



Merryfields School

Nurturing a love of learning for life

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Signed:



Mr Neil Brannigan, Headteacher
Mr Aaron Dimock-Bell, Chair of LAC

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Key Safeguarding Contacts

1. Key Roles in Merryfields School

Safeguarding contacts

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Geraldine Eld**

Our Designated Teacher for looked after children is **Geraldine Eld**

g.eld@merryfields.manorhall.academy

01782 914 219



Safeguarding training level 1-4, safer recruitment

Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and PSHE lead

is **Nicole Minor**

n.minor@merryfields.manorhall.academy

01782 914 219



Safeguarding training level 1-4

Our Early Help Manager and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Melissa Poole**

m.poole@merryfields.manorhall.academy

01782 914 219



Safeguarding training level 1-3

Our Chair of Local Academy Committee is **Aaron Dimock-Bell**

adimmock-bell@merryfields.manorhall.academy

01782 914219

Safer recruitment

Our Safeguarding link Local Academy Committee member is Rosanna Snee

01782 914219

Safeguarding training level 1-4

Our school Bursar is Josie Atkins

Safer recruitment

2. Context

Merryfields School is a generic special school for pupils with learning difficulties. A large proportion of pupils have a diagnosis of ASC and many of our pupils experience challenges around their communication. Therefore, it is essential that all staff have a robust understanding and working knowledge of safeguarding and how that may present in a pupil's behaviour and appearance, as pupils may not always be able to tell us verbally when something is wrong.

3. PURPOSE & AIMS

The purpose of Merryfields School's safeguarding policy is to ensure we:

- **Are committed** – developing a robust culture of vigilance that is reflective of the educational needs of our pupils. We understand that our pupils' behaviour is a form of communication when they are unable to tell us that something is wrong and we strive to put processes into place to ensure that pupils can communicate their needs to staff.
- **Build resilience** – raising awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues, and equipping children with the language and skills to keep themselves safe. Children of all abilities and needs are taught strategies for communicating that something is wrong and where appropriate, assemblies are used to teach children about specific issues such as bullying, safety and mental health, with input from professional visitors to school where appropriate.
- **Establish a safe environment** – in which children can learn and develop within an ethos of openness and are taught to treat each other with respect, to feel safe, to have a voice and are listened to. This is evident in all classrooms, as well as through the school council. Pupils are offered choices through their individual methods of communication and taught that their choices are respected.
- **Support vulnerable pupils** – supporting pupils who have been abused, have witnessed violence towards others or may be vulnerable to abuse. This may be through the support of our Pupil Mentor, who is an accredited Emotional Literacy Support Assistant, our Early Help Manager, who delivers and supports Nurture interventions, through the large number of staff who have completed Emotion Coaching training, staff delivering interventions such as Drawing and Talking and Lego Therapy, or where appropriate through referrals to outside agencies such as CAMHS or Glow.

- **Prevent unsuitable people** – from working with children by ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of all school staff, supply staff and volunteers to work with our children and to maintain an active vigilance thereafter. With an open door culture, staff are encouraged to discuss any concerns about adult conduct with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher (DSL)

Our aim is to follow the procedures set out by Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership, [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) by **knowing** and **understanding** that:

- **Knowing** that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, and **the voice of the child is a priority**.
- Remembering that **everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.
- Ensuring that **everyone** working within school takes responsibility to ensure that their approach is **child-centred** considering, at all times, what is in the **best interests of the child**.
- Establishing a **safe environment**, to **enable** our children to learn and develop within an ethos of openness.
- Recognising that **no single practitioner** can have the full picture of a child's needs and circumstances
- Recognising that if children and families are to receive the **right help at the right time**, **everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action
- Knowing the importance of providing children with a **balanced curriculum** including PHRSE which covers healthy relationship education, online safety, healthy relationships, how to say 'no' and how to ask for help, as relevant to their individual needs.
- Undertaking the role to enable children and young people at our school to have the **best outcomes**.
- Ensuring that we have awareness of our staff's knowledge and understanding as well as embedding safeguarding, through clear systems of communication and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) including weekly briefings so that safeguarding is a **robust element** of our practice.

At Merryfields School we strive to: -

- Provide help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- **Protect** children and young people from maltreatment, inside or outside the home, including online.
- **Prevent** impairment of our children and young people's mental and physical health or development, including through a collaborative working approach with the School Nursing team and other professionals.
- **Ensure** that our children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provisions of safe and effective care.
- **Take action** to enable **ALL** children to have the **best outcomes** in all areas of their education and development.

This policy provides guidance to all adults working within the school, whether paid or voluntary or directly employed by the school or a third party and should be read in conjunction with the documents [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

- This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents/carers about this policy when their children join our school.
- This policy will be reviewed in full by the Local Academy Committee on an annual basis or sooner should legislation/guidance change.
- This policy sets out how the school's Local Academy Committee (LAC) discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at this school. Our policy applies to all staff; paid and unpaid, working in the school, including LAC members.
- The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff, supply staff and volunteers) at the point of induction, alongside our Staff code of conduct.
- Our LAC, working with the senior leadership team and especially our Designated Safeguarding Lead, ensure that those staff who do not work directly with children read either Part 1 or Annex A (condensed version of Part 1) of the KCSIE 2025 guidance.
- Our LAC members read the Management of Safeguarding as detailed in part 2 of KCSIE.
- All staff who work directly with children, are provided and read Part One of [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) Merryfields school follows the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership policies and procedures. [StaffsSCP](#)

4. Our ethos and culture at Merryfields School

Merryfields School is committed to our school ethos of 'nurturing a love of learning for life' within our daily practice. We provide pupils with an environment where they can share their experiences, be listened to by staff, have their individual needs met, and therefore feel safe and ready to learn. Our children are reassured that they have a voice, will be listened to and what they say will be taken seriously. Where appropriate, children are taught and provided opportunities to use alternative and augmentative communication options, to allow them to express themselves. Children at our school are encouraged to talk freely with any staff member at our school if they are worried or concerned about something. Posters in classrooms show pupils who they can talk to outside of the classroom should they have a worry or concern. Pupil voice informs the direction of school development through surveys, pupil observations and school council meetings. Pupils know that they will be supported and kept safe. They are never given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Children at our school are encouraged to talk freely with staff if they are worried or concerned about something and our staff understand that a victim of any type of abuse should never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

We provide opportunities within our curriculum for children to learn how to ask for help, how to recognise what is safe (for example using NSPCC tools and learning including PANTS) consistent use of personal care plans for pupils requiring them and how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships. We believe in consistent use of Wellbeing Plans for pupils learning how to self-regulate and build positive relationships with those around them so that pupils are supported positively and given opportunities to build positive relationships. Pupil voice is key in school

development through pupil observations, surveys and school council meetings, with information being fed back to Senior Leaders in order to influence change.

We provide regular opportunities for staff training and development with weekly briefings covering the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, as well as responding to issues that are being raised within school, locally and nationally. The DSL is a Youth Mental Health First Aid trainer and a range of staff are trained as Youth Mental Health First Aiders. Visitors to school are made aware of safeguarding processes and school expectations, by providing them with leaflets on their arrival. Merryfields School has a positive relationship with the School Nurse who is key in supporting with mental health, physical health and ensuring that pupils are able to meet their potential.

The children's welfare is of paramount importance as we are a child centred school. We make every effort to listen to and capture the voice of children to enable us to have a clear understanding of their daily lived experiences. Children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. They may feel embarrassed or have been threatened. This could be due to vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers.

All staff at Merryfields School are encouraged to have professional curiosity and speak to the DSL about any concerns, particularly due to the vulnerability of our pupils due to their communication needs and disabilities.

We all have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to maintain a professional attitude of *it could happen here* where safeguarding is concerned.

Our school is committed to safeguarding children and expects all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. Everyone has a responsibility to **act without delay** to protect children by reporting anything that might suggest a child is being abused, neglected or exploited. It is our willingness to work safely and challenge inappropriate behaviours that underpins this commitment. The school seeks to work in partnership with families and other agencies to improve the outcomes for children who are vulnerable or in need.

We have a culture of vigilance and staff are confident and competent in the challenging of unacceptable behaviours in a timely way, and these are dealt with appropriately and robustly. Staff do not accept these behaviours as 'banter' 'having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.

All staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and **not see these as insignificant**. On occasions, a referral is justified by a **single incident** such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, **concerns accumulate over a period of time** and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, **it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns** in accordance with this policy to allow the Designated Safeguarding Lead to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity.

When dealing with safeguarding matters, we are conscious of the language and terminology that we use, especially in front of children. Sometimes reference is made to a child who has been subjected to abuse as a victim. However, not all children will consider themselves a victim nor will they want to be referred to in this way. We are conscious of this and when managing any incident, we will be prepared to use terminology that children are most comfortable with and that they understand.

In KCSiE 2025 guidance, reference is made to alleged perpetrator and perpetrator, however we will try to avoid using these terms and instead we will refer to children and young people who have 'displayed' or 'instigated' particular behaviours. We will ensure that all children involved receive support.

We work closely and restoratively with our safeguarding partners with the confidence to challenge decisions and practice if deemed appropriate. We encourage staff within Merryfields School to question and challenge their peers, as well as DSL decisions on safeguarding should they feel it is appropriate, as we strive to ensure that we have a vigilant and open culture where staff are confident to expect the very best care for our pupils.

We work closely with safeguarding partners and share the same goals, learn with and from each other, have what we need to help families, acknowledge and appreciate difference as well as challenging each other.

We acknowledge the four principles that as professionals we should follow when working with parents and carers:

- effective partnership and the importance of building strong, positive, trusting and co-operative relationships
- respectful, non-blaming, clear and inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication that is adapted to the needs of parents and carers
- empowering parents and carers to participate in decision making by equipping them with information, keeping them updated and directing them to further resources
- involving parents and carers in the design of processes and services that affect them.

We recognise the stressful and traumatic nature of safeguarding and child protection work and support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to signpost and seek further support as appropriate, this could take the form of clinical supervision. [Education Support helpline - free and confidential emotional support for teachers and education staff](#)

At Merryfields School we believe that children have a right to learn ways to keep themselves safe from harm and exploitation. We provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills, concepts, attitudes, and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being through assemblies, class teaching, nurture sessions, special events to highlight specific issues and input from professional visitors. Safeguarding issues are addressed through the PSRHE curriculum, for example self-esteem, emotional literacy, road safety, healthy relationship education, consent, online safety and bullying. Due to the learning needs of our pupils, pre-existing programmes are often challenging for them to understand and engage with and at Merryfields school we pride ourselves on working with professional visitors such as the NSPCC and Glow, to adapt materials to support their delivery of their safeguarding programmes to our pupils in a meaningful way. Relevant issues are addressed through all areas of the curriculum and special events e.g. anti-bullying week, celebrations of religious festivals.

5. Legislation, guidance and links to other school policies

This policy has been devised with due regard for the statutory guidance from the DfE [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) (KCSiE) and this document is read alongside;

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures](#)
- [What to do if you are Worried a Child is being Abused-Advice for Practitioners](#)

- [Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- NSPCC Caspar newsletters
- Andrew Hall safeguarding updates
- Online safety policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Safer recruitment policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy

6. The role of all staff in keeping children safe

All staff have read and have a good understanding of **at least part 1** of [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) and are aware of the safeguarding links to other policies relating to their daily practice. Staff have read the Safeguarding policy, Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing policies including low level concerns and briefings revisit these policies (as well as testing knowledge through questioning).

The school has **clear induction processes** for all staff, volunteers and LAC members, and all required documents and policies are provided both at induction of new staff, and on a yearly refresh basis for current staff. These documents include Part 1 of KCSIE 2025; Code of Conduct; school's Behaviour Policy; schools' response to children who go missing from education; the role of the DSL and this Safeguarding Policy. The Headteacher shares and discusses these documents, checking staff understanding. New staff have the opportunity to meet with the DSL or DDSL to talk through school safeguarding processes as part of their induction.

At Merryfields School we have a robust Safeguarding and Child Protection training schedule for all staff, which is monitored by the DSL. All staff receive Level 1 Safeguarding and Child Protection training annually and receive regular updates through staff meetings, weekly briefings, emails etc. to develop and support robust safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) practices across the entire school. Amongst other things, this includes an understanding of the expectations and roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring [Filtering and Monitoring Standards](#).

Planned weekly briefings cover areas of KCSIE and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures, and incorporate testing of staff knowledge through questioning, as well as delivery of information about specific safeguarding issues. Monthly, staff safeguarding briefings are dedicated to online safety. When there is a need, national, local area or school based issues will be covered as they arise, for example, if there are concerns about patterns of pupils' safety using technology, this will be covered in a briefing in order to address as a whole school, or fliers and bulletins are shared with staff and parents as appropriate.

All staff know who the DSL/DDSL is, and as well as being the expert in this field, are there to support staff, volunteers, and Governing body. Staff understand that if they have a safeguarding concern, they can speak to the DSL at any time of the day.

All staff are aware of their responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All staff are aware of indicators of abuse and neglect and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home and online, including contextualised safeguarding. Staff are confident in exercising **professional curiosity** and understand that knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation to

identify cases of children who may be in need of our help or protection. They are aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

All staff, but especially the DSL/DDSL 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), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

All staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and that children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. They know that in many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content. This includes AI generated child sexual abuse material. [AI Guidance](#)

All staff promote responsible online behaviour and online safety and empower and encourage pupils to report issues and seek help.

All staff are also mindful that disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories can be an online safety risk/concern.

All staff know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality by only involving those who need to be involved, such as the DSL/DDSL and local authority children's social care. Staff never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. They are aware of their statutory reporting responsibilities and duty in relation to FGM.

All staff know how to reassure children that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A child should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting **any** form of abuse and/or neglect. Nor should a child ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

All staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in it and are confident to identify and support children who may benefit from early help, effectively giving children and their families the right help at the right time. In Merryfields School, staff are aware of the role of the pupil mentor in supporting children and their families in a timely way to prevent escalation of difficulties.

All staff are aware of how to make a referral to children's social care, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with their potential role in such assessments. Posters within key staff areas provide the contact details to make a safeguarding referral and staff are made aware that they can make a referral themselves.

All staff understand their responsibility to report concerns about the behaviour of any adult in our setting and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously. A flowchart within key staff areas, provides contact details for the Chair of the LAC and the CEO of the Manor Hall Academy Trust, to

ensure that staff know how to seek support from key members of the wider school community should they require it.

All staff understand their responsibility to escalate concerns and 'press for reconsideration' if they believe a child's needs remain unmet or if the child is failing to thrive and in need or if the child is at risk of harm. Staff are actively encouraged to challenge the DSL's decision making should they feel it is appropriate. Within school, the safeguarding flow chart shows staff what to do should they wish to escalate their concerns about a child within school (see appendix 8). [SSCP Escalation Policy](#)
[Whistleblowing Advice Line | NSPCC](#)

In all cases, if our staff are unsure, they know that they should always speak to the DSL/DDSL.

7. Roles and responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)(DDSL)

For full details of the DSL/DDSL roles and responsibilities please refer to Part 2 & Annex C of [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#).

Our DSL/DDSL(s) have received the appropriate safeguarding training to provide them with an understanding of their role and the knowledge and skills to carry it out. Our DDSL(s) are trained to the same level as the DSL. Training received also supports their knowledge of the processes, procedures, and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#). In addition to the formal training, their knowledge and skills are refreshed at regular intervals through Staffordshire Safeguarding Partnership termly DSL Briefings, termly network meetings of the Designated Safeguarding Leads in the Manor Hall Academy Trust, emails and reading statutory guidance. The DSL and DDSLs strive to keep updated in specific areas of safeguarding through additional training events throughout the year. This information is shared with the safeguarding LAC member during termly meetings and information is shared with the staff team through safeguarding briefings. The DSL continually develops an understanding of the community the school serves, the risks and resilience. This is achieved through an understanding of local community safeguarding needs from communication from the SSCP, an understanding of safeguarding needs specific to children with SEND through networking support throughout the Manor Hall Academy Trust, as well as an understanding of the school community through analysis of the categories of concerns being raised. The DSL is given **additional** time, funding, training, resources, and support needed to carry out the role effectively. This includes opportunities to attend the DSL briefings and Trust network meetings for DSLs.

Our DSL takes the **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations and roles and responsibilities in relation to the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place, including requirements relating to the safe use and filtering of generative AI), and this is explicit in their job description.

Guidance:

[Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges](#)

[Generative AI expectations](#)

[Plan technology for your setting](#)

As part of online safety, we are aware of our responsibility for information security and access management, and we ensure that we have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard our systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. We will take appropriate

action to meet the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges in order to improve our resilience to cyber-attacks.

Guidance:

[Cyber security standards for schools and colleges](#)

[Cyber Security Training for School staff](#)

[NEN](#)

During term time, the DSL/DDSL is available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL can delegate activities to the DDSL(s); however, the ultimate responsibility remains with them, and this lead responsibility is not delegated. In the absence of the DSL the DDSL(s) will take a lead on safeguarding with clear direction from the Senior Leadership Team.

The DSL acts as a source of support, advice, and expertise for staff. Risk assessments/safety plans will be completed as required and should, where appropriate, involve other agencies, these are reviewed regularly and shared appropriately.

Our DSL maintains robust systems to monitor and record training of **all** staff and volunteers and update and refresher time scales are evident within the training record. Training is delivered in-line with StaffsSCP and KCSIE 2025. This will include regular safeguarding briefings, information sharing from external sources such as the NSPCC and Andrew Hall safeguarding, as well as the Staffordshire safeguarding Children Partnership, safety advisor and external events attended. Level 1 safeguarding training, a record of having read KCSIE 2025 and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as well as Prevent training is recorded.

Additional safeguarding Level 2- 3 training for the DSL and DDSLs is recorded.

Records of the content of weekly safeguarding briefings (including staff input) and information shared with staff via email is recorded in the safeguarding training file, as well as on the briefing minutes.

The DSL ensures that **all** staff and regular visitors have appropriate safeguarding training to equip them for their role in school. This includes training on how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information accurately. The DSL ensures systems are in place to induct new staff/Local Academy Committee Members are robust and monitored and any non-compliance shared with Senior Leadership Team/Local Academy Committee.

The DSL monitors the electronic safeguarding case management system, MyConcern which is used to record concerns about children, ensuring that the quality of information is accurate, proportionate, timely and assessment/referrals are made appropriately. By January 2026 Merryfields School will transfer electronic management to CPOMS to align within the Manor Hall Academy Trust. Historic paper records are scanned and uploaded to electronic profiles. The recording and storing of information are kept in-line with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and General Data Protection. The safeguarding and child protection records are kept in a secure location, away from academic records and there is a clear recording process of transfer, in or out.

When a parent chooses to remove their child/ren from school to receive EHE (Elective Home Education), the DSL will pass on any safeguarding concerns and the safeguarding file if there is one,

to the EHE Team (electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk) within Staffordshire County Council and inform other professionals who may be involved with that child.

The DSL/DDSL monitors the quality of safeguarding files through dip-sampling of files half-termly during supervision, as well as on an ad hoc basis as files are actively in use. Appropriate and regular case supervision takes place between the DSL and DDSLs with a clear agenda that ensures that pupils with the greatest vulnerability are reviewed most regularly, but all pupils' case files are reviewed at least once per term. Supervision ensures that safeguarding decisions are discussed, challenged, quality assured and supported by the safeguarding team.

The DSL/DDSL will refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care, as required, and support other staff to make these referrals. We understand the importance of attending case conferences and core group meetings as well as Child in Need meetings.

The DSL/DDSL understand the importance and need for attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences (both Initial and Review) and core group meetings as well as Child in Need meetings. The DSL/DDSL will represent education at these meetings and prior to conference, whether attending or not, MUST complete the Education Report prior to the Conference.

Any staff member may be required to be part of strategy discussions with other interagency meetings and contribute to the assessment of child/ren. The DSL/DDSL will notify children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation.

DSL will liaise with all staff (e.g., pastoral staff, attendance staff, school nurses, SEN staff and Mental Health Leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

The DSL/DDSL helps to promote educational outcomes by sharing appropriate information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children (including children with or who have previously had a Social Worker) are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school leadership staff. Their role could include ensuring that the schools and their staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for these children; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make.

The DSL continually develops an understanding of the community the school serves, the risks and its resilience. This is achieved through an understanding of local community safeguarding needs from communication from the SSCP, an understanding of safeguarding needs specific to children with SEND through networking support within the Manor Hall Academy Trust, as well as an understanding of the local community through updates from Staffordshire Police and the school community through analysis of the categories of concerns being raised. The safeguarding team discuss all pupils within school to understand their context.

8. Our Local Academy Committee (LAC)

At Merryfields School, our LAC have a strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements, and they **must** ensure that we comply with our duties under legislation. They **must** have regard to this guidance in ensuring policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law at all times. See Part 2 [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#). The Headteacher ensures that the policies and procedures, adopted by the governing bodies and proprietors (particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect), are understood, and followed by all staff. These policies are transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, children and their parents/carers.

The Chair of LAC has attended training for dealing with safeguarding concerns or allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors. They have read and understand Part 4 of KCSiE relating to allegations that either meet (Section 1) or do not meet the harm threshold (Section 2 low-level concerns)

The LAC ensure that all staff, including members and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations and roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction. This training should be regularly updated and in line with any advice from the safeguarding partners. This training will equip the LAC with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place here are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding and this training is regularly updated.

In considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, our Governing Body will ensure that our school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. They ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

The Governing body will review the following standards and discuss with our online safety lead what more needs to be done to support our setting in meeting this standard:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems;
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually;
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning;
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs.

Guidance:

[Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges](#)

The Governing Body are also aware of their responsibility to ensure that the appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place in order to safeguard systems, staff and learners and that there is the need to review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. The LAC will ensure that appropriate action is taken to meet the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges to improve the resilience to cyber-attacks.

Guidance:

[Cyber security standards for schools and colleges](#)

[Cyber Security Training for School staff](#)

[NEN](#)

The LAC are aware of their obligations under the [Human Rights Act 1998](#), the [Equality Act 2010](#), (including the [Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty](#)), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Further guidance is found in Pg 24-26 Para 82-93 [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 & Equality Act 2010-Advice for schools](#)

The LAC facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding involving everyone in school, ensuring that safeguarding is at the forefront and underpins all relevant aspects of process and policy development. These systems, processes and policies operate with the **best interests** of our children

at the heart of what we do. Termly LAC visits take place with the Safeguarding link member, who ensures that policies, procedures and training are up to date and reports back to the full LAC meeting.

The LAC has appointed the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations and roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring). This is explicit in their job description, and they ensure that the DSL understands their responsibility in leading safeguarding across the school. They also ensure that the DSL is given additional time, funding, training, resources, and support needed to carry out the role effectively. The LAC has also identified two Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs), who are trained to the same safeguarding standard as the DSL.

The LAC ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. It is recognised that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities. Safeguarding within the PSRHE curriculum is shared with the link LAC member during their termly monitoring. There is an expectation that all teachers follow the Merryfields School Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy to ensure a good and safe educational environment and requires teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

The link LAC member for Safeguarding completes termly Single Central Record (SCR) checks with the DSL to ensure that the SCR is compliant. These are recorded on the Manor Hall Academy Trust pro forma.

The following is a resource: - [Teaching about relationships, sex and health](#) and there are more listed in Annex B KCSiE including [Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes](#)

Our LAC, whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, are doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the online risks from the school's IT system. As part of this process, our LAC ensure that our school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. The LAC consider the age range of our children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

The LAC ensures that the school is **compliant with their 175/157** safeguarding audit return to the Local Authority/Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership , via the Phew electronic system and any areas of concern in safeguarding are identified. The 175/157 audit, forms the actions of the school safeguarding action plan which is reviewed regularly and share with the safeguarding LAC link member. This is in line with the [SSCP-Safeguarding Partnerships Arrangements](#)

The LAC also ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency practice in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#).

The LAC ensure that those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received safer recruitment training and are compliant with safer recruitment procedures. This includes the requirement for appropriate checks to be carried out in line with national guidance. Candidates will be made aware that online searches will be carried out.

See Part 3 Safer Recruitment [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#). Merryfields School follows the Manor Hall Academy Trust Safer Recruitment policy.

Our LAC/Headteacher have ensured that there is a current Whistleblowing Policy which is provided by the Manor Hall Academy Trust, and staff are aware of this policy and understand its content. The Whistleblowing processes are highlighted within staff safeguarding briefings, and senior leaders regularly encourage professional challenge. There is a culture in our setting where staff can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns are addressed professionally and sensitively in accordance with agreed whistleblowing procedures. Records of whistleblowing are retained in a secure location, including actions taken as a result. The safeguarding flowchart is displayed in staff high traffic areas, detailing who to approach with a concern about a member of staff and contains the name and phone number of the Chair of the LAC and the CEO of the Manor Hall Academy Trust, should staff need to contact them directly.

(see school website for policy).

Further guidance on [whistleblowing](#) is available here and the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding safeguarding failures internally. Staff can call on 0800 028 0285 and the line is available from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday. Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The Designated Teacher

The LAC have appointed a Designated Teacher (DT) and this teacher works with the local authority and parents/carers to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils in our setting, who are 'looked after'. Our Designated Teacher works across the school to promote and improve educational outcomes for children in care using evidence-based interventions. They are appropriately trained and have the relevant qualifications and experience. Our Designated Teacher also has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care, outside of England and Wales. Post-looked after pupils are identified where possible and are prioritised for wellbeing, sporting and academic interventions.

The Designated Teacher works closely with the Virtual School to provide the most appropriate support, utilising Pupil Premium Plus funding, to ensure that they meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan (PEP). They work with the Virtual School Headteacher, to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. [Designated Teacher](#)

The Designated Teacher has the details of the Local Authority Personal Advisor who has been appointed to guide and support the care leaver and liaises as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

At **Merryfields School** we are attachment aware and trauma informed. We have completed the Staffordshire Informed Attachment Aware programme and received the STIAA status. We take a relational based approach to supporting our most vulnerable children and will work restoratively with children to improve their outcomes. Staff training in Emotion Coaching, Attachment awareness, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Mental Health First Aid and Awareness has taken place and there is an accredited Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) in school, as well as staff trained in Nurture work. We also offer Drawing and Talking therapy, Lego therapy and Functional Reflex Therapy to our pupils. The Designated Teacher has completed the virtual school audit to ensure good practice and alongside the behaviour lead, they have completed a Staffordshire Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Pathway Discussion Document with the Staffordshire Virtual school

Headteacher. An Attachment Research Community Matrix has also been completed, highlighting areas of good practice and development.

We are aware of the additional duties of the virtual school headteacher extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker. We understand the role that we play in improving outcomes for children with a social worker.

[Virtual Headteacher Role-Children with a social worker](#)

9. Working with parents/carers.

At Merryfields School we are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of their children, and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area. The school follows legislation that aims to act in the best interests of the child.

When new pupils join our school, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy and that we are an Operation Encompass setting. A copy of this policy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the school website. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to the relevant local authority or other agencies.

We are committed to working with parents in a positive, open and transparent way. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or if it is necessary to do so to safeguard a child from harm.

We will seek to share with parents/carers any concerns we may have about their child before making a referral, unless to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm. A lack of parental engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the school has about a child will not prevent the DSL from making a referral to the local authority in those circumstances and where it is appropriate to do so.

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, the school requires parents to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives.
- Full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Emergency contact details (if different from above) and **at least 2 contacts.**
- Full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from school (if different from the above).
- Any legal or criminal changes which effects parental responsibility e.g., bail conditions, court orders, Special Guardianship orders, Child arrangement orders etc

The school will retain this information on the pupil file. The school will only share information about pupils with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil or where a parent has given permission and the school has been supplied with the adult's full details in writing.

We recognise that we are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. We will use these communications to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and parents/carers are likely to find it helpful to understand what systems schools use to filter and monitor online use. It will be especially important for parents/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. Information about online safety is shared with parents both routinely and responsively.

Parents can also be supported by our Early Help manager to mirror strategies that are successful in school at pupils' homes, as well as with sleep, behaviour, routine and communication. Parents are involved in the school life of pupils and we always endeavour to gain parents perspective and opinions, with the children at the centre of everything we do.

We update parents about safeguarding through information sharing over a communication app, as well as through the school website. We work individually with parents to share information about specific safeguarding issues.

10. Early Help

Any child may benefit from early help, but **all** staff are particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who: -

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

The DSL ensures that **all** staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in it. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL/DDSL, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases, acting as the **lead professional** in undertaking an early help assessment.

The DSL/DDSL will consider how the needs of different family members impact each other. This includes needs relating to education, mental and physical health, financial stability, housing, substance use and crime. We will also consider specific needs such as disabilities, those whose first language is not English, fathers or male carers, and parents who identify as LGBTQ.

Guidance documents can be accessed at the following links:

[SSCP Early Help](#)

[SSCP Threshold Framework](#)

11. What happens if a referral is deemed necessary to escalate beyond early help.

Child in Need (Section 17)

If the DSL considers that the welfare concerns indicate that a Child in Need referral is appropriate, they will speak with parents/child and obtain their consent for referral to local/appropriate authority children's social care to request an assessment. If parents refuse to give consent, but the child's needs are still not being met, the DSL may feel that a referral is still appropriate and will discuss these concerns with the local authority children's social care. Appropriate school staff will attend Child in Need (CIN) meetings convened by Children's Social Care when children are deemed to require Section 17 services.

Child Protection (Section 47)

If the local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, they make enquires under Section 47 to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. This duty also applies if a child is subject to an emergency protection order (under S44 of the Children Act 1989) or in police protective custody (under S46 of the Children Act 1989).

Child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we are likely to have more contact with parents than other professionals involved and will work in an open, honest, and transparent way with any parent whose child has been referred to children's social care or whose child is subject to a child protection plan. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents/carers, wherever possible.

12. Escalation process

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership expects staff working directly with families to share information appropriately and work to plans agreed in all relevant forums. Good practice includes the expectation that constructive challenge amongst colleagues within agencies, and between agencies, provides a healthy approach to the work.

This process will be kept as simple as possible and the aim will be to resolve difficulties at a professional practitioner level, wherever possible and always in a restorative way. We recognise that differences in status and experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this course of action, and support should be sought from the DSL/DDSL.

If we believe that concerns regarding a child are not being addressed and their outcomes are not improving, we will escalate our concerns in line with the [SSCP Escalation Policy](#).

Where local authority children's social care has concluded that an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) is **not** required but professionals in other agencies remain seriously concerned about the safety of a child, these professionals should seek further discussion with the local authority children's social worker, their manager and/or the designated safeguarding professional lead. The concerns, discussion and any agreements made should be recorded in each agency's files.

If concerns remain, the professional should discuss with their designated lead person or senior manager in their agency. If concerns remain professionals may formally request that local authority children's social care convene an ICPC.

Local authority children's social care should convene a conference where one or more professionals, supported by a senior manager/named or designated professional requests one. If disagreement continues, Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership's escalation procedures should be followed.

13. A safer school culture

Safer Recruitment and Selection

At Merryfields School we pay full regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025'. Our Safer Recruitment and selection practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity (best practice being birth certificate), checking academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and appropriate checks including criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks, prohibition checks whether they are known to the police and/or social care, if they have been disqualified from providing childcare and any relevant overseas information. Evidence of these checks is recorded on our Single Central Record (SCR).

The SCR is checked termly by the DSL and the Bursar, with a further termly check by the DSL and the link Local Academy Committee member for safeguarding, with outcomes and actions being recorded on the Manor Hall Academy trust pro forma. All HR files for new starters are checked and signed off by the DSL alongside the Bursar, to ensure that safer recruitment processes have been completed fully.

Staff who have lived or worked outside the UK **will** undergo the same checks as all other staff, even if they have never been to the UK. We will ensure that any other appropriate checks are carried out so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks could include criminal records checks for overseas applicants and for teaching positions obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.

Guidance: [Application process for criminal records checks overseas](#)
[Regulated professions database](#)

Separate barred list checks are only be carried out in the following circumstances:

- for newly appointed staff who are engaging in regulated activity, pending the receipt of an Enhanced Certificate with Barred List information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (and where all other relevant checks have been carried out); or,

- where an individual has worked in a post in a school or college that brought them into regular contact with children or young persons which ended not more than three months prior to that person's appointment to the organisation (and where all other relevant checks as above have been carried out).

All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils.

Relevant staff have undertaken appropriate training in Safer Recruitment.

One of the trained safer recruitment staff will be involved in **all** staff and volunteer recruitment processes and sit on the recruitment panel. A member of the Local Academy Committee **Aaron Dimock-Bell** (Chair of LAC) has received Safer Recruitment training.

Induction

All staff will be made aware of the systems we have in place to support safeguarding and these are explained as part of staff induction (with a copy provided) including:-

- The Safeguarding policy.
- The Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- The role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any deputies).
- At least part one of KCSIE 2025.

All new staff to school have an opportunity to meet with the DSL or DDSL who will explain safeguarding processes in school and provide an opportunity for new staff to ask questions.

If staff, supply staff and visitors are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in school, who they are with and for how long. Doors should have a clear glass panel in them and where possible be left open. No volunteers, students or parent helpers will be left unsupervised with children or out of sight of the teacher or member of staff in charge. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure this is the case.

Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

Use of reasonable force

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in school to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involves a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's

path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom. Departmental advice for schools is available [here](#).

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children including any with SEN or disabilities, or with medical conditions, staff should consider the risks carefully.

At Merryfields School we have a Behaviour Lead and PROACT-SCIPr-UK® trainers who train and guide staff in supporting dysregulated behaviour. The Behaviour Lead reports all Physical Interventions to the SLT to be quality assured and to ensure that staff receive appropriate support and ongoing training. All physical interventions are correctly recorded, carers are informed and pupils will be checked over by a First Aider. Our school ethos aims to create positive and proactive behaviour support, including by creating Wellbeing Plans to ensure consistency of care for our pupils. Within plans, we recognise the importance of pupils' individual needs, including their requirement for sensory provision and the message behind their behaviour, in order to reduce the occurrence of children becoming dysregulated and the need to use reasonable force. Our Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy is available on the Merryfields School Website.

14. Keeping children safe in education 2025-Specific Safeguarding issues.

All staff have an awareness of the following safeguarding issues through regular training and safeguarding briefings. Staff are aware that these behaviours can make children vulnerable and put them in danger and that often these issues overlap. Please read and refer to Appendix 2 for additional information and guidance on the below topics.

- Abuse (incl Physical/Emotional/Sexual/Neglect) Annex 1
- Behaviours linked to safeguarding issues
- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Child on child abuse (inc sexual violence and sexual harassment/sexting/harmful sexual behaviour -sharing of nude/semi-nude images & upskirting)
- Children and the court system (5-11yrs & 12-17yrs)
- Children missing from education
- Children who are absent from education
- Child missing from home or care
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- County Lines
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness and Perplexing Presentations
- Faith abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Homelessness
- Mental health
- Online safety
- Private fostering
- Preventing radicalisation
- Prevent Duty and Channel
- Serious violence

- Trafficking

For further information, advice and guidance on these issues please see Annex 2 of this document.

15. Children potentially at greater risk of harm

All children should be protected however our staff and LAC recognise that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm than others. This list is not exhaustive but highlights some of these groups: -

- Children who need a social worker (Child in Need & Child Protection)
- Children who are absent from education
- Children who are Elective Home Educated (EHE)
- Children requiring mental health support
- Looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers.
- Children with special educational needs & disabilities/health issues
- Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or gender questioning.
- Children who are young carers
- Children who are affected by parental conflict and/or domestic abuse
- Children who are refugees or asylum seekers
- Children vulnerable to/at risk of/involved in CSE/CCE

We support these groups by having: -

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and action:** to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon.
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them.
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent, rather than not.
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments, decisions and how they have been reached, positive or negative.
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family.
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy, to assist them in putting forward their views.

16. Educational visitors to school.

All Educational Visitors to Merryfields School will be requested to provide evidence of a DBS check, as well as official ID related to the nature of their visit. Educational visitors to school will never be left alone with pupils.

We will ensure that where individuals come onto our premises that we consider the following: -

- assessing the education value,
- the age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered and
- whether relevant checks will be required.

This will form part of the risk assessment including our professional judgement and we will consider whether to seek an enhanced DBS for any volunteer not engaging in regulated activity. In doing so, we will consider:

- What we know about the individual/company, including formal and informal information offered by staff, parents, other establishments, or volunteers.
- Whether the individual/company has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where references can be advised, and suitability recorded.
- Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check.
- We will clearly have decided the level of supervision required through risk assessment – the supervision will be “reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children” as stated in KCSIE 2025.

Due to the needs of our pupils, at Merryfields School we believe that it is appropriate to fully supervise educational visitors and never leave them alone with pupils.

All regular volunteers follow a safer recruitment process where they complete a DBS check, we receive 2 references and an interview takes place to ensure suitability. Volunteers are never left alone unsupervised with pupils.

We have a clear visitor's procedure that enables us to offer pupils experiences of meeting other professionals to extend knowledge and curriculum. All visitors, volunteers and Students on placement within school are expected to wear lanyards identifying their role and staff are aware that they should not be alone with pupils.

Regular professional visitors to school, e.g. Nursing, Physio, Occupational Therapists, Speech and language services and Hearing/Visual Impairment teams will be requested to provide a letter of assurance detailing that safer recruitment processes have been completed prior to their appointment. Regular visitors are recorded on our Single Central Record and their Letters of Assurance are retained. We seek to renew letters of assurance annually and parent permission to work with children is sought by these services. Visitors, students and volunteers wear coloured lanyards to identify them when in school.

17. Allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment securing wellbeing and best possible outcomes for the children at Merryfields school. We take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults who work at Merryfields School are safe to work with children. However, we do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

The LAC ensures that there are procedures in place for dealing with the two sections covering two levels (see below) of concern and/or allegations against staff members, supply staff, volunteers, and contractors.

- Allegations that **may** meet the harms threshold.
- Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold, referred to for the purposes of this guidance as '**low level concerns**'.

Allegations that **may** meet the harms threshold

We have an good understanding and give due regard to Part 4 [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) guidance and [Allegations of Abuse - SSCP](#) where it is alleged that anyone working in our education setting providing education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

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

This relates to members of staff, supply staff, volunteers, and contractors, who are currently working in any education setting, regardless of whether the school or college is where the alleged abuse took place.

If an allegation is made or information is received about an adult who works at our school which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Headteacher immediately. If it is about the sole proprietor of the independent school, then this needs to be raised with the Designated Officer. Should an allegation be made against the Head teacher, this will be reported to the Chair of the Governing Body. If neither the Headteacher nor Chair of Governing Body is contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Headteacher or the Vice Chair of Governors. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. No member of staff or the governing body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and/or historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police. If we are not the employer of an individual, we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with appropriately. In no circumstances will we decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Our Chair of LAC, Headteacher and DSL will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

If an allegation is made or information is received about an adult who works at our school which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Headteacher immediately. Should an allegation be made against the Head teacher, this will be reported to the Chair of the LAC. If neither the Headteacher nor Chair of LAC is contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Headteacher or the Vice Chair of LAC. A flow chart is displayed in staff areas to support staff in these circumstances. The Chair of the LAC's contact details are readily available in the safeguarding flowchart, as well as being shared with all staff at induction. The contact details of the CEO of the MAT are also displayed, should staff require further advice or support.

The Headteacher or Chair of LAC will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. No member of staff or the governing body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

Referrals to LADO in Staffordshire are made via the [LADO Referral form](#)

Learning lessons

It is important that lessons are learnt when managing all levels and types of allegations.

The headteacher/case manager at Merryfields School will review the circumstances of all substantiated cases with Staffordshire's LADO to determine whether improvements can be made to the school's or college's procedures to help prevent similar events in the future. This will be done throughout the entirety of the process and at conclusion.

Lessons will also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The LADO and case manager will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

Where an allegation is concluded to be either unfounded, false, malicious or unsubstantiated the headteacher/case manager (and if they have been involved the LADO) will consider the facts of each case and determine whether any lessons can be learned, and improvements made.

[Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low level concerns'.](#)

At Merryfields School we promote an open and transparent culture in which **all** concerns about adults are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Creating this culture enables us to identify inappropriate, problematic, or concerning behaviour early, minimising the risk of abuse and ensuring that adults who work in or on behalf of our school are clear about professional boundaries and act within them in accordance with our ethos and values. We encourage staff to speak to one another when they have suggestions to improve practice in a supportive manner, and we have a culture of openness and challenge with one another in all aspects of our work, as we believe that this enhances our provision as a school.

What is a low-level concern?

Low level does not mean that the concern is insignificant. It is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or 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.

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

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy

- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating pupils

All staff have a good understanding of what constitutes a low-level concern, and our governing body ensure that these low-level concerns are included as part of our staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies.

Sharing low-level concerns

We understand how crucial it is that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively will also protect those working in or on behalf of our setting from potential false allegations or misunderstandings. All low level concerns are reported to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. They are investigated and recorded on a standard pro forma and kept in a secure file that can only be accessed by those investigating.

If we are in any doubt as to whether information shared about a member of our staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harms threshold we will consult with the LADO.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headteacher or Chair of LAC knows to contact the LADO via the LADO referral form. This information is provided within the Safeguarding Flowchart, as well as in safeguarding training and briefings.

The school has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or HR. The DSL has a responsibility to inform Barring service.

18. Information sharing

At all times, we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and colleagues from other agencies in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) & [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#). Our setting works closely with Stoke and Staffordshire Children's Social Care and, where appropriate from a placing local authority.

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

As part of meeting a child's needs, our LAC recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. This includes ensuring arrangements are in place to set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within our setting and with children's social care, the safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.

We are proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care.

Our LAC are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. Our LAC committees ensure that relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

Where children leave our school, the DSL will ensure that any relevant Safeguarding file is transferred to the new setting as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, with confirmation of receipt.

In addition to the safeguarding file, our DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of the child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new setting to continue supporting the children and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Guidance documents:

- [Data protection in schools-GOV.UK](#)

19. Managing complaints

In line with our school ethos and culture, we encourage children and parents/carers to talk to us if they are unhappy with anything to do with school. We have a robust internal investigation process.

Our complaints policy states clearly the various stages of complaint and where to escalate concerns following completion and outcome of our complaints process. Our complaints policy is available on our school website for parents/carers and is also available on request.

Safeguarding concerns should be raised with school immediately. If a concern means a child is at immediate risk, we will contact the local authority children's social care based on where the child resides. All new visitors are given safeguarding information in the form of a Safeguarding leaflet, which outlines how to share concerns, as well as code of conduct expected by visitors/contractors.

20. Site Security

At Merryfields School we understand the importance of site security which is controlled by precise management directives, but the site is only as secure as the people who use it. All people on our site must adhere to the rules which govern it:

- Gates are kept closed during the school day; visitors gain access through the main entrance.
- Visitors, volunteers, and students must only enter through the main entrance and after signing in at the office will be issued with a school lanyard. Only admin staff and SLT are permitted to open the front door to visitors to ensure that the process is completed thoroughly.
- The main entrance/exit point is only accessible using a keypad code.
- Play areas are secured to prevent anyone entering or exiting without permission.

- School has a clear system of ensuring visitors are accompanied / supervised by regulated staff member. Any visitor on site who is not identifiable by a visitor's pass will be challenged by any staff member and this will be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- External visitors who have not pre-booked their visit will not be given access to the school.
- Parents, carers, and grandparents attending functions have access only through the designated and supervised entrances, with only invited visitors for appropriate school events. All those entering school for an event will be recorded on an events visitors list.
- Children will only be allowed home with adults with parental responsibility or confirmed permission as detailed on Arbor or via Local Authority transport. Any transport collecting children will be checked to ensure that the driver and Personal Assistant have appropriate identification for their role.
- Empty classrooms should have closed windows and doors.
- Children will never be allowed to leave school alone during school hours unless prior arrangement has been made for them to be collected by an adult such as a parent who is doing so for a valid reason. They should report to the office to do this.
- Children are always appropriately supervised in outdoor areas.
- A health and safety audit is completed annually with risk assessment/safety planning and forms part of the Governors annual report. This will include a fire evacuation and Prevent risk assessment.
- The risk management of site security is managed by senior leaders/governance, and we have a clear system of risk assessments and review timescales of these.
- A whole site safeguarding risk assessment is shared with staff at safeguarding briefing and induction.
- As the large school playground is next to public fields, staff remain vigilant to safety and safeguarding concerns presenting from the public area. The Internal Evacuation Policy and procedures are activated, Senior Leaders are informed and children are moved from the area, should any concerns be raised.

Guidance

- [School and college security - GOV.UK](#)

21. Early years foundation

This framework is mandatory for all early years' providers [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#) : maintained schools; non-maintained schools; independent schools; all providers on the Early Years Register. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. For our staff who work in childcare provision or who are directly concerned with the management of such provision, the school needs to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Child Care (Disqualification) Regulations 2018. Further information on the staff to whom these regulations apply, the checks that should be carried out, and the recording of those checks can be found the following document (2nd bullet point).

Guidance documents:

- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)

As a school we ensure that at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate must always be on the premises and available when children are present and must accompany children on outings.

Any existing injuries that a pupil presents with are investigated and recorded on the school proforma for EYFS (see appendix 10), with parental explanation and signature. This will then be recorded on the pupil's safeguarding file.

There is a clear policy use of mobile phones on school premises with use of mobile phones, cameras and other personal electronic devices (such as smart watches and glasses) with imaging and sharing capabilties not being permitted within areas of school where pupils are present (see Merryfields School website for policy).

There is a clear process for the reporting and storing of medication within the staff handbook as well as the Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy (see Merryfields School website for policy)

There are clear safer recruitment processes to ascertain the suitability of new recruits and there is a Whistleblowing policy and section within this policy to ensure there is clear guidance around the reporting of concerns around staff conduct.

There is a personal care policy to ensure consistency of appropriate practice throughout school including EYFS.

22. Induction sheet for supply staff and visitors to school

Safeguarding Links

Merryfields School Safeguarding Policy
(available on the school website)

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018

NSPCC website

Merryfields School Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding at Merryfields

School

At Merryfields School we are committed to ensuring that our pupils are safe, and achieving their best possible outcomes.

All staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. This may be a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse, or concerns accumulating over a period of time that are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time.

It is crucial that staff and visitors record and pass on concerns to allow the Designated Safeguarding Lead to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity.



Nurturing a love of Learning for Life

Safeguarding pupils at Merryfields School

Everyone's responsibility

A Guide for Staff, Parents and Visitors



Safeguarding Staff



Geraldine Eld

Deputy Headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



Melissa Poole

Early Help Manager

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)



Nicole Minor

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

If anyone has concerns about a child

We all have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to maintain a professional attitude of *it could happen here* where safeguarding is concerned.

If staff members, visitors, parents or carers have concerns about the welfare of a child they should raise these with the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**. If the DSL is absent, then concerns should be raised with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Any concerns about a member of staff should be reported to the ~~Headteacher~~ or ~~Deputy Headteacher~~.

Anybody can make a safeguarding referral, regarding a child's welfare, by contacting Staffordshire Children's Advice Service on 0300 111 8007 or Stoke's Children's advice and Duty Team on 01782 235100

Merryfields School Expectations for visitors

- Mobile phones must not be used in communal areas of school. We request that visitors' mobile phones are handed in at reception.
- We believe our pupils should feel safe in school, therefore **we expect everyone to follow our Code of Conduct**, acting professionally through their use of language and actions.
- We expect visitors to school to dress appropriately and professionally.
- We expect visitors to school to present their ID and safer recruitment assurance as requested, in order to enter school.
- Our school ethos is one of nurturing a love of learning and therefore **we expect ALL visitors to follow our positive behaviour management style and behaviour policies when visiting school**.

Chair of Local Academy Board - Peter Kelly

23. Safeguarding Induction Checklist

Name:

Date:

| | <u>Criteria</u> | <u>Comments & date</u> | <u>Signature</u> |
|-------|---|----------------------------|------------------|
| DAY 1 | Welcome – <i>Provide Staff or Volunteer Handbook</i> | | |
| | Employment Checks Complete | | |
| | School Background information: Pupils, Ofsted, Special | | |
| | School Structure, Governance arrangement | | |
| | Keeping Children Safe In Education, Part 1 issued and explained | | |
| | School Ethos explained | | |
| | Role & Responsibility: reporting structure, Safeguarding role in school | | |
| | Role of the LAC- members | | |
| | Name of DSL, role described and contact details | Posters around school | |
| | Name of DDSL's in school | Leaflets at the front door | |
| | Staff Conduct of Code Policy | | |
| | Behaviour Policy | | |
| | Name of Behaviour leads and discussion around Physical Interventions | | |
| | Children Missing from education process | | |
| | Confidentiality and breaches | | |
| | General Data Protection Act | | |
| | Intro to health and safety in school. | | |

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--|--|
| | <p>Health & Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fire procedures and Fire officers - First Aid - Accidents at work - General workplace safety standards/risk assessments - Alternatives to reporting in school in an emergency e.g. ambulances - Whole Site Risk Assessment - Staff medication | Discuss this risk assessment in detail | |
| WEEK 1 | Meet with Head teacher & DSL (+SPOC/LAC DT/Attendance) | | |
| | Named Governors Safeguarding- Rosanna Snee Chair- Aaron Dimock-Bell | | |
| | Signs and types of Abuse – | review pages 51 – 54 on Safeguarding Policy | |
| | Where to find safeguarding policy | | |
| | What to do regarding disclosure – reporting systems | – page 55 in Safeguarding Policy | |
| | Students and Volunteers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should never be left alone with a pupil or pupils - Separate lanyards | |
| | <p>Policies to read:</p> <p>Health & Safety Complaints Safeguarding inc Prevent Peer on Peer abuse Code of Conduct Whistle Blowing KCSIE (part 1 or 2) Online Safety</p> | | |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| | Behaviour | | |
| | Health and Safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manual Handling - Hazardous substances COSHH - Electrical Safety - Work Equipment - Personal Protective Equipment - Working at Height - Use of computers/laptops - Advise of important contacts - Site specific information – pool/asbestos | | |
| WEEK 2 | Cyber Security | | |
| | Health and Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training and Competency - Employee Health and Wellbeing - Consultation - Sources of information | | |
| | Training needs Identified | | |
| | Any other issues | | |
| | Review date: | | |

Date Induction carried out on:

By:

Signed by Employee:

Date of Completion:

Areas to follow up:

Training needs Identified:

Appendix 1

Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

1. **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 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.

The following may be indicators of neglect (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Constant hunger.
- Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food.
- Frequent tiredness or listlessness.
- Frequently dirty or unkempt.
- Often poorly or inappropriately dressed for the weather.
- Poor school attendance or often late for school.
- Not being brought to school.
- Poor concentration.
- Affection or attention seeking behaviour.
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated.
- Not being taken to medical appointments.
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight.
- Failure to develop intellectually or socially.
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings.
- The child is regularly not collected or received from school; or
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.
- Adolescent neglect
- Affluent neglect

2. **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.

The following may be indicators of physical abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape.
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt.
- Bite marks.
- Round burn marks.
- Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders, or buttocks.

- An injury that is not consistent with the account given.
- Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred.
- Bald patches.
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning.
- Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather.
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted.
- Fear of medical help.
- Fear of changing for PE.
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance.
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- Isolation from peers.

3. 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.

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist but if we suspect that a child is a victim of child sexual abuse, we will refer to and/or use the resources on the [CSA Centre](#)):

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge.
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness, or scratching.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Inability to concentrate, tiredness.
- Refusal to communicate.
- Thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains.
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia.
- Attention seeking behaviour, self-mutilation, substance abuse.
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation.
- Unusual compliance.
- Regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling.
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately.
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group.
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming; or
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.

4. 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 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 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 also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber 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.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- The child consistently describes him/herself in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly.
- Over-reaction to mistakes.
- Delayed physical, mental, or emotional development.
- Sudden speech or sensory disorders.
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies.
- Neurotic behaviour: rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches.
- Self-harming, drug, or solvent abuse.
- Fear of parents being contacted.
- Running away.
- Compulsive stealing.
- Appetite disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.

N.B.: Some situations where children stop communicating suddenly (known as "traumatic mutism") can indicate maltreatment.

Parental response

Research and experience indicate that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all four categories:

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed.
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain, or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb).
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development.
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries.
- Frequent presentation of minor injuries.
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child.
- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child.
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse.
- Parents request removal of the child from home; or
- Violence between adults in the household.
- Evidence of coercion and control.

Disabled Children-When working with children with disabilities, practitioners need to be aware that additional possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- A bruise in a site that may not be of concern on an ambulant child such as the shin, maybe of concern on a non-mobile child.
- Not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment.
- Poor toileting arrangements.
- Lack of stimulation.

- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint.
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food, or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries.
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication.
- Ill-fitting equipment, for example, callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting.
- Misappropriation of a child's finances; or
- Inappropriate invasive procedures.

Appendix 2

Specific safeguarding issues

Behaviours linked to safeguarding issues

All staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Presenting behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, serious violence (including the link to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

Bullying, including Cyberbullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period, where it is difficult for those bullied to protect themselves. It can take many forms, but the main types are:

- Physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (e.g., racist, or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling)
- Emotional (e.g., isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group)
- Cyberbullying (including sexting)

Guidance on bullying can be [Preventing & tackling bullying](#)
[Cyberbullying advice](#)

Child on child abuse (incl sexual violence and sexual harassment)

All staff have the knowledge and awareness that children are capable of abusing other children (including online). All staff are clear about this school's policy and procedure regarding child-on-child abuse.

Child-on-child abuse can occur, both physically and verbally, either online or face to face, between two children of **any** age and sex, with a single child or group of children and can happen both inside and outside of our setting. Children who are victims of this abuse, will find the experience stressful and distressing and it is likely to have an adverse effect their educational attainment. This type of abuse can exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

All staff at Merryfields School recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports of it. They understand the importance of the **timely** challenge of inappropriate behaviours between peers, many listed below, that are abusive in nature. They are aware of the importance of: -

- Making clear that child-on-child abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment, is never acceptable and that we have a zero-tolerance approach.
- Not dismissing this abuse as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as physical and sexual assaults e.g. grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia, flicking bras and the lifting up of skirts.

All staff know that if we do not challenge and support our children that this will lead to a **culture** of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

We know that the initial response to a report from a child is vitally important. We do not want to miss that opportunity and so we reassure victims that their reports are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We never give victims the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. We reassure victims that they should not feel ashamed for making a report.

We have well promoted and easily understood systems in place so that our children feel confident knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

Staff are aware that any incidents of child on child abuse should be recorded on safeguarding systems like any other safeguarding concern so that they can be reviewed and action taken by the safeguarding lead.

Any investigations are recorded on the pupil files of all pupils involved on MyConcern/CPOMS.

All pupils involved are supported through clear messages of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. This may include 1:1, small group or whole class education such as the NSPCC PANTS rules, private body parts, teaching about personal space, or consent, or use of kind words and actions. PSHRE learning covers all of these topics regularly and are part of our school language and culture.

Where appropriate, a risk assessment may be put in place for pupils where it is deemed that there is a potential risk of harm.

Pupils are encouraged to ask for help and know who they can approach if they are worried or need support.

All victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school or college will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. We will ensure that children know that the law is in place to protect them rather than criminalise them, and we will be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Staff are aware of the groups that are potentially more at risk of child on child abuse as evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk. The DfE states ‘peer on peer abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.

Victims of child-on-child abuse will be supported by the school's pastoral system and referred to specialist agencies if appropriate. Risk assessment and/or safety planning are an integral part of this support plan, particularly regarding the post incident management.

All staff understand, that even if there are no reports in our setting, this does not mean that it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important that if staff at Merryfields School have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy (DDSL). Our staff will not develop high thresholds before acting.

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault and may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence. Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks about clothes and/or appearance, jokes, taunting and online sexual harassment. This also includes the telling of sexual stories, making lewd comments and calling someone sexual names and physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes, and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and online sexual harassment.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response. It might not be abusive – but children still need to know it is illegal- whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive.
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Staff at Merryfields School are aware that child-on-child abuse involving technology can include cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying. This may include the use of technology to facilitate or record, threaten and/or encourage physical abuse and/or sexual violence, to share unwanted explicit content, upskirting and consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos.

Technology assisted harmful sexual behaviour can include frequently and intentionally accessing age-inappropriate sexual material online, sending and receiving illegal images, sexual interactions where there are significant power differences, lack of consent or through force/threats and engaging in abusive or sexually violent behaviour.

All staff are aware of the importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.

All staff **are** clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and the important role they play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

If staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the safeguarding referral process. Staff know that if they have any doubt about next steps, they must speak to the DSL/DDSL. Our behaviour policy will support any sanctions.

The DfE states 'peer on peer abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.

Guidance Documents:

- [CSA Centre](#)
- [Hackett Tool](#)
- [Disrespect NoBody campaign](#)
- [CEOP-Safety centre](#)
- [UKCIS Guidance: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes](#)
- [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation in schools](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings](#)
- [Undressed \(lgfl\)](#)

Children Missing Education

All professionals working with children, as well as the wider community can help by remaining vigilant to children's safety. The law states every child should be receiving an education, and we stand a better chance of ensuring a child's safety if we know where and how they are receiving this. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities in England and Wales to make arrangements to identify children and young people of compulsory school age missing education in their area; we work closely to ensure we put appropriate safeguarding responses in place for children who go missing from education.

(Attendance policy available on school website).

A child going missing, particularly repeatedly, can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation; child criminal exploitation; mental health problems; substance abuse and other issues. **Using professional curiosity** to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk helps prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

We understand our responsibility to link school absence/missing episodes with the impact this has on the child's education. We know that there is a distinction between a child being absent and when they are subject to a missing episode and the importance of acting on this information and reporting a missing episode when appropriate. We have a key role in sharing information with the police and any lead practitioner involved with the family when a child is reported missing. We will provide, when required, an appropriate environment for a Return Home Interview (RHI) within the education setting, where possible and will contribute to safety planning when required. We will follow our attendance policy for children who are regularly and persistently absent.

If a child is not known to the Local Authority or other agencies but there are remaining safeguarding concerns, we will consult the [SSCP Threshold Framework](#) and ensure that any concerns are reported to the appropriate agencies/partners.

Our school holds **at least 2** emergency contact numbers for each pupil. If a child goes missing from our school and we are unable to locate them, we will inform parents/carers and we will also contact the Police to report them missing. This will ensure that the Police and other partners have a true picture of missing episodes, which are indicators of risk for some children.

The school will notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The school (regardless of designation) will also notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who is to be deleted from the admission register because s/he:

- Has been taken out of school by their parents and is being educated outside the school system (e.g. elective home education).
- Has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within a reasonable distance of the school at which s/he is registered (moved within the city, within the country or moved abroad but failed to notify the school of the change).
- Displaced because of a crisis e.g. domestic violence or homelessness.
- Has been permanently excluded.

Our school will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered '[missing](#)'

Staff are aware of the importance of completing registers in a timely and accurate fashion.

Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeated occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Further information and support, includes:

- [Working together to improve school attendance](#) including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: [Children missing education](#).
- Further information for colleges providing education for a child of compulsory school age can be found in: [Full-time enrolment of 14 to 16-year-olds in further education and sixth-form colleges](#)

Child Missing from Home or Care

There are strong links between children involved in criminal and sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as running away from home, care or school, bullying, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, truancy, and substance misuse.

In addition, some children are particularly vulnerable, for example, children with special needs, those in residential or foster care, those leaving care, migrant children, particularly those who are unaccompanied, those forced into marriage, those involved in gangs and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Most children who go missing are not in care and go missing from their family home. However, children who are looked after are much more likely to run away than those who live at home, and over 50% of young people in care have run away at some point.

Guidance document

- [Children who run away or go missing from home or care](#)

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

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

We are aware of the [Child Exploitation Risk Screening Tool](#) and use this at the earliest opportunity to understand the risk factors in a child's life.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm, from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

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

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.

- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late.
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Guidance documents:

- [Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked](#)
- [Child Exploitation - StaffSSCP](#)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

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.

CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

The above CCE indicators can also be signs of CSE, as can having older boyfriends or girlfriends and/or suffering from sexually transmitted infections/becoming pregnant.

Guidance documents:

- [Child Sexual Exploitation Definition & Guidance](#)

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and/or store 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 several locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes, and care homes.

Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug

debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRF) should be considered. Further information can be found here [National Referral Mechanism](#)

If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation: -

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

Guidance Document:

- [Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults; County Lines](#)
- [County Lines toolkit](#)

Domestic Abuse including Operation Encompass

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Children living in households where domestic abuse takes place should be considered and treated as victims. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse) Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people, can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life. We will signpost and support our children/young people.

Operation Encompass

Our DSL/DDSL has completed the National Operation Encompass training and therefore we are an Operation Encompass setting. This enables police and education settings to work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. It ensures that we have up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs.

If you require further information in relation to Operation Encompass, please use this link below
[Operation Encompass](#)

Guidance Documents:

- [NSPCC-Domestic Abuse](#)
- [Refuge-Domestic abuse & effects on children](#)
- [Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support](#)
- Operation Encompass helpline 0204 513 9990 (8am-1pm Mon-Fri)

Drugs

There is evidence that children and young people are increasingly misusing alcohol and illegal drugs. Consequences range from non-attendance and poor attainment at school, poor health, committing crime to support 'habits' and increased risk of being a victim of violent crime and criminal exploitation, including sexual exploitation.

Guidance Documents:

- [NSPCC-Parental Substance Misuse](#)
- [Drugs Advice for Schools](#)

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) & Perplexing Presentations (PP)

Fabricated or Induced Illness is a condition whereby a child suffers harm through the deliberate action of their carer, and which is attributed by the adult to another cause.

There may be several explanations for these circumstances, and each requires careful consideration and review. Concerns about a child's health should be discussed with a health professional who is involved with the child.

Perplexing Presentations are concerns raised around medically unexplained symptoms or concerning parental behaviours around child's health, by a non-medical professional.

In Staffordshire we use the following guidance:

[FII-PP Pathway](#)

[NHS-Overview-Fabricated or Induced Illness](#)

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL/DDSL are aware of local contact details and referral routes into local housing organisations, so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators of risk 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 will be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this

will **not** replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

We also recognise that in some cases 16/17 yr olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians and they will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the DSL will ensure that appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

Honour-based Abuse

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors, when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. It is known by several names including "cutting", "female circumcision" or "initiation". The term female circumcision suggests that the practice is like male circumcision, but it bears no resemblance to male circumcision, and it has serious health consequences with no medical benefits. FGM is also linked to domestic abuse, particularly in relation to "honour-based abuse".

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either via disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It is rare to see visual evidence, and children should not be examined but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

Staff **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless there is good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL (or deputy) and involve children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where staff do not discover that FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, staff will follow local safeguarding procedures.

Guidance Documents: -

- [Multi Agency Statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#)

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one, entered, **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 a marriage. The 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). Some perpetrators use perceived culture practices, to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

There are some significant differences between the referral of a concern about a young person being forced into marriage and other child protection referrals. Professionals must be aware that sharing information with a young person's parents, extended family, or members of their community, could put the young person in a situation of significant risk.

Any disclosure that indicates a young person may be facing a forced marriage must be taken seriously by professionals who should also realise that this could be 'one chance to save a life'. A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure. In cases of vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent to marriage, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced.

From February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit for advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

Guidance Document:

- [Forced Marriage](#)
- [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage](#)

Mental Health

All staff have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils and **are** 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. We have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

At Merryfields school the DSL is a Youth Mental Health First Aid trainer and as a result, a number of staff have received Youth Mental Health First Aid training, and further staff have received Youth Mental Health Awareness training.

Our Behaviour Lead, Dave Ellis has completed DfE Mental Health Lead training.

Our DSL has completed Emotion Coaching level 1 & 2 training.

Whole school CPD has included Attachment in relation to Autism and Emotion Coaching training.

Our wellbeing team consists of the DSL, behaviour lead, pupil mentor and Early Help Manager. The team meet termly to discuss pupil need and allocate support. Referrals may come from class staff or parents to the pupil mentor, or they may be raised within the wellbeing team due to patterns of dyregulated behaviour, safeguarding concerns or due to the presence of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Within Merryfields school we have staff who are trained to deliver:

- Drawing and Talking therapy
- Lego therapy
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant sessions
- Nurture groups
- Massage in schools
- Functional Reflex Therapy
- Rebound Therapy

Only appropriately trained professionals will attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem and therefore referrals are made to CAMHS or the Educational Psychologist as appropriate. Education 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.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Guidance and helpful documents: -

- [Addressing Trauma and Adversity](#)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance](#).
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#)
- [Every Interaction Matters](#)
- [MIND-Parenting Capacity and Mental Health](#)
- [NSPCC-Mental Health and Parenting](#)
- [Guidance for education settings responding to a sudden unexpected death being treated as a suicide](#)

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Online Safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation, radicalisation, sextortion, sexual predation, and technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

At Merryfields School we realise that it is essential for our children to be safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We have an effective whole school approach to online safety which empowers us to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms for us to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Consideration of these 4Cs (above) will provide the basis for our Online Safety policy.

We ensure that online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing policies and procedures. We consider online safety in other relevant policies, when planning curriculum, teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL and parental engagement. We have filters and monitoring systems in place on school devices and networks, and these are regulated, and risk assessed as part of the prevent duty.

Our filtering and monitoring standards will

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

The Local Academy Committee (LAC) will review the standards and discuss with the online safety lead and service providers what more needs to be done to support schools and colleges in meeting this standard.

We have an online safety policy (available on the school website) which identifies the usage and expected behaviour of children/students. As a school we appreciate the value of technology and that appropriate filters are in place, yet this does not lead to unreasonable restrictions which would limit online teaching and safeguarding.

Online safety training is delivered to staff monthly as part of our safeguarding briefing training. This training includes testing knowledge as well as disseminating information. Online safety is planned on specific topics, although it can also be reactive to current local issues.

Online safety information is also regularly shared with staff by the online safety lead via email. Information on online safety and current local issues is shared with parents/carers via the seesaw communication app. The Early Help Manager also supports parents/carers with specific issues that they are experiencing, e.g. support with appropriate filtering and monitoring of devices at home.

If staff have any specific safety concerns, these should be recorded as any other safeguarding concern so that are reviewed and acted upon by the DSL. These concerns may also influence future staff training.

Pupils learn about online safety in their PSRHE and computing lessons and pupils are taught how to get help if they are worried about something that they have seen/ that has happened online. Pupils are taught about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour online.

Merryfields School also teaches Online Safety day, when a special day of learning takes place.

At Merryfields School we use SENSO monitoring software to monitor use of computers. This is regularly checked by the online safety lead and is quality assured by the DSL. Any online safety breaches are shared within safeguarding supervision and SLT meetings. Appropriate filtering is in place to prevent users from accessing inappropriate materials online. Even with these systems in place, staff are aware that they must monitor pupils during their use of technology in order to ensure that its use is safe.

An annual risk assessment is in place that considers and reflects the risks that children may face in school.

Policies available on the school website:

Online Safety
Staff code of conduct
Mobile phone policy

Guidance Documents:

- [Children's Commissioner-Online Safety](#)
- [Teaching online safety in schools](#)
- [Appropriate Filtering and Monitoring](#)
- [CEOP-Safety Centre](#)
- [National Cyber Security Centre](#)
- [NSPCC-Undertaking remote teaching safely](#)
- [360 Degree Safe - Online Safety Review Tool](#)
- [UKCCIS-UK Council for Child Internet Safety](#)

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or immediate relative. If the arrangement is to last, or has lasted, for 28 days or more, it is categorised as private fostering.

Close relatives are defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership), or a stepparent.

People become involved in private fostering for all kinds of reasons. Examples of private fostering include:

- Children who need alternative care because of parental illness.
- Children whose parents cannot care for them because their work or study involves long or antisocial hours.

- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their educational opportunities.
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children.
- Teenagers who stay with friends (or other non-relatives) because they have fallen out with their parents.
- Children staying with families while attending a school away from their home area.

Our staff at Merryfields school will notify the DSL/DDSL when they become aware of a private fostering arrangement. There is a mandatory duty on the school to inform Staffordshire Childrens Social Care of a private fostering arrangement by contacting (0800 1313126), who then have a duty to check that the young person is being properly cared for and that the arrangement is satisfactory.

Guidance Document:

- [Children Act 1989 – Private Fostering](#)
- [What is Private Fostering? | Foster For Staffordshire](#)

Preventing Radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' or colleges' safeguarding approach.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause.

At Merryfields school we value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs and ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Pupils/students and school staff have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Merryfields school is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation must be viewed as a safeguarding concern and that protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school's safeguarding duty.

The school's or college's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

Definitions of radicalisation and extremism, and indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation are in

Prevent Duty

The school governors, the Head Teacher/Principal and the DSL will assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include consideration of the school's RE curriculum, SEND policy, the use of school premises by external agencies, integration of students by gender and SEN, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

All schools are subject to a duty to have "due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism". This is known as The Prevent Duty and is part of our Merryfields School's wider safeguarding obligations.

Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales. We follow the guidance in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

Our school has a Prevent Lead who is the lead within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism: this is the DSL.

Our school will monitor online activity within the school to ensure that inappropriate sites are not accessed by students or staff. This is best done using specialist online monitoring software, which in this school is called Senso.

Guidance Documents:

- [The Prevent Duty.](#)
- [Educate Against Hate](#)
- [ACT Early | Prevent radicalisation](#)

Serious Youth Violence

All staff should be 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.

Guidance documents:

- [Home Office Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement](#)
- [Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults; County Lines](#)

Appendix 3

Allegations about a Member of Staff (Incl supply), Governor or Volunteer

1. Inappropriate behaviour by staff/supply staff/volunteers could take the following forms:
 - **Physical**
For example, the intentional use of force as a punishment, slapping, use of objects to hit with, throwing objects, or rough physical handling.
 - **Emotional**
For example, intimidation, belittling, scapegoating, sarcasm, lack of respect for children's rights, and attitudes that discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, disability, or sexuality.
 - **Sexual**
For example, sexualised behaviour towards pupils, sexual harassment, inappropriate phone calls and texts, images via social media, sexual assault, and rape.
 - **Neglect**
For example, failing to act to protect a child or children, failing to seek medical attention or failure to carry out an appropriate risk assessment.
 - **Spiritual Abuse**
For example, using undue influence or pressure to control individuals or ensure obedience, follow religious practices that are harmful such as beatings or starvation.
2. If a child makes an allegation about a member of staff, supply staff, LAC member, visitor or volunteer the Headteacher must be informed immediately. The Headteacher must carry out an urgent initial consideration to establish whether there is substance to the allegation. The Headteacher should not carry out the investigation him/herself or interview pupils.
3. The Headteacher will exercise and be accountable for their professional judgement on the action to be taken as follows:
 - If the actions of the member of staff, and the consequences of the actions, raise credible Child Protection concerns the HeadTeacher will notify the LADO via the [LADO Referral form](#). The LADO will liaise with the Chair of LAC and advise about action to be taken and may initiate internal referrals within Staffordshire Childrens Social Care to address the needs of children likely to have been affected.
 - If the actions of the member of staff, and the consequences of the actions, do not raise credible child protection concerns, but do raise other issues in relation to the conduct of the member of staff or the pupil. These should be addressed through the school's own internal procedures.
 - If the Headteacher decides that the allegation is without foundation and no further formal action is necessary, all those involved should be informed of this conclusion, and the reasons for the decision should be recorded on the child safeguarding file.
4. Where we are not the employer of an individual, we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with appropriately and that they liaise with relevant parties (this includes supply teachers and volunteers). In no circumstances will our school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Our Governing body/proprietor will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

5. Where an allegation has been made against the Headteacher or Proprietor, then the Chair of the LAC takes on the role of liaising with the LADO in determining the appropriate way forward. [Allegations of Abuse - SSCP](#)
6. Where the allegation is against the sole proprietor, the referral should be made to the LADO directly.

Appendix 4

Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.
2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as: 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.
3. Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:
 - negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
 - undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
 - intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results the above points
 - We are aware the types of behaviours that are indicative of the kind of promotion or advancement relevant to the definition and are an important guide to its application. [New definition of extremism \(2024\) - GOV.UK](#)
4. There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.
5. Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal, and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff can recognise those vulnerabilities.
6. Indicators of vulnerability include:
 - Identity Crisis – the student/pupil is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society.
 - Personal Crisis – the student/pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
 - Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student/pupil's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.

- Unmet Aspirations – the student/pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life.
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement/reintegration.
- Special Educational Need – students/pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

7. This list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all children experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

8. More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters.
- Family members convicted of a terrorism act or subject to a Channel intervention.
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element.
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature.
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations.
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour; and
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis.

SPOC Contacts

| Prevent Leads | Contact Name | Email Address |
|---|---------------------|--|
| Cannock | Karla Vowles | KarlaVowles@cannockchasedc.gov.uk |
| | Oliver Greatbach | olivergreatbatch@cannockchasedc.gov.uk |
| East Staffs | Mike Hovers | Michael.hovers@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk |
| | Sal Khan | sal.khan@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk |
| Lichfield | Susan Bamford | Susan.Bamford@lichfielddc.gov.uk |
| Newcastle | Georgina Evans | Georgina.Evans@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk |
| South Staffs | Maggie Quinn | M.Quinn@sstaffs.gov.uk |
| Stafford | Victoria Cooper | vcooper@stafforddbc.gov.uk |
| Staffs Moorlands | David Smith | david.smith@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk |
| Tamworth | Joanne Sands | joanne-sands@tamworth.gov.uk |
| Staffordshire County Council (Safer Communities) | Fiona Chapman | fiona.chapman@staffordshire.gov.uk |
| Staffordshire Police Prevent Team | Sgt. Darren McGrath | prevent@staffordshire.police.uk |

Appendix 6

Role of the Staffordshire LADO

The Staffordshire LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) promotes a safer children's workforce by providing effective guidance, advice, and investigation oversight to cases. They may be able to offer advice and assist with communication in situations which sit outside the statutory criteria, albeit at the discretion of the LADO and where the broader goals of a safer children's workforce are relevant.

The service will give advice on how concerns or allegations should be investigated, including if a referral needs to be raised with the Police and/or Children's Social Care. Staffordshire LADO is not directly responsible for investigatory activities but will actively support any investigation and give advice around a range of parameters including suspension, possible media interest, when to tell the adult, and ensure all interested parties are appropriately linked together. They will retain oversight of individual cases to ensure concerns or allegations are investigated thoroughly in a fair and timely manner, and will advise in relation to any subsequent duties to communicate with regulatory bodies and/or the DBS.

The StaffsSCP inter-agency procedures for: [Allegations of Abuse - SSCP](#) is based on the framework for dealing with allegations made against an adult who works with children, this is detailed in [Working Together 2023](#) and should be followed by all organisations providing services for children and young people. Compliance with these procedures will help to ensure that allegations are dealt with consistently and in a timely manner, that a thorough, proportionate, and fair process is followed and that processes are open to challenge.

Arrangements for managing concerns or allegations of this nature should be robust and effective in keeping children safe. All allegations should be taken seriously, approached with an open mind, and not be driven by preconceived opinions about whether a child has or has not been harmed.

[Professional and Personal Relationships](#) is available which will help individuals form judgements on what may constitute behaviour that is unsafe or abusive.

Who to refer concerns to:

All reports of concern or allegation to the Staffordshire LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) that an adult working or volunteering with children:

- 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 he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Step 1: Follow KCSiE 2025 Guidance. Headteacher/ Chair of LAC/ Proprietor will contact the LADO via the [LADO Referral form](#)

Step 2: Staffordshire Childrens Advice and Support Team will ensure that the matter is passed promptly to the Staffordshire LADO Duty Officer and assist in initiating any additional safeguarding activities.

If your concern or allegation is urgent and outside of office hours telephone: 0345 6042 886 (the Emergency Duty Team).

This single referral point will provide a responsive and inclusive service for all children's workforce sectors, focus the advice and support where it is needed most and enable the team to continue to work effectively with partners.

Appendix 7

Useful safeguarding contacts

- Staffordshire Education Safeguarding Advice Service (ESAS) on 01785 895836 or email esas@staffordshire.gov.uk
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 0300 111 8007
- Staffordshire Childrens Advice and Support (SCAS) 0300 111 8007
- Emergency Duty Services (EDS- Emergency safeguarding concerns) 0345 604 2886 or email eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk
- Stoke-on-Trent Children's Services: Chat and Advice Service (CHAD) 01782 235100 Emergency Duty Team: 01782 234234 (outside office hours)
- Staffordshire Police Prevent Team 01785 232054, 01785 233109 or email prevent@staffordshire.police.uk
- PHSE Coordinator Natalie McGrath natalie@staffscvys.org.uk
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre [CEOP](#)
- [NSPCC](#)– 24-hour Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000 [NSPCC Staffs School contacts](#) rachel.willis@nspcc.org.uk & Matthew.Harding@nspcc.org.uk
- [Stop It Now! child sexual abuse helpline](#)
- Women's Aid - 24 Hour Helpline: 0870 2700 123
- UNICEF – Support Care Team 0300 330 5580 (Mon – Fri 8am-6pm). If you think a child is in immediate danger, please call 999. [Unicef](#)

National Contacts

- CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) [CEOP Safety Centre](#)
- Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) 0344 3814772. Email helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) – [Internet Watch Foundation](#)
- Safer Internet Centre – helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Childline – 0800 1111 [Childline](#)
- Ofsted – General enquiries: 0300 123 1231
 - About Schools: 0300 123 4234
 - Concerns: 0300 123 4666
 - e-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- HM Government (advice on protecting children from radicalisation for parents, teachers, and leaders) www.educateagainsthate.com
- NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour project: 0844 892 0273



Are you worried about a child?



1. Try and sort out in your mind...
- Why are you worried?
- What have you seen?
- What have you heard from others?
- What has been said to you directly?

Thinking about your training, what could these indicators mean? Try and be as clear as you can about why you are worried but do not be afraid to listen to your instinct that something just does not seem right.

2. Report your concern on MyConcern or on a Pink Safeguarding Recording Form, giving as much detail as possible. Remember to be clear about facts and opinions.

3. **If you think a child is at risk of immediate serious harm, speak to the DSL (Geraldine Eld) or DDSL (Neil Brannigan or Nicole Minor) immediately.** You might also speak to the DSL to discuss your experience, thoughts or feelings or ask for an update.



Geraldine



Melissa



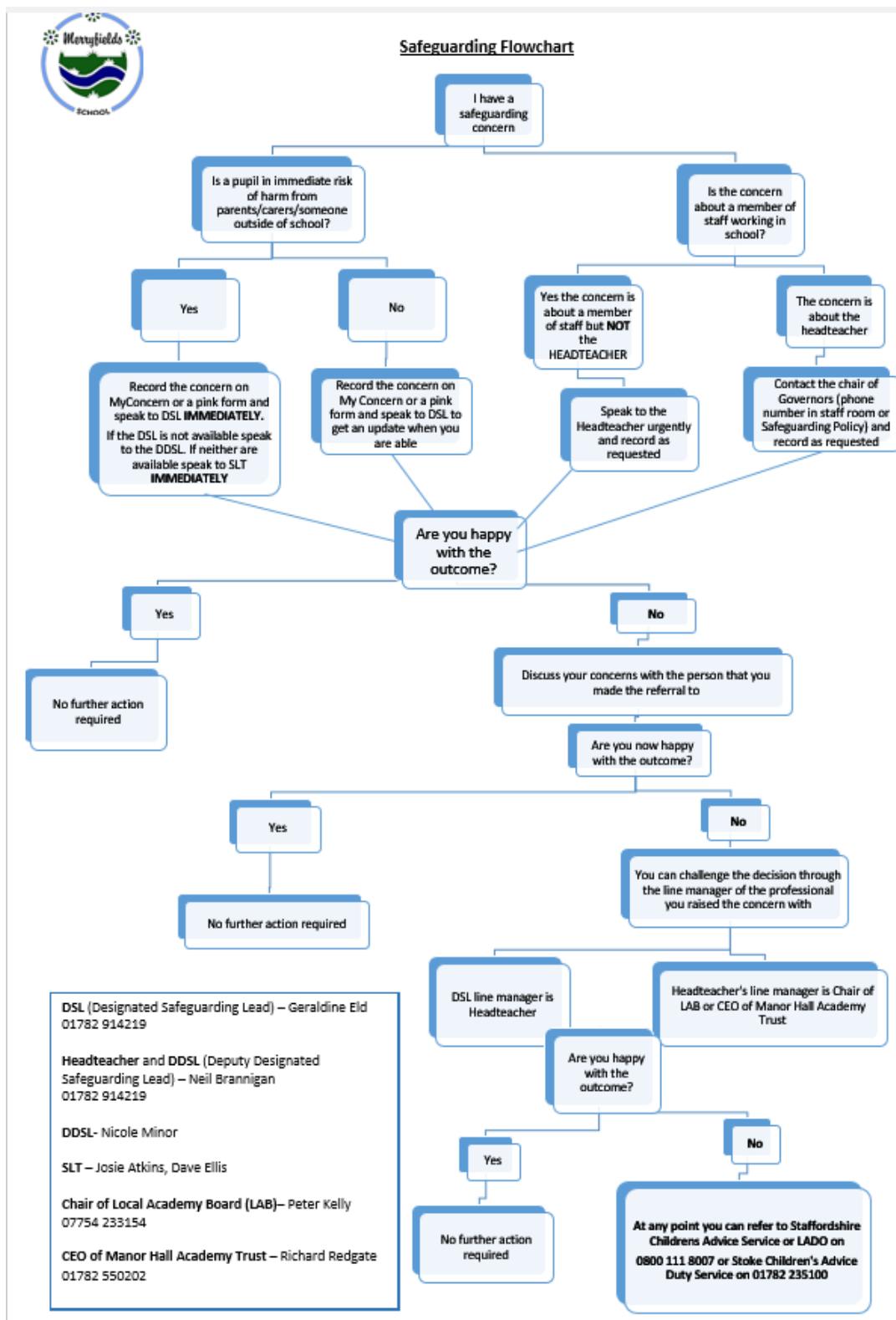
Nicole

4. Get an update- if you're not sure what has happened in response to your concern and you feel action should have been taken or you want advice, get an update from the DSL. If you feel more action should have been taken, tell them why.
5. If you're not happy with the response, look at the Merryfields School Safeguarding flow chart which tells you how to escalate a concern within school or how to refer a concern in to social care yourself. If you refer in to social care yourself, it's ok to tell the DSL or Headteacher so that you can be supported.

Merryfields School is committed to 'nurturing a love of learning for life' in our daily practice. We provide pupils with an environment where they can share their experiences, be listened to by staff, have their individual needs met, and therefore feel safe and ready to learn

Appendix 9

Safeguarding Flow Chart for staff



Keeping Safe at School

- If you are worried

- If you want help to be safe

Talk to your teacher or

Geraldine or Melissa