

## Safeguarding Policy

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION:

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015), Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) and Kent and Medway Online Safeguarding Children Procedures (2016).

The trustees, governors and staff across Veritas MAT take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children entrusted to our care.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has overall responsibility for child protection practice in school is the Principal in each school unless they designate another DSL to act on their behalf.

Schools within Veritas MAT are committed to:

- Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern
- Being an important part of the wider safeguarding community system for children
- Providing an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected; confident to talk openly and sure of being listened to
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties
- Using the curriculum to provide opportunities for increasing self awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness and decision making so that students have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others
- Working with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations

- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the school's procedures and lines of communication
- Monitoring children and young people who have been identified as "in need" including the need for protection; keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals
- Developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies including Early Help

## **2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **Schools across Veritas MAT:**

The school is responsible for ensuring that all action adheres to KSCB Safeguarding procedures and ***Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)***.

The role of the school within this procedure is to contribute to the identification, referral and assessment of children in need including children who may have suffered, be suffering or who are at risk of suffering significant harm. The school may also have a role in the provision of services to children in need and their families.

All adults in school have a role to play in relation to:

- Protecting children from abuse
- Promoting the welfare of children
- Preventing children from being harmed

**The role of the school in situations where there are safeguarding concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Trust is the CEO – Graham Chisnell**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead for Warden House Primary School is The Head of School Anne-Marie Middleton**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating safeguarding action within school
- Ensuring that locally established procedures are followed including reporting and referral processes
- Acting as a consultant for staff to discuss concerns
- Making referrals as necessary
- Maintaining a confidential recording system
- Representing or ensuring the school is appropriately represented at inter-agency meetings in particular Child Protection Conferences
- Managing and monitoring the school's part in child care / protection plans
- Organising training for all school staff ensuring refresher training for all every three years
- Liaising with other professionals including Early Help
- Ensure new staff and volunteers have appropriate level of Safeguarding training
- Ensure DSL receive updated training every two years
- Ensure all staff receive regular Safeguarding and Early Help updates, as required.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Trust is responsible for ensuring each school adheres to the policy and requirements outlined in this policy and may play an operational role in specific cases in support of the DSL for each school.

### 3. GENERAL STRATEGIES:

Child Protection issues are addressed within the curriculum, policies and guidance or through school/community initiatives. This includes:

- Family Liaison Officer roles & support
- PSHE
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Peer mentoring / buddies
- Anti-Bullying strategies
- Care Plans/Education Plans
- School Councils (consultation/children's rights)
- Complaints procedures
- Health and Safety including Online safety
- Risk assessments
- Extra-curricular activities
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks (formerly CRB)
- Safer Recruitment
- Consider Early Help support for children and their families

### 4. PROCEDURES:

***Veritas MAT adhere to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children.***

#### **Recognition and categories of abuse:**

All staff school should be aware of the definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse which is defined as 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 by another child or children.

There are four categories of abuse. These are:

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

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

exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or 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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Every member of staff recognises that children exposed to radicalisation, extremism and child exploitation is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability and should be approached in the same way as protecting children from other risks. Further information on these areas and Female Genital Mutation can be found in the Safeguarding box (Appendix 1).

Indicators and signs of abuse are listed in the leaflet "***Safeguarding Children and Child Protection - Induction Leaflet Guidelines for School Staff***" distributed to all staff at induction. A copy of this leaflet can be found on the Safeguarding board in the Staff Room.

Staff need to remember that child abuse can occur within all social groups regardless of religion, culture, social class or financial position. Children who have a disability are statistically subject to greater risk of abuse and are particularly vulnerable.

It is also important to remember that those who abuse children can be of any age, gender, ethnic group or background and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions to prevent recognition or action taking place.

**All** staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues, some of which are listed below. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger.

**All** staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.

### **Responding to concerns:**

Concerns for a child or young person may come to the attention of staff in a variety of ways, for example through observation of behaviour or injuries or disclosure. Any member of staff who has a concern for a child or young person however insignificant this might appear to be should discuss this with the DSL as

soon as is practically possible. More serious concerns must be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is accessed as early as possible.

**The role of the school in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.**

If a child makes a disclosure of abuse to a member of staff they should:

- Allow the child or young person to make the disclosure at their own pace and in their own way
- Avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child is saying (attentive listening/reflective feedback)
- Not ask leading questions or probe for information that the child or young person does not volunteer
- Reassure the child or young person that they have been heard and explain what you will do next and to whom you will talk
- Record the conversation as soon as possible using the Blue Safeguarding Concern Form (forms available in the Staff Room)
- Inform the DSL

**Record keeping:**

Staff can play a vital role in helping children in need or at risk by effective monitoring and record keeping. Any incident or behavioural change in a child or young person that gives cause for concern should be recorded on the Blue Safeguarding Concern Form, copies of which are kept in the Staff Room. It is important that records are factual and reflect the words used by the child or young person. Opinion should not be given unless there is some form of evidence base which can also be quoted. **Records must be signed and dated with timings if appropriate.** It is important to remember that issues are confidential and staff should know only on a 'need to know' basis.

**Information to be recorded**

- Child's name and date of birth
- Child in normal context, e.g. behaviour, attitude, (has there been an extreme change)
- The incident(s) which gives rise for concern with date(s), times(s) and signed.
- A verbatim record of what the child or young person has said.
- If recording bruising/injuries indicate position, colour, size, shape and time on body map.
- Action taken

**These basic details are vital to the information gathering process and do not constitute an investigation.** Written information should be passed to the DSL.

**Storage of records:**

The DSL will ensure that records relating to concerns for the welfare or safety of children are kept separate from other school files and are stored securely. Information will be shared on a strictly need to know basis and in line with safeguarding policy guidance.

**Referrals to Social Services:**

It is the responsibility of the DSL to decide when to make a referral to the Social Services Directorate. To help with this decision s/he may choose to consult with the Area Safeguarding Advisor. Advice may

also be sought from Social Services who offer opportunities for consultation as part of the Child in Need / Child Protection process. Issues discussed during consultations may include the urgency and gravity of the concerns for a child or young person and the extent to which parents/carers are made aware of these. Some concerns may need to be monitored over a period of time before a decision to refer to Social Services is made. **In all but the most exceptional cases parents/carers will be made aware of the concerns felt for a child or young person at the earliest possible stage and in the event of this becoming necessary, their consent to a referral to Social Services will be sought.**

Referrals to Social Services will be made using Kent's inter-agency referral form. In situations where there are felt to be urgent or grave concerns a telephone referral will be made prior to the form being completed and sent to the County Duty Social Services office (03000 411111).

If a child or young person is referred, the DSL will ensure that relevant staff are informed of this.

If after consultation with the DSL a member of staff feels that appropriate action is not being taken in respect of his or her concerns for a child s/he should refer directly to Social Services. The Principal should be informed of this decision where they are not the DSL.

#### **Concerns involving members of staff:**

Any concerns that involve allegations against a member of staff should be referred immediately to the Principal who will contact the Area Safeguarding Advisor to discuss and agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and the member of staff.

Further information regarding the procedure for managing situations involving members of staff, the Principal or the DSL can be found in the **Safeguarding Procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff**. A copy of this document is in the Safeguarding file in the Staff Room.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed guidance can be found in the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

**All staff need to be aware that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. When in doubt – consult.** (For specific guidance on how to respond to allegations against staff, please refer to the **Safeguarding Procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff**).

#### **Safe working practice**

Children may make allegations against staff in situations where they feel vulnerable or where they perceive there to be a possible risk to their welfare. As such, all school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position regarding child protection or potential allegations. For example, it is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. Physical intervention should only be used when the child is endangering him/herself or others and such events should be recorded and signed by a witness. Staff should be aware of the school's **Behaviour for Learning and Positive Handling policies** and any physical interventions must be in line with agreed policy and procedure in which appropriate training should be provided.

Staff should be particularly aware of the professional risks associated with the use of electronic communication (e-mail; mobile phones; texting; social network sites) and should familiarise themselves with the school E-Safety policy.

All school staff should work towards providing an environment and atmosphere for children and young people to enable them to feel safe to talk. However, staff should never promise a child to keep certain

information confidential. It must be explained that staff have certain duties to help keep that child safe, which may involve informing others.

### **Curriculum and staying safe**

Schools play an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour; what is 'safe'; to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned. ***Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*** states that the curriculum should ensure opportunities for "developing children's understanding, awareness and resilience".

### **Supervision and support:**

Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.

All staff have a Team Leader with whom they can discuss concerns including the area of child protection. The DSL can put staff and parents in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish. Staff can also approach Support Line directly.

### **Monitoring and review:**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure best practice in safeguarding is maintained across the school community.

School:	Warden House Primary School
Principal	Graham Chisnell
DSL	Graham Chisnell
Deputy DSL	Anne-Marie Middleton
Safeguarding Governor	David Lister
Kent Safeguarding Advisor	Peter Lewer (01233 898597)

Additional information can be found in the:

- Whistleblowing policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Online safety
- KCSiE Part 1 2016
- FLOW CHART FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD





