



Child Protection Policy

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1 Preface

1.1 Processes and procedures are never ends in themselves but should always be used as a means of bringing about better outcomes for children. No guidance can or should attempt to offer a detailed prescription for working with each child and family. Work with children and families where there are concerns about a child's welfare is sensitive and difficult. Good practice calls for effective cooperation between different agencies and professionals: sensitive work with parents and carers in the best interests of the child; "and the careful exercise of professional judgement and critical analysis of the available information".

2 Statement of Intent

2.1 Oakfield School recognises that protecting and safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility and depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. Individual children and young people, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need coordinated help from health, education and children's social care services. The voluntary sector and other agencies are important in protecting and safeguarding children.

2.2 Oakfield School is responsible for protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people it encounters. The need for guidelines and procedures is important to ensure that this is done with understanding and clarity.

2.3 Oakfield School will aim to protect and safeguard children and young people by:

2.3.1 Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised, with all staff undertaking Level 1 Safeguarding Children, which is refreshed every 3 years. Staff are required to have a Certificate of Enhanced Clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service. New members of staff, other individuals working within the school, or members of staff who have been absent for a period, must be referred for an Enhanced DBS check.

2.3.2 A person who is barred from working with children will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer, with those groups. If Oakfield School knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with children, they will be breaking the law. If there is an incident where a member of staff or volunteer must be dismissed because they have harmed

a child, or would have, had they not left, Oakfield School will notify the DBS and if appropriate, The Teaching Regulation Agency. Details of how to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency can be found on GOV.UK.

- 2.3.3 Having a Child Protection Policy and Procedure and regularly reviewing and updating this in line with national and local policy developments. The Child Protection Coordinator to include updates from HSCP.
- 2.3.4 Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the Child Protection Policy and Procedure, through staff induction and ongoing Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership training level 1.
- 2.3.5 Ensuring that all staff attend appropriate Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Child Protection Training.
- 2.3.6 Ensuring that Oakfield School has Child Protection Coordinators and that all staff and volunteers are aware of the named persons and process of reporting concerns to them.
- 2.3.7 Assessing the risk that children and young people may encounter and taking steps to minimise and manage this through in-house risk assessment and Health and Safety inspections.
- 2.3.8 Letting parents/carers, children and young people know how to report concerns about a child, young person, staff member or volunteer or complain about anything that they are not happy about using the Whistle Blowing policy and the internal complaints procedures.
- 2.3.9 Giving children, young people, parents/carers information about what Oakfield School does and what you can expect through the pupil induction process and termly feedback during home visits.

3 National & Local Guidance

- 3.1 This Child Protection Policy and Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Hull Safeguarding Children Partnerships Guidelines and Procedures. In accordance with the Children Act 2004 it is a statutory responsibility for key agencies coming in to contact with children and young people, to plan to ensure that in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (Section 11, Children Act 2004).
- 3.2 Where private or voluntary organisations come into contact with or offer services to children, they should, as a matter of good practice, take account of this guidance and follow it as far as possible.

3.3 The following national guidance should also be referred to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance for schools and colleges, September 2024)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings February 2022
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children (HM: July 2018)
- A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children December 2023
- Information Sharing – Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers (HM: July 2018)
- The Prevent Duty (June 2015)
- The Children Act (1989)
- The Children Act (2004)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Criminal Justice & Court Services Act 2000
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused – Advice for Practitioners (HM: March 2015)

3.4 The following Local Partnership guidance and Oakfield School policies should also be referred to:

- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy, to be read in conjunction with Preventing and Tackling Bullying, DfE July 2017.
- The school's Behaviour & Discipline Policy (including Restraints, Rewards and Sanctions)
- PSHE Policy
- Drug-Related Incidents policy
- Safe Working Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Worker Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy and YHGfL Guide to using Facebook safely
- Confidentiality Policy
- Complaints & Disciplinary Policy
- Staff Induction and Staff Handbook
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

4 Early Intervention

4.1 Children and their families may experience a range of needs at different times in their lives, therefore, it is important for children to receive the right help at the right time, to address risk and prevent issues escalating. At Oakfield we aim to identify where early interventions are needed to support families by closely monitoring children and highlighting any emerging issues. If necessary, and with appropriate consent, information is shared, or meetings are convened with other professionals to support effective early help assessments.

5 Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare & Child Protection

5.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- undertaking that role to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

5.2 Child Protection

5.2.1 Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm. Effective child protection is essential to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect from harm is reduced.

5.3 Child in Need (CIN)

5.3.1 Children who are defined as 'in need', under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services. This includes those children with a disability.

5.4 Significant Harm

5.4.1 Some children are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The concept of significant harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the child and gives the Local Authority a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

5.5 Who Abuses Children.

5.5.1 Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

5.6 What is Abuse and Neglect?

5.6.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or young person. Child refers to anyone under the age of 18. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

5.6.2 All staff, especially Child Protection Coordinators and deputies, should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families.

5.6.3 All staff, but especially the Child Protection Coordinators (and deputies), should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to): sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

5.6.4 In addition to the above, safeguarding also includes children's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. This is inclusive of different relationships that young people form in their neighborhoods, schools and/or online, which can feature all forms of abuse and/or violence. Often parents/carers have little influence over these contexts, and other people

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse 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 Abuses:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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 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, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

Neglect:

Neglect is 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 because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caretakers), or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

5.7 This is not an exhaustive list, and it must be recognised that it is not the role of staff / volunteers to assess whether children or young people have suffered harm. Staff / volunteers / Child Protection Coordinator do have a duty to report any concerns about harm in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, Guidelines & Procedures.

6 Recognition of Harm

6.1 The harm or possible harm of a child may come to your attention in several possible ways:

6.1.1 Information given by the child, his/ her friends, a family member, or close associate.

6.1.2 The child's behaviour may become different from the usual, be significantly different from the behaviour of their peers, be bizarre or unusual or may involve 'acting out' a harmful situation in play.

6.1.3 An injury which arouses suspicion because:

- it does not make sense when compared with the explanation given.

- the explanations differ depending on who is giving them (e.g., differing explanations from the parent/carer and child); and
- the child appears anxious and evasive when asked about the injury.

6.1.4 Suspicion being raised when several factors occur over time, for example, the child fails to progress and thrive in contrast to his/her peers.

6.1.5 Contact with individuals who pose a 'risk to children' relates to an individual that has been identified as presenting a risk or potential risk of harm to children. This can be someone who has been convicted of an offence listed in Schedule One of the Children and Young Person's Act 1933 (Sexual Offences Act 2003), or someone who has been identified as continuing to present a risk to children.

6.1.6 The parents/carers behaviour before the birth of a child may indicate the likelihood of significant harm to an unborn child, for example substance misuse, previous children removed from their parent/carer.

6.1.7 **Substance misuse.** The potential for a child to be harmed because of the excessive use of alcohol, illegal and controlled drugs, solvents or related substances may occur during their life. The use of drugs or other substances by parents or carers does not in itself indicate child neglect or abuse, and there is no assumption that a child living in such circumstances will automatically be considered under the child protection procedures. It is important to assess how parental substance use impacts upon the children or young people in the family.

6.1.8 **Mental Health & Wellbeing.** Mental illness in a parent/carer does not necessarily have an adverse effect on the child or young person but it is important to assess its implications for any children involved in the family. The adverse effects of parental mental illness on the child are less likely when parental problems are mild, last for a short period of time, are not associated with family disharmony, and where there is another parent or family member who can respond to the child's needs and offer protection. Where mental illness is accompanied by problem alcohol use, domestic violence or associated with poverty and social isolation, children are particularly vulnerable.

6.2 Oakfield School plays a key role in helping all pupils build resilience and develop good mental health and wellbeing. We understand that children and young people go through ups and downs during life, but with the right support, nurture, and education these difficulties can be overcome. It is acknowledged, that there are occasions when some pupils may face significant life challenges or events, which could have a profound impact on their emotional wellbeing and cause mental ill health. In addition, we are aware that mental health problems can

sometimes be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

- 6.3 We fully understand that only medical professionals can make a formal diagnosis of a mental health condition, but staff must remain vigilant to any warning signs, which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health, or emotional wellbeing issues. The Emotional Wellbeing Lead and Child Protection Coordinators are to be notified in a swift and timely manner, to determine the necessary course of supportive action, which may include referrals to specialist services.
- 6.4 If staff fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, the normal child protection procedures should be followed, and the Child Protection Coordinators informed immediately.
- 6.5 The Child Protection Coordinators, Emotional Wellbeing Team and the Senior Leadership Team have undertaken PAPYRUS, Suicide Prevention – Explore, Ask, Keep Safe Training.
- 6.6 Possible warning signs include:
 - Becoming socially withdrawn.
 - Changes in mood, behaviour, or activity.
 - Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
 - Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
 - Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope.
 - Repeated physical pain or sickness with no evidence.
 - Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
 - An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

6.1.9 **Domestic Abuse.** Children and young people can suffer directly and indirectly if they live in a household where there is domestic abuse. It is likely to have a damaging effect on the health and development of children. The amendment made in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to the Children Act 1989 clarifies the meaning of harm to include, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. This can include children witnessing violence in the home. Domestic abuse has an impact in several ways:

- It can pose a threat to the physical wellbeing of an unborn child, if a mother is kicked or punched.
- Children may suffer injuries as a result of being caught up in violent episodes.
- Children become distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent.

- The physical and psychological abuse suffered by the adult victim can have a negative impact upon their ability to look after their children.
- The impact of domestic abuse is exacerbated when the abuse is combined with problematic alcohol or drug use.
- People working with children should also be alert to the frequent inter-relationship between domestic abuse and the abuse and neglect of children.

7 **Operation Encompass**

7.1 Oakfield School signed up to Operation Encompass in September 2017.

7.2 A domestic abuse notification is sent to the Child Protection Coordinator, Jayne Oakley, by the Schools Partnership Safeguarding Hub (EHASH). This informs the school of a domestic abuse incident and whether children were present at the time of the incident, enabling the school to be aware and support the child.

8 **Bullying**

8.1 This can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the four main ones are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities and social acceptance of their peer group) and Cyber bullying. The damage inflicted by bullying can be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress, to the extent that it can affect health and development and, at the extreme, cause significant harm.

8.2 Cyberbullying is bullying through information and communication technologies, mediums such as mobile phone text messages, emails, phone calls, internet chat rooms, instant messaging, and social networking websites such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Cyberbullying is where technology is used to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. (Refer to the school's Online Policy).

9 **Self-Harm**

9.1 School staff can play an important role in preventing self-harm and supporting student, peers and parents currently engaging in self-harm.

9.2 Any member of staff who is aware of a student engaging in or suspected of being at risk of engaging in self-harm should always consult with the Child Protection Coordinator.

9.3 Students need to be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality. If you consider a student is at serious risk of harming themselves then confidentiality cannot be kept.

10 Radicalisation & Extremist Behaviour

10.1 At Oakfield School, we assist our children to become more resilient to the messages of violent extremists through creating an environment where all young people learn to understand others, value and appreciate diversity and develop skills to be able to debate. Through the balanced curriculum we offer we will help young people learn and explore the values of different faiths and cultures. However, should any concerns of radicalised or extremist behaviours be brought to the school's attention, it will be dealt with in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures, and advice will be sought from either the Local Authority Early Help and Safeguarding Hub or Humberside Police. Any referrals to the Channel process should be emailed to: prevent@humberside.pnn.police.uk. Refer to The Prevent Duty June 2015.

11 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

11.1 Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.

11.2 Significant indicators:

- Having a relationship of concern with a controlling adult or young person (this may involve physical and/or emotional abuse and/or gang activity)
- Entering and/or leaving a vehicle driven by an unknown adult
- Possessing unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothes, or other items
- Frequenting areas known for risky activities
- Being groomed or abused via the internet and mobile technology
- Having unexplained contact with hotels, taxi companies, and fast-food outlets

11.3 Refer to HSCB guidance for practitioners

11.3.1 Child Criminal Exploitation – County Lines. The term County Lines describes gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into other areas of the country, often small towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or another form of ‘deal line’, which can be a person. They are likely to exploit children to move and store the drugs money and will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

11.3.2 At Oakfield School we will treat any child who is criminally exploited as a victim first and refer to Children’s Social Care and/or Humberside Police immediately.

11.4 Indicators that a child may be at risk of criminal exploitation:

- Increase in ‘missing episodes’ a particular key as children can be missing for days and drug-run in other counties
- Having unexplained amounts of money, new high-cost items, and multiple mobile phones
- Increased social media and phone/text use, almost always secretly
- Having injuries that are unexplained and unwilling to have looked at
- Increase in aggression, violence and fighting
- Carrying weapons
- Travel receipts that are unexplained
- Parents’ concerns and significant changes in behaviour

11.5 Female Genital Mutilation

11.5.1 This is against the law, yet for some communities it is considered a religious act and cultural requirement. Therefore, if it is carried out either within the UK or arrangements are made for the child to go abroad with the intention of having this procedure, the school has a duty to inform either the police or Children’s Social Care. Similarly, if staff become aware that this procedure has been carried out, following a direct disclosure by a young person, then there is a legal duty to inform the police, as soon as possible under the Serious Crime Act 2015.

12 Children Missing from Education (CME)

12.1 Children are best protected by regularly attending school where they will be safe from harm and where there are professionals to monitor their wellbeing. At Oakfield School we will encourage the full attendance of all our pupils. Where we have concerns that a child is missing from education, we will follow the local authority protocols and refer to the Education Welfare Service CME Officer who will make reasonable efforts to identify the child’s whereabouts.

12.2 The child will not be removed from our school roll until notified by the CME officer that it is appropriate to do so.

(Ref: Attendance Policy and Local Authority CME protocols)

13 Curriculum

13.1 Pupils at Oakfield School have SMSC lessons in which Safeguarding is embedded in the curriculum including: Online Safety, British Values and local and National topics. Child Protection Coordinators work closely with the staff delivering the lessons.

14 Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND)

14.1 We are an inclusive school and recognise that SEND children have the same human rights to be safe from abuse and harm as non-SEND children.

14.2 We actively try to remove any barriers to learning and participation that may disadvantage children. We acknowledge that children with SEND are especially vulnerable to all types of abuse and are statistically more likely to be targeted due to difficulties they may face in communicating what is happening to them. Therefore, we ensure that SEND children are responded to carefully when they have, or show signs of, concern.

14.3 We feel it is particularly important that all staff and volunteers are fully informed and adequately trained to protect vulnerable groups.

14.4 Oakfield is a Residential Special school therefore additional factors are to be considered with regard to Safeguarding and be alert to the extra vulnerabilities of SEND children in the setting e.g. inappropriate pupil relationships and the potential for child-on-child abuse, particularly in schools and colleges where there are significantly more girls than boys and vice versa. They should generally be led by the Child Protection Coordinators, who work closely with the host local authority and, where relevant, any local authorities that have placed their children there.

14.5 Residential Special Schools, have additional requirements in regard to Safeguarding. These relate to National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools and regulations for the relevant setting all schools with a residential provision must comply with their obligations relating to them.

14.6 Oakfield have an Independent Person who visits the children in the residential provision.

15 Online Safety

- 15.1 The school has a policy regarding the use of mobile and smart technology, which reflects the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G).
- 15.2 This access means some children, whilst at school, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. The school's Child Protection Coordinators will undertake the necessary action when this occurs.

16 Screening, Searching & Confiscation

16.1 Searching:

- Staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees.
- The Headteacher and authorised staff have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupils may have a prohibited item. Prohibited items are:
 - Knives or weapons
 - Alcohol
 - Illegal drugs
 - Stolen items
 - Tobacco and cigarette papers
 - Fireworks
 - Pornographic images or videos
 - Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used: to commit an offence or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil).
- Headteachers and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

16.2 Confiscation:

- School staff can seize any prohibited item found because of a search. They can also seize any item, however found, which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

16.3 Appropriate Adult:

- For further details, please see the DFE Screening, searching and confiscation – Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies, July 2022

17 Equality Act 2010

- 17.1 Schools and colleges have obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act). According to the Equality Act, schools and colleges must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).
- 17.2 Whilst all of the above protections are important in the context of safeguarding, this guidance and the legal duties placed on schools and colleges, in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, governing bodies and proprietors should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils and students with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.
- 17.3 Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools and colleges to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with disadvantages affecting pupils or students with a particular protected characteristic in order to meet their specific need.
- 17.4 This includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people, including those with long term conditions. A school or college, could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment.
- 17.5 Guidance to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the act can be found at Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).
- 17.6 For further information, Equality Act guidance | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com).

18 LGBTQ

- 18.1 The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.
- 18.2 Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of

staff. LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

19 Child on Child Abuse (Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues)

- 19.1 Oakfield School believe that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated, dismissed, or minimised.
- 19.2 Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by others which are of a safeguarding nature. Although research shows that girls are more likely to be victims of peer-on-peer abuse, staff should remain open minded and acknowledge that this form of abuse can affect any pupil within our school.
- 19.3 Child on child abuse usually manifests as one, or a combination of the following:
 - **Bullying.** If a child is suffering or at risk of significant harm, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern. Bullying can take different forms, including physical, verbal, cyber, racist, religious, cultural and homophobic bullying.
 - **Domestic Abuse.** Teenage relationships' abuse involves controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour and violence. It can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional in nature.
 - **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).** Defined as an individual or group taking advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity.
 - **Harmful Sexual Behaviour.** Involves a child engaging in discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, whether online or offline. It includes sexualised language or role play, viewing pornography, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. It also includes 'sexting'.
 - **Sexual Harassment.** This is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which can include sexual comments, sexual "jokes" or taunting, physical behaviour, or online sexual harassment.
 - **Sexual Violence.** This includes rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

20 Up Skirting

- 20.1 Up skirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm. This is a Criminal Offence, and does not solely

relate to females, as males can also be victims of this form of harmful behaviour.

21 Procedures for Managing Allegations of Sexual Harassment

- 21.1 Sexual harassment creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviour and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence. These behaviours should never be tolerated, passed off as 'banter' or part of growing up.
- 21.2 When a report of sexual harassment is made, a factual record should be completed. It is important to consider the wishes and feeling of the alleged victim.
- 21.3 Parents/carers of DSL should be made aware, and along with Senior Leaders, and a decision made on the most appropriate course of action, as per the Anti-Bullying or Behaviour Policy.
- 21.4 Pastoral support will be offered to all affected parties.
- 21.5 Where cases are proven, appropriate sanctions, as outlined in the behaviour policy, will be applied.
- 21.6 Decisions, reasons for decision, actions and outcomes should be accurately recorded and retained on the pupil file and online diary.

22 Procedures for Managing Allegations of Sexual Violence

- 22.1 When an allegation is made, the DSL should be informed immediately.
- 22.2 A factual record must be made, but no attempts should be taken to investigate the circumstances, at this stage.
- 22.3 If required, the DSL will contact EHaSH, or in cases where an alleged criminal offence has been committed, Humberside Police.

23 The role of the Child Protection Coordinator

- 23.1 Where there are concerns about the welfare of any child or young person, all staff/volunteers have a duty to share those concerns with the designated Child Protection Coordinators. If the Child Protection Coordinators are not on site these should be referred to the Deputy Child Protection Coordinator (Joanne Jordan), if none of the above are on site SSLT will contact one of them immediately with the referral.
- 23.2 The school's Child Protection Coordinators are responsible for:
 - monitoring and recording concerns about the wellbeing of a child or young person.

- being a source of expertise and advice, having received training on detecting signs of harm, CP procedures and liaising with other front-line agencies.
- having knowledge of procedures agreed and established by local joint agencies
- completing any necessary paperwork when making a referral, supplying information to social and learning services.
- making referrals to the Local Authority Children's Services
- overseeing and updating the Child Protection policy.
- making available to staff information on current protocols and procedures, arranging training for staff/volunteers
 - by means of this document, a copy of which is kept in the staffroom, staff prep area and staff shared area of the server; and
 - by publicising access to the up-to-date Child Protection Guidelines, which are kept in the staff room.
- keeping staff trained and updated on current issues and procedures. It is planned that this should be done on a regular basis, at the beginning of the school year for all staff. All staff will complete Safeguarding Level 1 and will throughout the year have updates via staff meetings and emails. Child Protection Coordinators, Jayne Oakley and Leanne Middleton, are trained to deliver Safeguarding Level 1. The Child Protection Coordinators will also, as part of induction process, give initial safeguarding training to all new staff.
- All staff should receive appropriate Safeguarding and child Protection training (including Online Safety, which amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to **filtering and monitoring**) at induction. The training should be regularly updated. KCSIE 2023

- 23.3 The school's Child Protection Coordinators (Jayne Oakley and Leanne Middleton), after receiving a referral, will act on behalf of Oakfield School in referring concerns or allegations of harm to the Local Authority Children's Social Care or the Police Protecting Vulnerable People Unit.
- 23.4 If the Child Protection Coordinators are in any doubt about making a referral it is important to note that advice can be sought from the Local Authority Children's Social Care. The name of the child and family should be kept confidential at this stage and will be requested if the enquiry proceeds to a referral.
- 23.5 The school's Child Protection Coordinators may share limited information on a need-to-know basis amongst the staff/management whilst respecting the need for confidentiality.
- 23.6 It is not the role of the Child Protection Coordinator to undertake an investigation into the concerns or allegation of harm. It is the role of

the Child Protection Coordinator to collate and clarify details of the concern or allegation and to provide this information to the Local Authority Early Help and Safeguarding Hub, or Locality POD if Children's Social Care is already involved, whose duty it is to make enquiries in accordance with Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

24 The role of the School Health Service

24.1 The School Health Service has an important role to play in promoting and maintaining the health and welfare of children. Weekly on-site provision is contributing to the re-establishment of a more integrated service. This allows easier, quicker, and more effective communication between services.

25 The Role of the Governing Body

24.1 The Governing Body will ensure the school:

- has a Child Protection Policy & Procedures in place, which is in accordance with LA guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures, and available to all school personnel and parents on request.
- operates safe recruitment procedures by making sure all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff, volunteers and parents who work with children.
- keeps and maintains a Single Central Record for all staff checks (including volunteers, and supply staff).
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance issued by the DfE, LA and Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- has a member of the Governing Body (Chair – Lee Morfitt) who is responsible for liaising with the LA and partner agencies in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Headteacher.

25.2 The Governing Body will review all policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding on an annual basis.

26 The Role of the Governing Body

26.1 The school's Headteacher ensures that all policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by staff and that sufficient resources and time are allocated to allow designated staff to discharge their duties.

26.2 It is the responsibility of the school's Headteacher and Governing Body to make sure that newly appointed staff have undergone Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

26.3 Importantly, in the event of the CPC, the Headteacher, the delegated Support Staff, or any other member of the Senior Management Team not being available, it is the duty of whomever suspects harm to make a referral to Local Authority Early Help and Safeguarding Hub.

27 Monitoring & Filtering

- 27.1 Whilst the Governing Body consider their responsibility to safeguard and promote children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system.
- 27.2 As part of this process, governing bodies should ensure the school has appropriate monitoring and filtering systems in place and review their effectiveness.

28 Out of Hours/School Holidays

- 28.1 The school's Child Protection Coordinators, Jayne Oakley and Leanne Middleton will be available out of hours and in the school holidays and contactable on a works mobile phone or works email address and will attend any meetings or relevant work out of hours and in the holidays.
- 28.2 The school's Child Protection Coordinators will inform the Headteacher in advance if they are not available any evening or in the school holidays so that the Headteacher is made available.

29 Seeking Consent for a Referral

- 29.1 Professionals should seek in general to discuss any concerns with the family (including the child where appropriate) and where possible seek their agreement in making referrals to the Local Authority Early Help and Safeguarding Hub. This should only be done where such discussion and agreement seeking will not place the child at an increased risk of significant harm.
- 29.2 So, in general, where concerns about a child relate to Section 17 children 'in need' (Children Act 1989) consent should be sought from the parents, carers or children, where appropriate, prior to a referral being made to the Local Authority.
- 29.3 It should be noted that parents/carers or child may not agree to information being shared, but this should not prevent referrals where child protection concerns persist. The reasons for dispensing with consent from the parents, carers or child should be clearly recorded.
- 29.4 In cases where an allegation has been made against a family member living in the same household as the child and it is the view that

discussing the matter with the parent would place the child at risk of harm, or where discussing it may place a member of staff/volunteer at risk, consent does not have to be sought prior to the referral being made.

29.5 If there is uncertainty about whether to seek parental consent prior to a referral being made, then advice should be sought from the duty social worker at the Local Authority Early Help and Safeguarding Hub.

30 Reporting Concerns or Allegations of Abuse (Refer to LSCP Guidelines and Procedures)

30.1 A member of staff or volunteer must report any concerns or allegation of harm immediately to the designated Child Protection Coordinators. In the absence of the Child Protection Coordinators the matter should be reported to the person identified as their Deputy.

30.2 In the event of these individuals being unavailable the matter should be reported through the line management. In the unlikely event of management not being available the matter should be reported directly to the appropriate Local Authority Early Help and Safeguarding Hub or Police Public / Family Protection Unit. In the case of it being out of hours the Emergency Duty Team should be contacted (*please see the contact details*).

31 Making a Referral

31.1 Referrals of children in need, including those where there are child protection concerns will be made to:

- **Hull**
Children's Social Care, Local Authority Early Help and Safeguarding Hub or Police Public Protection Unit
- **East Riding**
Children's Social Care or Police Family Protection Team

31.2 Out of Hours to the relevant Emergency Duty Team.

31.3 All referrals made by telephone need to be followed up in writing within 48 hours.

31.4 The Child Protection Coordinator should make the referral as appropriate. The referrer should be prepared, where possible, to give the following information:

- The nature of the concerns/allegations.
- Whether the child will need immediate action to ensure their safety.
- Are the parents aware of the concerns? Has consent for the referral been sought? If not, the reasons for this?

- Information about the child and family, including other siblings.
- The nature of your involvement with the family.
- Other professionals involved with the family.
- The source of your referral: is it based on your own assessment of the needs of the child, a reported allegation or disclosure, or has the concern been reported to you by another person, if so who?
- Child's current whereabouts and when they were last seen.
- If you consider the child suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, who is the source of that harm and their current whereabouts?

32 Allegations against Staff Members/Volunteers

32.1 Any member of staff or volunteer who has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual working within the school will report the nature of the allegation or concern to the Headteacher immediately. The member of staff who has a concern or to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further.

32.2 The Headteacher will report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

32.3 If the concern or allegation relates to the Headteacher, the Child Protection Coordinator or a member of the school leadership team will contact the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will report the matter to the LADO.

32.4 In cases where there is an immediate risk to any child or young person, the information must be passed to Local Authority Children's Social Care or the Police, as soon as possible. An allegation is defined as where:

32.4.1 It is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates 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.

33 Low-Level Concerns

33.1 A low-level concern is defined as any concern had about an adult's behaviour towards, or concerning, a child that does not meet the harms threshold (see below) or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral at the time of its reporting.

33.2 The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

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

33.3 Inappropriate behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour to behaviour which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Examples of inappropriate behaviour that would constitute a low-level concern that should be reported to the Headteacher include:

33.3.1 Being overly friendly with children – this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with pupils, e.g., conversations that are about a staff member's personal life or are of a sexual nature.

- Having favourites – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment, or buying pupils gifts.
- Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phones or devices.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Using inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

33.4 Low-level concerns are differentiated from concerns that can cause harm. The harms threshold is the point at which a concern is no longer low-level and constitutes a threat of harm to a child. This threshold is defined as accusations that an adult 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 in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour that has happened outside of school.

- 33.5 While Low-Level concerns are, by their nature, less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the school understands that many serious safeguarding concerns, e.g. child sexual abuse, often begin with low-level concerns, e.g. being overly friendly with children.
- 33.6 As part of the school's approach to safeguarding, we will promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf Oakfield School (including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.
- 33.7 All concerns need to be to the SSLT all concerns will be recorded and kept within Safeguarding. Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will be made aware of any low-level concerns.
- 33.8 A record of all low-level concerns will be kept within Safeguarding.

34 Responding to a Complaint or an Allegation

- 34.1 The person to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further and should:
 - treat the matter seriously.
 - avoid asking leading questions and keep an open mind.
 - communicate with the child (if the complainant) in a way that is appropriate to the child's age, understanding and preferred language or communication style.
 - Make a written record of the information (where possible in the words the child used), including:
 - When the alleged incident took place (time and date)
 - Who was present (witnesses)
 - What was said to have happened
 - Sign and date the written record
 - Report the matter immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer directly

N.B. children/young people must not be asked to produce or sign any statement. This could undermine any potential investigation.

- 34.2 Oakfield School adheres to the Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024
- 34.3 Under the Education Act, 2011, it is a criminal offence to publish material that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is subject to an allegation before they are charged. This legislation applies to all stakeholders and parents/carers, and includes any form of disclosure which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public,

i.e. social networking sites, speaking to the press, playground or staff room gossip etc.

34.4 In cases where there is an immediate risk to any child or young person, the information must be passed to Local Authority Children's Social Care or the Police, as soon as possible.

- Seek advice on how to proceed and follow the recommended actions. Advice should also be taken on notifying the alleged perpetrator and parents/carers of both parties.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an accurate record of the concern, the discussions, recommendations, and any outcomes. A copy of the record will be retained in the pupil's files and online diary.
- Pastoral support will be offered to all affected parties.
- It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period, according to our Behaviour & Discipline Policy.
- Where EHASH nor the Police accept the complaint, a thorough internal investigation should take place into the matter.
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative supervision plan. This plan should be monitored, and a date set for a follow-up evaluation.

34.5 Through our broad and balanced curriculum, we will educate pupils about keeping themselves safe, and how to build respectful relationships.

34.6 Further DfE guidance on managing Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

35 Seeking Medical Attention

35.1 If a child has a physical injury and there are concerns about abuse and emergency medical attention is required, then this should be sought immediately by phoning for an ambulance. You should then follow the procedures for referring a child protection concern to Local Authority Children's Social Care.

36 Staff & Volunteer Self-Protection

36.1 Adherence to guidelines on self-protection for staff and volunteers working with children and young people can avoid vulnerable situations where false allegations can be made. These include:

- Avoiding situations where a staff member or volunteer is on their own with a child.
- In the event of an injury to a child, accidental or not, ensure that it is recorded and witnessed by another adult on the school's accident record form, kept in the first aid room.
- Keep written records of any allegations a child makes against staff and volunteers and report in line with the Child Protection Policy.
- If a child or young person touches a staff member or volunteer inappropriately record what happened immediately and inform the child protection coordinator.
- Adhere to the Oakfield School Behaviour and Discipline

37 Code of Practice

37.1 Staff, volunteers, and children should always:

- Take all allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse that a young person makes seriously (including those made against staff) and report them through the procedures.
- Provide an opportunity and environment for children to talk to others about concerns they may have.
- Provide an environment that encourages children and adults to feel comfortable and confident in challenging attitudes and behaviours that may discriminate against others.
- Risk assesses situations and activities to ensure all potential dangers have been identified.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Staff/volunteers/children should not.
- Permit or accept abusive or discriminatory behaviour.
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact in or outside of school
- Use inappropriate or insulting language.
- Show favouritism to anyone.
- Undermine or criticise others.
- Give personal money.

37.2 When drawing up the codes of practice, it is important to involve staff/volunteers and children in the process.

38 Recruitment & Selection

38.1 It is important when recruiting paid staff and volunteers to adhere to the organisations recruitment policy. This will ensure potential staff and volunteers are screened for their suitability to work with children and young people.

38.2 Oakfield School adheres to the Hull City Council Safer Recruitment Procedures.

- 38.3 All paid staff and volunteers with access to children and young people or sensitive information relating to children will be required to undertake an enhanced DBS check.
- 38.4 Staff and volunteers working directly with children or with access to sensitive information will be required to complete Local Partnership Child Protection Training. Their training will be reviewed in their supervision meeting.
- 38.5 All staff and volunteers will be required to read the Child Protection Policy. This will be reviewed to ensure up to date knowledge.
- 38.6 All staff and volunteers to complete an application form, including details of previous employment, details of any conviction for criminal offences (including spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974), agreement for an enhanced DBS check, permission to contact two referees, including their current or most recent employer (which should be taken up).
- 38.7 The potential staff member or volunteer will be interviewed for their suitability for the post using Safer Recruitment Procedures.
- 38.8 Staff and volunteers will have a period of induction where they will complete any induction training, e.g., Level 1 Safeguarding, First Aid and Team Teach, and access internal policies.

39 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

- 39.1 In addition to as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview.
- 39.2 Oakfield School will undertake reasonable online searches, as part of the due diligence on the shortlisted candidates, where we identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online; these will be discussed with the candidate at interview.
- 39.3 Process:
 - Candidate shortlisted.
 - When a candidate confirms their attendance at a selection day, an online search will be carried out before the interview by Oakfield's Child Protection Coordinators and recorded on an Online Search for Shortlisted Candidate form.

- In line with Statutory Guidance KCSIE 2024 Oakfield will conduct online searches for all new staff, volunteers, Governors. We will ask shortlisted candidates to share with us all social media platforms that they use and their usernames / handles, as well as the names of any websites that they own, post on, or contribute to. A Google search will also be conducted, checking the first page of results for the following search terms:

- Candidate name.
- Name and current employment.
- Name and previous employment.
- Name and school/college/university.
- Name and job title.

- 39.4 If a shortlisted candidate refuses to share this information, we reserve the right to remove the invite to interview and terminate the recruitment process.
- 39.5 If Oakfield identify any information of concern that requires the recruitment panel to ask any further or supplementary questions to explore the candidate's suitability to work with children and to work in our organisation, the Head of Recruitment will be notified.
- 39.6 The Child Protection Coordinators will discuss any concerns that are of a safeguarding or criminal nature with the Headteacher without delay.
- 39.7 Using the SGF11 Form, the school will identify what sites were identified and state whether we believe the content to cause concern.
- 39.8 Once the forms are complete, they will be handed to recruiting manager, who will then countersign the form before it is stored in the candidate's recruitment file (for successful candidates).

40 Whistleblowing

- 40.1 Staff or volunteers must report to a senior member of staff any behaviour or practice by a colleague which gives cause for concern in relation to safeguarding the wellbeing of pupils. However, if staff do not feel comfortable using internal reporting systems this should not prevent a report being made. If this issue does occur, then staff are advised to contact the NSPCC Whistle Blowing helpline tell: 0800 028 0285 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- 40.2 For the full whistleblowing process, please see the school's Whistleblowing Policy via:
<http://www.oakfieldhull.co.uk/index.php/school-policies/>

41 Contacts

Hull

Children's Social Care (Local Authority)

Early Help & Safeguarding Hub	(01482) 448879
Emergency Duty Team	(01482) 300304
Child Protection Administrator	(01482) 790933
Local Authority Designated Officer	(01482) 790933
Police Public Protection Unit	(01482) 578488

East Riding of Yorkshire

Children's Social Care (Local Authority)

Call Centre	(01482) 393939
Children's Services	(01482) 396840
Emergency Duty Team	(01482) 880826
Child Protection Administrator	(01482) 396472

East Riding Safeguarding Children Partnership

Local Authority Designated Officer

(01482) 396998/9

(01482) 396999

North East Lincolnshire

Children's Social Care

(01472) 325555

North Lincolnshire

Children's Social Care

(01724) 296500

Police Family Protection Team

ext. 2407

0845 6060222

The Prevent (Channel Team)

prevent@humbershire.pnn.police.uk

(01482) 220759

prevent@eastriding.gov.uk