

Safeguarding Summary

Overview

This policy outlines the school's commitment and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. It is based on key statutory guidance, including "Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)," and applies to all staff, governors, and volunteers. The core aim is to ensure timely and appropriate action is taken to protect children, that all staff are aware of their responsibilities, and are properly trained.

Important Contacts

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Hannah Pickles (dsl@bxs.org.uk)
- **Deputy DSLs:** Jane Prothero (mrspthero@bxs.org.uk) and Susanne Shackleton (mrsshackleton@bxs.org.uk)
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** 01274 435600 (ask for Duty LADO)
- **Chair of Governors:** Mrs Zeilah Chadwick (mrshadwick@bxs.org.uk)
- **Prevent Co-ordinator (Bradford):** Danielle King (danielle.king@bradford.gov.uk)

Key Principles

- **Definitions:** Safeguarding involves protecting children from maltreatment, preventing harm to their health or development, and ensuring they grow up in safe and effective care. Child protection is the specific activity of protecting children who are suffering or are at risk of significant harm.
- **Equality:** The school is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognises that some children (e.g., those with SEND, young carers, looked-after children) face an increased risk of abuse. The policy ensures all children receive the same protection regardless of their circumstances.

Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is presented as everyone's responsibility.

- **All Staff:** Must read Part 1 of "Keeping Children Safe in Education" annually. They are responsible for identifying and reporting any concerns about a child's welfare, understanding the signs of abuse, and knowing the school's referral procedures.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Hannah Pickles is the lead for all safeguarding matters. Her role is to provide support and advice to staff, manage referrals to children's social care and other agencies, and ensure safeguarding policies are followed.
- **The Governing Board:** Has strategic responsibility for safeguarding. They must ensure the school has an effective policy, that staff receive regular training, that appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place, and that a named governor oversees the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- **The Headteacher:** Is responsible for implementing the policy, ensuring all staff and volunteers understand their duties, and managing any allegations of abuse made against staff members.

Key Procedures and Policies

The document details procedures for a wide range of safeguarding functions, including:

- **Recognising Abuse:** Guidance on identifying different types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect) and specific issues like FGM, radicalisation (Prevent duty), and online safety.
- **Reporting Concerns:** Clear steps for staff to follow when they have a concern about a child.
- **Record-Keeping:** Maintaining confidential and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns.
- **Training:** All staff receive regular safeguarding training. The DSL and deputies undertake specialist training every two years.
- **Safer Recruitment:** Robust procedures for conducting DBS checks and vetting all staff and volunteers to ensure they are suitable to work with children (Appendix 2).
- **Allegations Against Staff:** A specific process for managing allegations of abuse made against staff members, volunteers, or contractors (Appendix 3).

Here is an edited summary of the school's procedures for confidentiality and for recognising and taking action on safeguarding concerns.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The school's primary responsibility is to promote the welfare and safety of children. Fears about sharing information **must not** stand in the way of this duty.

- **Core Principle:** Timely and effective information sharing is essential for safeguarding. The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information to keep children safe.
- **No Secrecy:** Staff **must never** promise a child that they will keep a disclosure of abuse a secret, as this is not in the child's best interests.
- **Victim's Wishes:** If a victim of sexual violence asks for confidentiality, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will balance the victim's wishes against the duty to protect them and others. A referral to children's social care or the police will be made if a child is at risk of harm. Serious crimes like rape or sexual assault **will be referred to the police**.
- **Anonymity:** The school will do everything it reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any child involved in a report of sexual harassment or violence.
- **Guidance:** Staff who are in any doubt about sharing information should speak to the DSL immediately.

Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

All staff are trained to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and must be alert to the needs of vulnerable children. They must follow these procedures when a concern arises.

Initial Actions

- **Immediate Danger:** If a staff member believes a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, they **must make an immediate referral** to local authority children's social care and/or the police. They must then inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- **Child Disclosure:** If a child discloses abuse, staff must:
 - Listen calmly, believe them, and allow them to talk without asking leading questions.
 - Reassure the child they did the right thing by telling someone.

- Explain what will happen next and that the information has to be passed on. **Do not promise to keep it a secret.**
 - Write a factual record of the conversation in the child's own words, sign and date it, and give it to the DSL immediately.
- **General Concerns:** For any other welfare concern, staff must speak to the DSL, who will decide on the appropriate course of action, such as an early help assessment or a referral.

Specific Safeguarding Issues

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** Teachers have a **mandatory personal duty** to report any known case of FGM on a girl under 18 **directly to the police**. For all other staff, or if there is a risk of FGM, the concern must be reported to the DSL.
- **Concerns about Adults:** Any allegation that an adult working with children poses a risk must be reported immediately to the **Headteacher**. If the concern is about the Headteacher, it must be reported to the **Chair of Governors**.
- **Child-on-Child Abuse:** This is never dismissed as "banter" and is always taken seriously.
 - All allegations must be recorded and reported to the DSL without investigation by the staff member.
 - The DSL will involve social care and/or the police where necessary and create support plans for all children involved (both the victim and the alleged perpetrator).
- **Sharing of Nudes/Semi-nudes ('Sexting'):**
 - Staff must report any incident to the DSL immediately.
 - They **must not** view, save, copy, or ask a pupil to delete the imagery.
 - The DSL will assess the incident and make an immediate referral to the police or social care if there are signs of coercion, grooming, or if the child is at immediate risk of harm.
- **Pupil Reporting Systems:** The school ensures pupils know how to report concerns through assemblies, posters, and direct access to staff, including the school councillor. The system is designed to be accessible and to ensure all pupils feel their concerns will be taken seriously.

Online Safety, Mobile Technology, and AI

The school is committed to protecting pupils from harmful online material through robust processes, education, and clear policies.

- **Key Risks:** The approach addresses four main online risks:
 - **Content:** Exposure to illegal or harmful material (e.g., extremism, pornography).
 - **Contact:** Harmful online interactions (e.g., grooming, peer pressure).
 - **Conduct:** Personal online behaviour that causes harm (e.g., cyberbullying, sexting).
 - **Commerce:** Financial risks like phishing and online scams.
- **School Actions:** To manage these risks, the school will:
 - Integrate online safety into the curriculum.
 - Train staff and educate parents on online risks and safe practices.
 - Use robust **filtering and monitoring systems** on the school network.
 - Enforce a clear policy on the use of mobile phones for both pupils and staff.
 - Require all users to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The school recognises both the educational benefits and safeguarding risks of AI (e.g., deepfakes, bullying). Any misuse of AI will be treated as a safeguarding concern, and the school's filtering and monitoring standards apply to its use.

Notifying Parents or Carers

- **General Practice:** The school will discuss safeguarding concerns with parents or carers where it is appropriate and safe to do so, typically led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- **Key Exception:** Parents or carers will **not** be contacted if it is believed that doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child. This decision will be made in consultation with children's social care.
- **Child-on-Child Abuse:** In cases of peer-on-peer abuse, the school will normally inform the parents of all children involved, carefully managing what information is shared and when, in line with advice from social care or the police.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND) or Health Issues

The school recognises that children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges and are more vulnerable to abuse. Barriers can include communication difficulties or assumptions that signs of abuse are related to their condition. The school provides extra pastoral support and ensures close collaboration between the DSL and the SENCO to address these vulnerabilities.

Pupils with a Social Worker

The school will work closely with social workers to protect vulnerable children. The fact that a child has a social worker will always be considered when making decisions about their safety, welfare, attendance, and educational support.

Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children

A **Designated Teacher** is appointed to promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked-after and previously looked-after children. This teacher works closely with the DSL and the local authority's Virtual School Head to ensure that safeguarding concerns are responded to effectively and that pupils are well-supported.

Pupils who are LGBTQ+ or Gender Questioning

The school acknowledges that LGBTQ+ pupils can be vulnerable to bullying and may experience poor mental health. It aims to create a supportive culture where all pupils feel they can speak openly with a trusted adult. For gender-questioning pupils, the school will take a cautious and individual approach, working in partnership with parents and considering any available clinical advice to meet the child's needs.

Complaints and Concerns about Safeguarding

- **Complaints Against Staff:** Allegations of a child protection nature are handled under the specific procedures outlined in Appendix 3 of the full policy.
- **Whistleblowing:** The school has a clear procedure for staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices within the school.

Here is an edited summary of the school's procedures for record-keeping, training, monitoring, and handling allegations against staff.

Record-Keeping

Accurate and secure record-keeping is a critical part of safeguarding.

- **Requirement:** All safeguarding concerns, discussions, actions, and decisions **must be recorded in writing**.
- **Storage:** Records are kept in a separate, confidential child protection file for each child. These files are held securely and are only accessible to those with a professional need to see them.
- **Transfer of Records:** If a child with a safeguarding file moves to another school, the file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file. This must happen within **5 working days** to ensure the new school can put support in place immediately. For complex cases, the DSL will also speak directly to the new school's DSL.

Training

All staff and governors receive regular training to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

- **All Staff:** Receive safeguarding training upon induction and at least annually thereafter. This includes online safety, the Prevent (anti-radicalisation) strategy, and the school's code of conduct.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies:** Undertake in-depth, formal training at least every two years, with knowledge and skills updated at least annually.
- **Governors:** Are trained to understand their strategic responsibilities for safeguarding.
- **Recruitment Panels:** At least one person on any staff interview panel must be trained in **safer recruitment**.

Monitoring and Links to Other Policies

- **Monitoring:** This safeguarding policy is reviewed **annually** and approved by the full governing board.
- **Linked Policies:** This policy operates alongside other key school policies, including those for **Behaviour**, **Staff Code of Conduct**, **Online Safety**, and **Attendance**.