude. Even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place. Child on child abuse can take many forms. These may include, but are not limited to, bullying (including cyber-bullying), sexual violence and sexual harassment, physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm, the sharing of nudes and semi nudes and initiation or hazing type violence and rituals, and upskirting.

Research suggests that child on child abuse may affect boys differently from girls, and that this difference

may result from societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological make-up. Barriers to disclosure will also be different. The School upholds that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers without SEND, and additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in children with SEND. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to a child's disability without further exploration,
- the potential for children with SEND to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs,
- communication barriers and difficulties, and
- overcoming these barriers

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:

- physical abuse: violence, particularly pre-planned, forcing others to use drugs or alcohol
- emotional abuse: blackmail or extortion, threats and intimidation
- sexual abuse: indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults, forcing others to watch pornography or take part in the sharing of nudes and semi nudes.
- sexual exploitation: encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties, photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older pupils may attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

What to do:

- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the designated safeguarding lead should be informed.
- In some cases children will find it difficult to tell staff about the abuse so it may come via a third party. Children should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual abuse or harassment.
- Members of staff will carefully listen to the child, being non-judgemental.

- A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The DSL should contact children's services to discuss the case. It is possible that children's services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a children's services referral where appropriate.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in both pupils' files.
- If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the pupil being complained about and the alleged victim). Children will be reassured that the law is in place to protect, rather than to criminalise them.
- It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.
- Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.
- The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned
- Support will be provided for both the victim and the perpetrator depending on the individual circumstances of each case.

Prevent Duty

The school recognises its duty to protect children from indoctrination into any form of extreme ideology which may lead to the harm of self or others.

This is particularly important because of the open access to electronic information through the Internet. The school aims to safeguard young people through educating them on the appropriate use of social media and the dangers of downloading and sharing inappropriate material which is illegal under the Counter-Terrorism Act. The school aims to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. Being drawn into terrorism includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. The school is committed to providing a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

The school vets all visitors carefully and will take firm action if any individual or group is perceived to be attempting to influence members of our school community, either physically or electronically. The school has adopted the Government's definitions for the purposes of compliance with the Prevent Duty:

- 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 by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism”.

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 seek advice from the DSL if they have concerns. 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. 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, etc), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

If a member of staff in a school has a concern about a particular pupil they should follow the school’s normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing with the school’s DSL and, where deemed necessary, with Children’s Services. Staff know that they can also contact the local police force or dial 101 (the police’s non-emergency number) or contact The Department for Education dedicated telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) which has been set up to enable staff and Governors to raise concerns relating to extremism directly. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. In emergency situations staff should contact the police emergency number: 999. The DfE’s briefing note ‘The use of social media for online radicalisation 2015’ includes information on how social media is used to radicalise young people and guidance on protecting pupils at risk.

The school welcomes pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the school’s curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone. See both the school’s Policy for Special Educational Needs and Learning Disabilities and Disability Policy.

Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse, neglect or exploitation of pupils with a special educational need or disability, creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The school is mindful in particular that:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil’s special educational need or disability without further exploration;
- pupils with a special educational need or disability can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required.

Private Fostering

Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 years old (or 18 if they have a disability) is looked after for a period of 28 days or more by someone who is not a close relative, legal guardian or person with parental responsibility. Close relatives include parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents. Other people, such as neighbours, friends or more distant relatives need to have an

assessment. Following a successful assessment, the child must be visited by the local authority at least every 90 days to ensure they are and remain safe.

By law, the local authority where the private foster carer lives must be told about all private fostering situations. The child's parents, private foster carer and anyone else involved in the arrangement are legally required to inform the local authority. Schools should be clear who has parental responsibility for children on their roll, and where they identify a private fostering arrangement they must report this to the local authority.

Relationships Education, Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education

Within a primary setting Relationships Education is statutory (some sex education sits within the science curriculum). Within a secondary setting Relationships and Sex Education is statutory. Health Education is taught across both settings. Please read the School's RSE policy which is published on the School website in the About Us, Policies and Documentation section.

Parents have the right to request their child's withdrawal from part or all of the Sex Education curriculum only. This request is made to the Head – guidance is also in place for them. Safeguarding is a theme throughout and the DSL / DDSL are aware that aspects of the new curriculum include:

- Issues related to consent
- Definitions/ choices
- Grooming, CSE, domestic abuse, FGM
- Honour based abuse
- Unhealthy / abusive family relationships
- Internet/online safety – a much enhanced curriculum theme
- Contextual safeguarding
- Abusive intimate relationships
- The need for the DSL / team to be aware of the defined curriculum content
- The need for them to know of the timetabling for delivery
- Need for clear communication between the safeguarding lead and teachers in raising an awareness of the potential impact of this curriculum for some pupils
- Sharing information which leads to additional support or teacher awareness for pupils with a particular protected characteristic which means that they are at greater risk
- The delivery of this curriculum takes a "whole school approach" aligning the RE/RSE/HE curriculum with all other curriculum areas and safeguarding.

Serious Violence

The School ensures that staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from

school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

The Rowans School follows the DfE's advice about sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (DfE May 2018)

All reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be fully investigated by the DSL, or in her absence a member of the Safeguarding Team, in close liaison with the appropriate Childrens Services contacts and the Police.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two pupils of any sex. They can also occur through a group of pupils sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single pupil or group of pupils.

It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and more likely that sexual harassment will be perpetrated by boys.

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. The School will ensure that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable at The Rowans School. Behaviours such as making sexual remarks, grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia is not 'banter' or 'having a laugh' and will never be tolerated.

The Rowans School recognises that the following pupils can be especially vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Pupils who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans, Questioning (LGBTQ) or who are perceived to be LGBTQ by their peers.

Sexual violence:

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

- Consent: Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.
- Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, calling someone sexualised names
- sexual 'jokes' or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- online sexual harassment, which might include: non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos and sharing sexual images and videos; inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be stand alone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence

Upskirting

The Rowans School will ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of the changes to the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 which criminalise the act of 'upskirting'. The Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) defines 'upskirting' as: "a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not only confined to victims wearing skirts or dresses and equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks shorts or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders."

Incidents of upskirting in the school will not be tolerated. The School will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgment, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

Appendix II: Visiting Speakers

Brief details for visiting speakers should be forwarded to the head in advance of the talk and ideally at least one week beforehand.

Introduction

The Rowans School ('the school') often invites speakers from the wider community to give talks to enrich our pupils' experience. The school recognises the enormous benefit gained by pupils from speakers from all walks of life. Both the school and pupils greatly appreciate the time and effort that visiting speakers put in to their presentations.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the school's legal obligations when using visiting speakers and to set out the standards of behaviour expected from visiting speakers.

This policy supports the aims and ethos of the *Safeguarding Policy* and takes into account the Educate Against Hate advice *Hosting Speakers on School Premises*.

Overview

The *Prevent Duty Statutory Guidance (April 2019)*, along with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)* expect schools to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised. This policy has therefore been drawn up with regard to the Government's prevent duty guidance and the school's wider safeguarding obligations.

The school's responsibility to pupils is to ensure they can critically assess the information that they receive as to its value to themselves, and that such information is aligned to the ethos and values of the school and British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

School protocol

All requests for outside speakers must firstly be discussed with the head teacher.

The school will undertake a risk assessment before agreeing to a visiting speaker attending the school. This will take into account any safeguarding checks considered appropriate in the circumstances, and may include a DBS check if relevant. The school may also conduct research on the visiting speaker and/or their organisation, as appropriate.

The school will obtain an outline of what the speaker intends to cover in advance of the visiting speaker's visit. In some cases, the school may also request a copy of the visiting speaker's presentation and/or footage in advance of the session to ensure it is appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils to be in attendance.

Visiting speakers will be supervised by a member of staff whilst on the school site. At no point will a visiting speaker be left unsupervised on site whilst pupils are present. Any concerns for the content or nature of the talk should be referred to the head teacher immediately.

On arrival at the school, visiting speakers who are not existing parents will be required to show an original current identification document including a photograph (such as a passport or photo card driving licence) and will be asked to sign the Visitors Book. The visiting speaker will be issued with a visitors' badge and the school's safeguarding card, which they must wear/ keep at all times whilst on school site.

Appendix III: Flow Chart for Raising Concerns about a child

