



Dedworth Middle School

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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# Dedworth Middle School

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## 1. Introduction, Aims, and Guiding Principles

Dedworth Middle School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. We believe that all pupils, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Our school will always act in the best interests of the child. This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers.

This policy is aligned with our statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as set out in the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the latest statutory guidance, **'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2025**, and **'Working Together to Safeguard Children'**.

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This is a broad term that includes:

- Protecting children from maltreatment and preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is a key part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

We are committed to a **whole-school safeguarding culture** where every member of the school community understands their role and responsibilities. This includes listening to children and taking their wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take.

### 1.1 Statutory Guidance and Legislation

This policy is written in line with the following key statutory guidance and legislation that underpins our safeguarding duties:

- **The Children Act 1989 and 2004:** These acts provide the legal framework for the protection of children in the UK.
- **'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2025:** This is the Department for Education's statutory guidance for schools and colleges on their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. All staff are required to read at least Part 1 of this document.
- **'Working Together to Safeguard Children':** This inter-agency guidance sets out how individuals and organisations should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- **The Education Act 2002 (Section 175 and 157):** This places a duty on schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.



- **The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015:** This includes the 'Prevent' duty, which places a duty on schools to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- **The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR:** This legislation governs the sharing and storage of personal information, including for safeguarding purposes.

## 1.2 Equality Statement

Dedworth Middle School is committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff. We recognise that some pupils may face additional barriers to reporting abuse and we will give special consideration to these pupils. Our safeguarding practices are designed to be inclusive and anti-discriminatory. We will ensure that all pupils, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, are protected from harm and are treated with dignity and respect. We will challenge any form of bullying, discrimination or harassment, and we will take account of a child's diverse circumstances when responding to concerns.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. It is our collective duty to ensure that all pupils are safe and feel safe, both within the school environment and beyond.

### a) Important Contacts

The following individuals have key safeguarding responsibilities:

Name	Role
Bradley Day	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Anna Hand Nicola Chandler Clare O'Donnell Mark Cross	Deputy DSL(s)
Nicola Chandler	Executive Head
Carol Watkins	Chair of Governors



Bradley Day	Designated Teacher for Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children
	LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

#### **b) The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

The DSL, along with any deputies (DDSL), is a senior member of the school's leadership team and has the overall responsibility for the day-to-day safeguarding and child protection work.

##### **The DSL's core responsibilities include:**

- **Managing and Overseeing Referrals and Records:** Act as the single point of contact for all safeguarding concerns, ensuring a confidential and up-to-date record is maintained for all safeguarding concerns and actions taken. The DSL will make referrals to Children's Social Care when it is considered necessary and proportionate to protect a child.
- **Liaison with External Agencies:** Act as the key link between the school and other agencies such as Children's Social Care, the police, and health services. The DSL is responsible for attending and contributing to all multi-agency meetings (e.g., child protection conferences, strategy meetings, and Looked After Children reviews).
- **Policy and Practice:** Ensure the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually, updated in line with new statutory guidance, and promoted to all staff, governors, and volunteers.
- **Training and Support:** Lead and coordinate all safeguarding training for staff, governors, and volunteers. This includes ensuring all staff receive an induction, annual updates on Part 1 of KCSIE, and providing expert advice and support to colleagues on an ongoing basis.
- **Championing Safeguarding Culture:** Promote an ethos of listening to children and taking their concerns seriously. The DSL is the school's champion for a strong and proactive safeguarding culture, ensuring it remains at the heart of all school practices.

#### **c) Headteacher**

The Headteacher holds the ultimate responsibility for the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Their specific duties include:

- **Safeguarding Systems:** Ensuring that all safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures, and systems are effective and robust. They must ensure that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are in place and regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective and appropriate.
- **Allegations Against Staff:** Acting as the primary point of contact for all allegations against staff and volunteers, reporting all such concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and managing the process in line with statutory guidance.



- **Staff Conduct:** Ensuring that all staff are aware of and adhere to the school's code of conduct and professional boundaries. They will take prompt and effective action when professional boundaries are breached.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Ensuring that the DSL and any deputies have the time, resources, and training necessary to fulfil their roles effectively. They will meet with the DSL regularly to discuss safeguarding concerns and strategy.
- **Creating a Safe Environment:** Fostering a school culture where safeguarding is a priority, and all staff and pupils feel empowered to raise concerns.

#### d) All Staff, Governors, and Volunteers

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff, supply staff, and volunteers, are responsible for:

- **Awareness and Vigilance:** Maintaining an attitude of "it could happen here." All staff must be vigilant and alert to the signs and indicators of abuse, neglect, and other safeguarding concerns, including those outlined in this policy.
- **Reporting Concerns:** Knowing and following the correct procedures for reporting concerns. Staff must report any concern to the DSL or a DDSL immediately, regardless of how minor it may seem. There is no hierarchy of reporting—a concern should not be reported to a head of department or phase leader and left there.
- **Taking Action:** Understanding that it is not their role to investigate safeguarding concerns. Staff should listen to a child without asking leading questions, reassure the child they are taking their concerns seriously, and then report what they heard or observed to the DSL. They must not promise a child confidentiality if it would put the child at risk.
- **Record Keeping:** Following the school's procedures for making a written record of their concern. This record should be factual, use the child's own words where possible, and be submitted to the DSL as soon as possible.
- **Professional Conduct:** Adhering to the school's Staff Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries policy, being mindful of their interactions with pupils, both in person and online.
- **Training and Development:** Engaging with and completing all mandatory safeguarding training to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date, thereby maintaining a high level of professional competence in safeguarding.

### 3. Specific Safeguarding Issues and Concerns

The school is committed to being vigilant to all risks of harm to our pupils. We recognise that some children may face additional barriers to reporting abuse and we will give special consideration to these pupils.

#### a) Four Main Categories of Abuse



- **Physical Abuse:** Any form of physical harm or injury to a child.
- **Emotional Abuse:** A persistent pattern of harmful behaviour that affects a child's emotional development.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or encouraging a child to take part in any sexual activity, or exposure to inappropriate sexual behaviour. This also includes online sexual abuse.
- **Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which may lead to significant harm.

#### **b) Child-on-Child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**

The school is committed to a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour. We will treat all allegations of such abuse with the same level of seriousness as adult-on-child abuse. We recognise that this abuse can occur both online and face-to-face, and can take various forms, including:

- Bullying (including online bullying)
- Physical violence such as hitting, kicking, or biting
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Initiations or hazing-type rituals
- Taking, sharing, or showing nudes and semi-nudes

Any allegation of child-on-child abuse will be reported to the DSL and will be investigated sensitively, ensuring the safety and welfare of the victim is the paramount consideration. We will work closely with other agencies, including the police and Children's Social Care, as necessary. The voice of the child will always be heard, and their wishes and feelings will be considered when determining the course of action.

#### **Nudes and Semi-Nudes**

The school treats the taking and sharing of nudes or semi-nudes as a significant safeguarding concern. We will respond to all incidents of this nature in a serious and consistent manner, taking a victim-centred approach. Our procedures are as follows:

- **Immediate Reporting:** Any member of staff who becomes aware of an image or video of this nature, whether it has been created by a pupil or shared between pupils, must report it to the DSL immediately.
- **Involving the Police:** The DSL will consult with the police if a pupil is involved in the creation or sharing of indecent images. The police will determine whether the images are deemed to be indecent and whether a criminal investigation is required.
- **Support for Pupils:** We will provide support to all pupils involved, whether they are a victim, the subject of the image, or a perpetrator. We will work to ensure the pupil who is the subject of the image feels safe and supported, and we will offer appropriate help to those who have created or shared the images.
- **Sanctions:** The school's behaviour policy will apply to all incidents, with sanctions being considered on a case-by-case basis. We will, however, always take a proactive



and educational approach, ensuring pupils understand the serious consequences and risks associated with such behaviour.

### c) Online Safety, Filtering, Monitoring and Mobile Technology

The school recognises that technology is an essential part of modern education and communication. However, we are also acutely aware of the risks that technology, particularly online, can pose to children. We are committed to a robust approach to online safety that includes teaching and learning, filtering and monitoring, and clear rules for the use of technology.

- **Online Safety Education:** Online safety is embedded within the curriculum, covering a range of topics including cyberbullying, social media use, online grooming, radicalisation, and the importance of privacy and responsible digital citizenship.
- **Filtering and Monitoring:** The school maintains effective **filtering and monitoring systems** on all its IT and internet-enabled devices. These systems are designed to block access to harmful, inappropriate, or illegal content and to identify concerning online behaviour. The DSL is alerted to any attempts to access inappropriate content or any other concerning activity, which may indicate a safeguarding concern.
- **Use of Mobile Technology:** The school has a clear policy regarding the use of personal mobile devices on school premises, which is communicated to all pupils and parents/carers. The policy is designed to:
  - **Prevent inappropriate use:** Including the taking and sharing of inappropriate images or videos, cyberbullying, or any other online harm.
  - **Minimize distraction:** Ensuring pupils are focused on their learning.
  - **Ensure a safe environment:** Reducing the potential for online harm during school hours.

### d) Pupils with Specific Needs and Vulnerabilities

We recognise that certain groups of pupils may be at a greater risk of abuse or neglect and may face additional barriers to disclosing concerns. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all pupils, especially those with specific needs or vulnerabilities.

- **Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities or Health Issues:** Staff are aware of the increased vulnerability of pupils with SEND. We will ensure that our communication methods are tailored to meet the needs of these pupils, and that we have a clear understanding of any specific health issues or care plans. Staff will be vigilant for signs of abuse, particularly non-verbal cues, and will be aware that a pupil's behaviour may be a form of communication about abuse or harm.
- **Pupils with a Social Worker:** The school works in close partnership with Children's Social Care for pupils who have an allocated social worker. The DSL will maintain regular contact with the social worker and will ensure that any changes in a pupil's circumstances are communicated in a timely manner. The school will attend and contribute to any meetings to ensure the pupil's voice is heard.





- **Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children:** The school is committed to championing the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, recognizing their increased vulnerability. The DSL acts as the designated teacher for looked-after children and will ensure that all staff understand their role in supporting these pupils, including the importance of working with carers and the Virtual School Head. We will ensure a clear Personal Education Plan (PEP) is in place for all looked-after children.
- **Positive Mental Health Procedures:** The school takes a proactive approach to mental health, recognizing it as a key component of safeguarding. We will:
  - **Promote well-being:** Through the curriculum and a supportive school environment.
  - **Identify concerns:** Staff are trained to recognise early signs of mental health issues and know how to refer pupils to the DSL or other appropriate services.
  - **Provide support:** The school will provide access to pastoral support and, where necessary, external mental health services. We will work with a range of agencies to ensure pupils receive timely and effective help.

#### e) Other Specific Safeguarding Issues

- **Children Missing from Education (CME):** The school will track and monitor pupil attendance and will take appropriate action to follow up on any unexplained absences in line with statutory guidance. We will be alert to the risks associated with pupils who go missing from education, as this can be a key indicator of abuse or neglect.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** Staff must be aware of the signs of FGM and have an understanding of the legal duty to report any known cases to the police. This is a significant safeguarding concern and will be handled sensitively and in consultation with external agencies.
- **Forced Marriage:** The school will be alert to the signs of forced marriage and will follow guidance from the Forced Marriage Unit. This is a serious safeguarding issue and concerns will be referred to the DSL for immediate action.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines:** The school will be alert to the signs of CCE, including involvement in gangs or 'county lines' drug trafficking. We will educate pupils on the risks and how to report concerns.
- **Domestic Abuse and Violence:** The school will be alert to the signs of domestic abuse and will work closely with other agencies, such as the police and Children's Social Care, to ensure that affected pupils are identified and supported.
- **Radicalisation and Extremism:** The school has a duty under the 'Prevent' strategy to prevent pupils from being drawn into terrorism. Staff are trained to recognise the signs of radicalisation and extremism and will know how to report concerns to the DSL. We will use a range of preventative measures to promote fundamental British values and build resilience against extremist narratives.



#### 4. Preventative Education

The school believes that preventative education is a key part of safeguarding. We will provide a comprehensive curriculum that helps pupils understand and manage risk, develop healthy relationships, and stay safe in all aspects of their lives.

- **Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE):** Our RSHE curriculum will be used to teach pupils about topics such as healthy relationships, personal boundaries, consent, and online safety. This is a compulsory part of our curriculum for all pupils.
- **Online Safety:** Online safety is embedded throughout the curriculum and is a key part of our preventative work. We will teach pupils about topics such as online grooming, cyberbullying, and the importance of responsible digital citizenship.

#### 5. Reporting and Referral Procedures

##### a) Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Dedworth Middle School respects the privacy of its pupils and families. However, staff must be aware that confidentiality in safeguarding is not absolute. The child's welfare is the paramount consideration, and this will always override a staff member's promise of confidentiality or a pupil's request to keep information private. Information will only be shared on a "need-to-know" basis with relevant professionals to ensure the child's safety and well-being. This will be done in line with statutory guidance and data protection legislation, with the DSL being the key conduit for all information sharing.

##### b) Responding to a Concern

- If a member of staff has any concern about a pupil's welfare or safety, they must record it on CPOMS and report it immediately to the DSL or a DDSL if they believe it is urgent.
- Staff should not investigate the matter themselves, nor should they promise confidentiality to a pupil who discloses abuse. The staff member's role is to listen, record, and report.
- A written record must be made using the school's designated safeguarding system (CPOMS), detailing what was said or observed. The record should be factual and, if a disclosure was made, should use the child's own words. The record should be given to the DSL as soon as possible.

##### c) Referral to Children's Social Care

- The DSL, having considered the concern, will make a referral to the Windsor and Maidenhead Children's Social Care team if they believe a child is at risk of significant harm.
- The DSL will inform parents/carers of a referral unless doing so would place the child at greater risk of harm. This decision will be made in consultation with Children's Social Care and recorded.

##### d) Multi-Agency Working and Information Sharing



- We understand that effective safeguarding requires a multi-agency approach. We will share information with other professionals, such as Children's Social Care, the police, and health professionals, where there is a clear safeguarding purpose and the information is relevant and necessary to keep a child safe.
- We will follow the principles of **'Working Together to Safeguard Children'** and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## 6. Record-keeping

Accurate and confidential record-keeping is a vital part of effective safeguarding. All staff must follow the school's procedures to ensure that all concerns, discussions, and actions are recorded in a clear and factual manner.

- All concerns will be recorded on the school's designated electronic safeguarding system (CPOMS) and will be held confidentially. Only the DSL, DDSL, and other key personnel will have access to these files.
- Records will be factual, objective, and non-judgmental. Staff should use the child's own words wherever possible.
- All records will be dated and signed, and any action taken or decisions made by the DSL will be clearly documented.
- **File Transfer:** When a pupil leaves the school, their safeguarding file will be transferred to their new school upon request, ensuring continuity of care. The DSL will ensure that the file is transferred securely.
- **Historical Records:** The school will retain safeguarding records in line with statutory guidance, including any records required by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

## 7. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation that a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, or visitor has abused a child must be reported immediately to the headteacher. If the allegation is against the headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of Governors.

- The headteacher/Chair of Governors will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.
- The LADO will be responsible for overseeing the investigation and determining the course of action.
- The school will follow the LADO's guidance, which may include suspension of the member of staff to protect pupils and the integrity of the investigation.

### Low-level Concerns

- The school recognizes that low-level concerns about staff conduct, which do not meet the threshold for a LADO referral, should still be addressed. These might



include a staff member repeatedly being overly familiar with pupils or taking unnecessary risks.

- Any low-level concern will be reported to the headteacher and will be managed in line with the school's code of conduct. A clear, factual record will be kept of the concern, the action taken, and the outcome.

## 8. Safer Recruitment

Dedworth Middle School is committed to safer recruitment practices to deter, reject, or identify people who might pose a risk to children. This includes:

- Requiring all applicants to complete a comprehensive application form.
- Conducting Enhanced DBS checks for all staff and governors.
- Verifying the identity, qualifications, and right to work of all new staff.
- Maintaining a Single Central Record (SCR) of all staff and volunteers who have worked at the school.

## 9. Whistleblowing

Staff, governors, and volunteers are encouraged to report any concerns about the conduct of staff, volunteers, or any professional body that may affect the welfare of children. Such concerns should be reported to the headteacher or the Chair of Governors. The school is committed to protecting whistleblowers from reprisal. The school will follow a clear procedure for managing whistleblowing concerns, which includes:

- **Confidentiality:** The identity of the whistleblower will be kept confidential unless a court order or legal requirement dictates otherwise.
- **Investigation:** The school will conduct a full and fair investigation into the concern and will provide a response to the whistleblower.
- **Protection:** No staff member will be penalized for raising a concern in good faith, even if the concern is not substantiated.

## 10. Intimate Care

Dedworth Middle School recognizes that some pupils may require intimate care support. We are committed to ensuring that intimate care is provided in a way that safeguards the pupil's dignity, privacy, and safety.

- All intimate care tasks will be carried out by appropriately trained staff.
- A written intimate care plan will be created in consultation with parents, the pupil, and any relevant health professionals. The plan will detail the pupil's needs, the procedures to be followed, and a list of staff who are authorized to provide care.



- Where possible, intimate care will be provided by two members of staff. If this is not possible, the designated staff member will work in an environment where they can be seen by other colleagues, but where the pupil's privacy is maintained.
- All staff involved will have a clear understanding of what constitutes a professional boundary and will report any concerns to the DSL immediately.

## 11. Training

All staff will receive regular safeguarding training that is updated annually to reflect the latest KCSIE guidance.

- **Induction Training:** All new staff and volunteers will receive a comprehensive safeguarding induction on their first day, which will include a copy of this policy, an overview of the school's procedures, and contact details for the DSL.
- **Annual Refresher Training:** All staff will receive annual refresher training, covering key statutory guidance and the latest safeguarding risks. This will be led by the DSL and will be mandatory for all staff.
- **Specialised Training:** The DSL and deputies will undergo higher-level training every two years and attend regular DSL network meetings to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date. The school will also provide specialised training on issues such as online safety, mental health, and Child-on-Child abuse for staff and this is revised annually. A safeguarding CPD cycle is shared amongst all schools in the trust.

## 12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated at least annually or in response to new legislation or guidance. The policy will be approved by the governing body.