

Highfield Brookham

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Key Contacts:

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)	Mikayla van den Berg, Director of Boarding, DSL Tel: 01428 728000 safeguarding@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk mvandenberg@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk EYFS: Georgie Hunter- Head of Pre-Prep, DSL EYFS Tel: 01428 722005 safeguarding@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Vivienne Liddell - Deputy Head Pastoral Tel: 01428 728000 vl@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk Andy Baker- Deputy Head Management and Organisation Tel: 01428 728002, 07789 363937 abaker@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk . Henrietta Platt- Head of Lower Prep hplatt@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk . Jo Longshaw- Head of Middle Prep jlongshaw@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk . James Figgis- Head of Senior Prep jf@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk . Leigh Fisher- SENCO Hols@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk
Boarding Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Elliot Hall- Head of Boys House ehall@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk . Jess Oecken- Head of Girls House joecken@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk . Oliver and Meagan May- Heads of Junior House omay@highfieldschool.co.uk Henrietta Backhouse- Senior Matron Seniormatron@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk
Nominated Director responsible for Safeguarding	Mrs. Charlotte Lumsden CLumsden@highfieldandbrookham.co.uk

Note:

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care and / or the Police (999). **Anyone can make a referral.** Where referrals are not made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible that the referral has been made.

The contact numbers below can be used for making direct referrals.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Miriam Williams, Donna Tomlinson, Vic Williams Tel: 0330 222 6450 LADO@westsussex.gov.uk
West Sussex Children's Services / MASH (Integrated Front Door)	Tel: 01403 229900 Out of hours for urgent child protection matters that cannot wait until the next working day: 0330 222 6664 WSChildrenServices@Westsussex.gov.uk
West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership	0330 222 7799 WSSCP@westsussex.gov.uk http://www.westsussexscp.org.uk https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/professionals/professional-disagreements-and-concerns/ladoinformation

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

Highfield and Brookham's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with Child Protection and Safeguarding issues, in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children, (2023), and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated Safeguarding portfolio. This Policy applies to the entire setting, including the EYFS and after school and holiday clubs, all staff (including supply and peripatetic staff), regular volunteers (i.e. those who come into school once a week or more, or 4 times in a 30 day period), pupils, Directors, anyone working on behalf of the school and visitors to the school.

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that the school meets their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies and procedures are in place and effective. It is a requirement of the Independent Schools' Standards Regulations (ISSRs) and is also a West Sussex Safeguarding Standard that the Directors receive an annual report from the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and Nominated Safeguarding Director in order to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities. This annual report takes place once a year, minimum, at the Directors' Meeting, and is included in the minutes thereof.

This policy and its associated procedures address the Independent Schools' Standards Requirements (ISSRs) Part 3, and are in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures. The welfare of boarders while accommodated at Highfield School is ensured by having regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It is reviewed and updated annually, minimum, and any changes in guidance or any deficiencies identified in the Policy and/or procedure will be rectified immediately.

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that 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 refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

DSL refers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- At Highfield and Brookham, we are committed to safeguarding children and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment.
- Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them
- Key staff and directors will be involved in policy development and review
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- The best interests of the child are at the heart of what we do

Policy aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners
- promote a culture which makes both school a safe place to learn and live.

Safeguarding legislation and guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- [Human Rights Act](#) (1998)
- [Children Acts](#) (1989 & 2004)
- [Section 157 of the Education Act](#) (2002)
- [Sexual Offences Act](#) (2003)
- [Female Genital Mutilation Act](#) (2003)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act](#) (2006)
- [The Equality Act](#) (2010)
- [The Teacher Standards](#) (2012- latest terminology update 2021)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter Terrorism Act (2015)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (September 2025) [KCSIE]
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (July 2018 – Last amended December 2023)
- [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (2024)
- [What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused – Advice for Practitioners](#) (March 2015)
- [Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges](#) (September 2021)
- [Revised Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales](#) (2023)
- ISBA guidance (<http://www.theisba.org.uk>)
- Advice from the West Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Partnership
- [School Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Operational Guidance](#) (August 2021)
- [Statutory Framework for EYFS](#) (Effective from September 2021)
- [The Independent School Standards and Guidance for Independent Schools](#) (April 2019)
- [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#) (August 2018)
- [Statutory Sex and Relationships \(SRE\) Guidance](#) (Sept 2020)
- [The Use of Social Media for Online Radicalisation](#) (July 2015)
- [Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers](#) (October 2020)
- [Domestic Abuse Act](#) (2021)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident](#) (2024)
- [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#) (2025)
- [Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#) (2024)

Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- has the status and authority within the school (SMT) to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained every two years, with regular updates
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Keeps detailed written records of all concerns, actions discussions and decision and the rationale for those decisions. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such as children's social care or the Prevent programme. They will ensure that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to children's services or the Police as appropriate
- Ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained

- Considers the sharing of safeguarding information with a child's new setting ahead of the transfer if it enables a smoother transition to the new school
- Has overall responsibility for Online Safety in the school and filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place and works with the IT department and Safeguarding Team to ensure this is maintained and acted upon if necessary.
- Attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- Coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the LADO and MASH teams and will share information with this as early as possible in response to concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils
- Ensures that the Child Protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated annually
- Liaises with the nominated director and Headteacher as appropriate
- Makes the Safeguarding policy available publicly, on the school's website or by other means.
- Understands the processes, procedures and responsibilities of multi-agency working, particularly children's social care
- Will develop and operate safeguarding procedures in line with locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by
- Manage referrals from schools staff or any others from outside the school
- Promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school leadership staff.
- Be aware of pupils who have a social worker

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

All DDSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL (updating training 2 yearly) and, works together with the DSL to carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

Staff Responsibilities

We understand that no single individual at Highfield and Brookham can have a complete picture of a child's needs and circumstances. For this reason, we encourage all members of staff to identify and share any concerns they may have, taking prompt action where necessary. This is emphasised through the safeguarding training, which is a part of every member of staff or volunteer's induction training. Should staff have any concerns about a child, they should raise their concerns with the DSL or DDSL.

ALL staff are required to read this policy in its entirety annually, including the associated appendices, and to confirm they have done so by completing an acknowledgement form. **All staff whether they work directly with children or not are also required to read Part One of KCSiE 2025** and the Directors will ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in Part one of this guidance. **School leaders and staff who work directly with children should also read and understand Annex B of KCSiE 2025.**

All staff should be aware of systems within the school which support safeguarding and these will be explained to them as part of staff induction.

This should include the:

child protection policy, which includes the policy and procedures to deal with child on child abuse;

behaviour policy including measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying; staff code of conduct;

safeguarding response to children who go missing from education;

role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training is regularly updated. In addition, **all** staff receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

All staff are made aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

All staff are made aware of the process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, 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 the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

All staff must know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and local authority children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting ANY form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

All staff should be aware that 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. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

Induction

As part of their safeguarding induction, all members of staff are required to read and understand:

- Part 1 and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Highfield and Brookham Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

New staff also meet with a member of the Safeguarding Team who covers:

- Online Safety
- The role and identity of DSL and DDSL's

Good Practice Guidelines and staff Code of Conduct

Good practice includes:

- Treating all pupils with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding the school's Safeguarding policy, staff Code of Conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- Referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary directly to police or children's social care
- Further information can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct.

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach. The School's Staff Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members at induction.

Corporal punishment

The School does not use corporal punishment. Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of appropriate restraint. There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a pupil physically to prevent them from inflicting injury to others, self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases, only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must be to restrain the pupil. If a member of staff takes action physically to restrain a pupil a written report is made, as soon as practical and sent to the Head. (Please refer to the school's Staff Code of Conduct and the Policy on Physical Restraint).

Concerns Regarding an Adult's Behaviour

Highfield and Brookham has an open and transparent culture where concerns about adults working with children are dealt with promptly and appropriately. If you have any concern regarding an adult's behaviour towards a child, children or young people, a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' about an adult working at Highfield and Brookham, or see behaviour that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work:

- Do not ignore it - any concerns will be taken very seriously
- You must discuss your concerns about any colleagues with the Headteacher, who will support you in liaising with the statutory agencies should any child protection issues arise
- If the allegation/concern is about the Head, the person with concerns will contact the Chairman of Directors (Mr Bill Mills, bill@explorelearning.co.uk) or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Local Authority Safeguarding and Standards Team.

- If the concern is about a member of supply staff or a contractor, their employers should be notified so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

The procedure aims to ensure that all allegations are dealt with fairly, consistently and quickly and in a way that provides protection for the child, whilst supporting the person who is the subject of the allegation.

In the event that a member of staff does not wish to report an allegation directly, or s/he has a general concern about malpractice within the school, reference can also be made to the school's **Whistleblowing Policy**. This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with the Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct for School Staff.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is: 0808 800 5000

Low Level Concerns (Neutral Notifications)

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate. A 'low level concern' is one that does not meet the harm threshold set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024). A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head Teacher about their concern using the Neutral Notification Process.

The aim is for Highfield and Brookham to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working at, or on behalf of Highfield and Brookham are to be clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the school.

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
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating children

The Headteacher will maintain written records of low level concerns, with details of the concern, the context in which it arose and the action taken. The name of the person reporting should be noted, respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonable possible. These records are then reviewed. When a pattern of behaviour meets the thresholds set out, they will refer to the LADO.

Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

If there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Headteacher, staff can contact the LADO directly.

The school will consider if there are any wider cultural issues at Highfield and Brookham which enable this behaviour to occur and if any appropriate policies should be reviewed or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

Staff/pupil online relationships

Staff are not permitted to have online contact with pupils on social media sites (for example Facebook and Instagram). The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation. More information can be found in our Staff Code of Conduct.

Digital Conduct, AI, and Online Safety

Staff must use technology responsibly and in line with the Acceptable Use Policy. They should also avoid contacting pupils or parents via personal devices, email, or social media. Ensure all communication with pupils occurs via school-approved platforms. Exercise caution when using AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Gemini). Never input personally identifiable pupil data. Ensure any AI-assisted content aligns with safeguarding and GDPR. Report any incidents of online bullying, inappropriate content, or digital safeguarding concerns to the DSL.

In line with KCSIE 2025, our school recognises that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) creates both opportunities and risks for children. Online harms now include misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, deepfakes, and other AI-generated content which may be used for bullying, exploitation, or abuse. To safeguard pupils, we ensure that all filtering and monitoring systems meet updated DfE standards, are regularly tested, and include AI-related risks. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), senior leaders, IT staff, and directors are jointly responsible for overseeing the safe use of AI tools, maintaining effective monitoring, and evidencing compliance. Pupils are taught digital literacy skills to recognise and respond to AI-related risks, while staff and parents receive training and guidance to support children's safe use of AI at school and at home.

The school utilises a filtering and monitoring system which blocks harmful content, with a focus on the 4 Cs, content, commerce, conduct and contact. Staff and parents get training on the current climate and important safeguarding factors surrounding online dangers. The procedures put in place to safeguard pupils and staff online, can be found in our Acceptable Use Policy.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse and may benefit from early help. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs (SEND) or certain health conditions
- Has a mental health need (whether or not they have a statutory EHCP)
- Young carers
- In a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home
- Affected by parental offending or has a parent or carer in custody
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying (including prejudice-based bullying)
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Live transient lifestyles

- Frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- At risk of being excluded from school or who have received multiple suspensions
- Struggling with their own mental health
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- At risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Do not have English as a first language
- At risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- At risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Have communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenge

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

Children missing in education

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSLs and Attendance Champions, will monitor unauthorised absence, persistent or unexplainable absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. The school will also hold at least one emergency contact number for each child on register. For further information, please refer to the School's Attendance policy.

Staff Training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and Directors will receive this during their induction, which includes reading policies including the Highfield and Brookham Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, KCSIE (2025) and staff Code of Conduct. New staff also meet with a member of the Safeguarding Team to explain reporting and recording arrangements and they confirm that they have read all the necessary Safeguarding policies by signing a declaration in their Induction Form.

All staff, and relevant directors will receive annual training, including Prevent and Online Safety. There is termly safeguarding training for all staff during INSET. The DSLs and Deputy DSL(s) receive 2-yearly training. A full training log is kept to monitor this.

All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, the staff portal and staff meetings throughout the year. There are also regular updates termly during INSET where further training is given, including online safety.

Safer recruitment

Our school complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history.

The school's Recruitment policy and procedures set out the process in full, including the process for shortlisting candidates, applicants signing a declaration and Highfield and Brookham doing due diligence on shortlisted candidates, such as carrying out online searches.

Safer Recruitment training is required for relevant staff and directors who are involved in the recruitment process. At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All relevant staff (involved in Early Years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are required to disclose if they have personally been disqualified from working in childcare.

The School obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

For further details, please see the school's **Safer Recruitment Policy**.

Volunteers

Volunteers, including directors, will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised. Contractors

The school requests all contractors to sign in on arrival and will be met and escorted onsite by their relevant staff contact. DBS with barred list checks may be requested where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

Site security

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a visitor lanyard, which confirms they have permission to be on site, with green lanyards for those who can be unaccompanied by staff due to a DBS check. Red lanyards are worn by visitors who are required to be accompanied by a member of staff. They are also required to read a summary statement which has all the contact details of the DSL, police, etc as well as a brief summary of what to do if a child makes a disclosure to them, and also the Fire Procedure. Visitors will also be shown a poster with the pictures of the DSL and Deputy DSL(s). Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. Some parents walk their dogs on site and are required to register and wear a blue lanyard. All visitors are expected to observe the school's Safeguarding and Health and Safety regulations.

The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

Extended school and off-site arrangements

The school and the Estates' Team require any outside clubs or visitors using the site to complete a formal cover letter and provide evidence ensuring that they have complied with KCSIE 2025 and in the guidance found in 'Keeping Children Safe in out-of School settings (DfE)'. As with any safeguarding allegation, the school will follow its own safeguarding policy and procedures, including informing the LADO should we receive an allegation relating to an incident when an individual or organisation is using school premises for the purposes of running an activity for children.

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or

activities on our site on behalf of our school, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place. Details of the School's Trips Policy can be found in the policy.

Safeguarding procedures for Sponsored International Pupils

The school follows all safeguarding procedures for any pupils in the school. However, there are specific procedures which are an addition for any children who are sponsored by the school to be at the school. The school ensures that:

- appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safety, wellbeing and protection from exploitation of the children which it sponsors
- where a Child Student is living in the UK in accommodation that was not provided by the sponsor, their living arrangements meet the requirements of the route. House visits by the DSL or Key Contact for the sponsorship, to check.
- sites at which children will be taught or accommodated meet all legally required standards for those purposes
- all staff who come into contact with the children have a current enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check

Child protection procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, all staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people (commonly referred to as child-on-child abuse).

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out in Appendix A, along with indicators of abuse. Bullying

While bullying between children (child-on-child) is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our AntiBullying policy.

Taking action

Any child, in any family, in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here". When deciding what course of action needs to be taken, as well as whether to involve outside agencies, the school will look at the threshold guidance produced by West Sussex, to decide on the best course of action.

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- Stop and listen to what the child is telling you straight away

- Make notes there and then or immediately after the disclosure if more appropriate
- Do not guarantee confidentiality – tell the child you may need to tell someone to get them the right help
- Do not ask leading questions
- In an emergency, take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999
- Report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Complete a record of concern
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should remember that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or they may not recognise these experiences as harmful. Staff should share any concerns with the DSL.

Gender-questioning Pupils:

KCSIE 2025 reflects the terminology and guidelines of the advice given by the DoF on dealing with Gender-questioning children. The CASS review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and that children may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children. Schools must consider the broad range of the individual's needs; do this in partnership with their parents (except in rare circumstances where involving parents would bring a significant risk of harm to the child); include any clinical advice that is available; consider how to address wider vulnerabilities, such as the risk of bullying

Record Keeping

Staff should record any concerns they have about pupils in CPOMS and/or speak to the DSL, Mikayla van den Berg, DSL for EYFS Georgie Hunter, Deputy Head of Pastoral and DDSL Vivienne Liddell Deputy Head of Operations and DDSL Andy Baker or any member of the Safeguarding Team.

Information added to CPOMS is kept confidentially on a secure site. All records on CPOMS should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

If the pupil reveals that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

If a pupil discloses to you

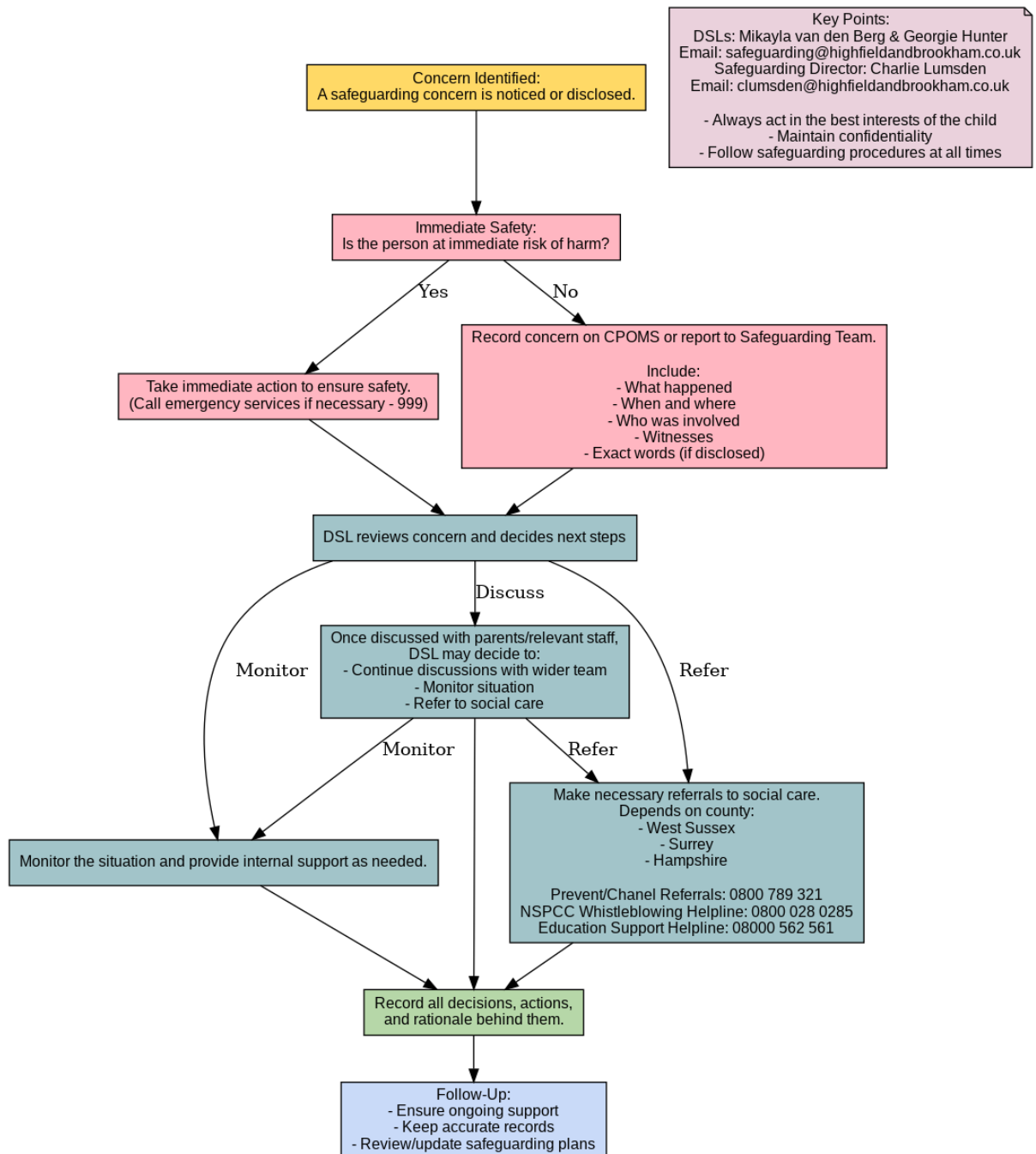
It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes children may not be aware that what is happening is abusive. All staff should be aware that 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.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the pupil, staff will:

- Stop and listen
- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and do not overreact
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- Do not be afraid of silences
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the pupil’s mother think about it
- At an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- Tell the pupil what will happen next
- Seek support if they feel distressed
- Act immediately and report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- Follow this up by completing an incident on CPOMS alerting the DSL as soon as possible. If Pastoral support or help is required

If it is decided that a referral is not necessary, (DSL or Deputy will make this decision) then pastoral support will be put in place by the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Flow chart for raising safeguarding concerns about a child



Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or if the concern is about a member of the staff body. If the concern is about the DSL or Deputy DSL, the Headteacher should be informed. If the concern is about the Headteacher, the Chair of Directors should be informed. The person contacted will then decide who else needs to have the information and this will be disseminated on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, KCSIE (2025) emphasises that any member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). It is important to note that the safety of children is paramount and takes precedence over data protection policies it does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent (KCSIE). The information sharing decisions also take into account the December 2023 update to Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE).

Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- Necessary and proportionate
- Relevant
- Adequate
- Accurate
- Timely
- Secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. Highfield and Brookham do not need consent to share personal information provided there is a lawful basis to process any personal information required (Working Together to Safeguard children, p19).

'Record of concern forms' and other written information will be stored in a locked facility by the DSL or Headteacher and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is a safeguarding concern and wherever it is practicable and safe to do so, the DSL will engage with the child and/or their carer, explaining who the information will be shared with, what will be shared and why. Decisions will be recorded, irrespective of whether or not the information is shared (Information Sharing, 2024). If a child is at risk or a perceived risk of harm, consent is not needed to share personal information. The DSL may share information without consent and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act (2018), which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Headteacher or DSL.

The Data Protection Act (2018) does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school's Data Protection Policy is available to parents and pupils on request. To obtain a copy, please contact the Bursary.

Referral to children's social care

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputy, the Headteacher and the Chair of Directors are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

Alternative Provision

Although Alternative provision is not something which is used at Highfield and Brookham, as we are a non-selective school, the school will ensure that all safeguarding provisions are in place if this does become an option used by the school.

Safeguarding Issues

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm.

Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Other safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include:

SEND

All staff also need to be alert to the specific needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including young carers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. Those with SEND may not outwardly shown signs of abuse and/or may have difficulties in communication about abuse or neglect. Those children with SEND might be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying than other children. There is the potential for children with SEND or other medical conditions to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and have communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these changes. Staff will support such pupils in expressing any concerns they may have and will be particularly vigilant to any signs or indicators of abuse, discussing this with the DSL as appropriate.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation

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

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.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas in the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line.' They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

CCE does not always involve physical contact, it does occur through the use of technology.

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; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

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 non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include noncontact 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 school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Potential vulnerabilities include:

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. 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). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, wellbeing, development, and ability to learn.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

The definition can be found [here](#).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

'Honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses 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. All forms of HBV are abuse and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the DSL as a matter of urgency.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by a female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

If you suspect a girl is at risk or has been a victim of FGM, you HAVE A LEGAL DUTY TO report it to the police. This is a legal responsibility of all teachers. The safeguarding lead should also be notified.

It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number. Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should call 999. In most cases the reports should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, best practice is for reports to be made by the close of the next working day.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- Low level of integration into UK society
- Mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- Visiting female elder from the country of origin
- Being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- Talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- Spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- Frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- Prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return ² Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- Confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

Serious Violence

Children can be at risk from or be involved with serious violent crime. There are a number of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence or at risk. These may include being male, increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, having experienced child maltreatment, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or 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.

Radicalisation and Extremism

The government defines extremism 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. This includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence (Prevent Duty, 2023).

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people' causes serious damage 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 (Terrorism Act, 2000)

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

- A risk assessment will be completed which assesses the risk of children at Highfield and Brookham being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology and what those risks might be in the local area. Should a child be assessed to be at risk of radicalisation, a referral should be made to the appropriate agency (Channel or Children's Social Care).
- The school will also undertake to assess the suitability of visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by the children. These speakers must be appropriately supervised at all times for the duration of their visit. Should the assessment of visiting speakers give rise to suspicion of extremist or radical ideologies, further more thorough checks must be conducted and the safeguarding officer or her deputy notified, before the visit is planned.

Staff will assess the level of risk to identify the most appropriate referral, which could include reference to Channel or Children's Social Care. Contact details for support and advice on the Prevent Duty can be found below.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has undertaken Prevent awareness training and can provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.

The Home Office statutory Prevent duty guidance (2023) can be accessed on: [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance)

The Channel General Awareness course can be accessed on the link below:

https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channel_awareness/01-welcome.html

Child-on-child Abuse

Highfield and Brookham recognises that all children are capable of abusing their peers and all staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This can happen inside and outside of school as well as online. Highfield and Brookham will protect their pupils who has been harmed or is at risk of harm wherever any abuse may have taken place. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare or regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to the DSL/DDSL and act on it immediately.

Highfield and Brookham has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

Staff should be clear that abusive comments and interactions should not be treated as 'banter' and could represent safeguarding concerns. Staff should challenge inappropriate behaviour. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as 'just banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up'

or 'boys being boys' can 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.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported

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 (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- 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; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- 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 nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- 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
- 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)

All staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse.

Highfield and Brookham recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys the perpetrators but that all child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously.

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm and will warrant a response under these procedures rather than the School's Behaviour Policy.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the school during the investigation. The school will take advice from Bracknell Forest Children Safeguarding Board (BFCSB) on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the alleged victim and perpetrator. If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the school will ensure that, subject to the advice of the BFCSB, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupils involved are supported during the interview by an appropriate adult (DSL, DDSL or other senior member of staff) and until the investigation is completed.

Confidentiality will be an important consideration and advice will be sought as necessary from the LADO or police as appropriate.

Victims and perpetrators of child-on-child abuse will be offered support by the School, as appropriate e.g. through counselling and other professional services.

Highfield and Brookham's response to child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL taking the lead. The following provides a strong framework around which the DSL and the DDSL team will operate. The Disclosure/report to a member of staff:

- All victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and will be kept safe.
- No pupil should ever be made to feel ashamed for making a disclosure/report.

- Staff should not promise confidentiality to the pupil at the disclosure stage.
- The staff member will write up a thorough summary of the report/disclosure – only recording the facts as presented. This will include the time and location of the incident.
- The staff member should inform the DSL or DDSL as soon as practically possible.

Risk Assessment:

- The DSL will carry out an immediate risk assessment (RA), considering the safety and support for the victim, the alleged perpetrator and all other children at the school.
- The RA should be considered a live document.
- The DSL will engage with our External agencies (e.g. the police) as required.

Action following the report/disclosure, the DSL will consider:

- The victim's views on how the investigation should be progressed
- The nature of the alleged incident
- The ages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children
- If the incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern
- If there are ongoing risks to the victim or other children
- If there are other related issues and wider context (contextual safeguarding)
- The proximity between perpetrator and victim, during the fact-finding stage
- Any actions required to make the location safer

Further considerations:

The DSL may manage the incident internally through utilising behaviour and bullying policies.

- The DSL may decide that the child or children may benefit from early help, particularly in the case of non-violent harmful sexual behaviour. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexualised behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. Full details of early help can be found in Chapter 3 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or in imminent danger, the school may make a referral to children's social care and follow subsequent advice/guidelines. This will involve reporting to the police. Any delays in the criminal process, bail conditions and the conclusion of the criminal process will all need attention and management
- It is important to understand intra-familial harms and identify and necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Ongoing response:
 - Long term support should be in place for the victim. There are many providers of support, including CAHMS, Rape Crisis and Survivors Trust. The victim may choose to have a designated trusted adult at school (DSL, tutor)
 - Protect the victim from any subsequent bullying or harassment
 - The transfer of information should the victim move to a new school
 - Long term support for the perpetrator (including the transfer of information to a new school)

Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection policy and our safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting) If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil
- Staff must tell the DSL and record the allegation, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children’s social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all the children involved – both the victim(s) and the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made – with a named person they can talk to if needed.
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour
Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.

Notifying parents

- Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child’s parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure
- Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL
- If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children’s social care team before doing so
- In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved

Dealing with unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and the case manager should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help.

In such circumstances, a referral to West Sussex may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, Highfield and Brookham will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it.

Nudes and Semi-nudes

The sharing of nudes and semi-nude imagery/videos (sexting) can be viewed as a form of sexual harassment and is defined as the production and/or sharing of sexual photos and videos of and by young people who are under the age of 18. It includes nude or nearly nude images and/or sexual acts. It is also referred to as 'youth produced sexual imagery'.

'Sexting' does not include the sharing of sexual photos and videos of under-18 year olds with or by adults. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police.

Further information can be found in the UKCIS document.

What to do if an incident involving 'nudes and semi-nudes' comes to your attention

- Report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately
- Never view, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it
- Do not ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff

Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or gender questioning (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. At Highfield and Brookham, we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced, by providing opportunities for any pupil to speak to teachers, tutors, anyone from the safeguarding team or the School Counsellor.

When a child is gender questioning, the Cass review identified that caution is needed as there are impacts on social transition. The child may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs. The school will encourage families to seek clinical help and advice when making decisions about support for a gender questioning child. Highfield and Brookham will consider the broad range of the individual's needs, this will be done in partnership with the child's parents (unless by involving parents would bring a significant risk of harm to the child).

Preventative Education

Highfield and Brookham plays a crucial role in preventative education and has a whole-school approach which prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Highfield and Brookham has a culture of zero tolerance of:

- Sexism
- Misogyny
- Homophobia
- Biphobia
- Sexual violence/harassment.

Highfield and Brookham has a clear set of values and standards that are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This is underpinned by the behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as a planned programme of evidence based RSE. This is delivered in regular timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. The programme is fully inclusive and is developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities).

The RSE program tackles, at an age-appropriate stage, issues such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries and consent
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- the concepts of, and laws relating to: sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and;
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

Online Safety at Highfield and Brookham

Online harms now include misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, deepfakes, and other AI-generated content which may be used for bullying, exploitation, or abuse. To safeguard pupils, we ensure that all filtering and monitoring systems meet updated **DfE standards**, are regularly tested, and include AI-related risks.

With children now having access to computers, personal and personal surfaces from Year 6, there is even greater need to ensure that children remain safe whilst online. Children can be vulnerable to exploitation or abuse through the medium of Information Technology. At Highfield and Brookham, we manage these risks by ensuring that when children use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content and there are monitoring systems in place.

We also ensure that their personal surfaces have monitoring software installed so that we can monitor their use outside of school. These are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness. Should a child type anything into their laptop that is of concern, it is flagged by the monitoring software and the Safeguarding Team receives a daily email with any searches or key words of concern. If there is a serious concern, the DSL and Deputy Head Pastoral receives an immediate alert to both their email and work mobile phone.

It is important that ALL staff and volunteers are alert to the potential risks children may be exposed to, and steps can be taken to mitigate the risk of this occurring, with specific reference to:

- Content:- e.g. being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
 - Contact:- e.g. being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: child to child 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:- e.g. personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and nonconsensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying
- Commerce:- e.g. - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Staff with concerns over children's use of ICT equipment must report their concerns, if, for example, a child is spending too much time online, on a Surface, on their own or experiencing difficulties, overly defensive, anxious or secretive about their computer usage.

The school supports and trains children in online safety through a variety of different methods:

- Across the curriculum in all subjects
- Annual e-safety day/week
- Workshops on online safety training for children and parents
- IT curriculum covering safe internet usage
- Pupil's home screen with Childline details on it
- Through RSHE lessons

- Through the Tutor System
- All staff share responsibility for e-Safety in the school and must be aware of these responsibilities.

At Highfield and Brookham, pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Examples include being taught to contact NSPCC or CEOP should pupils see content online they are uncomfortable with. Being taught to block anyone or anything who contacts them that might be harmful.

Use of Mobile Phones

In the Prep, personal mobile devices can only be used if absolutely necessary, to respond to the Pastoral SOS or Prep messaging group. They should not be used during lesson times. When in the Pre prep and Nursery building or when working with this age group, personal mobile phones/smart phones and internet enabled devices are not used by staff during working hours. This does not include breaks where personal mobiles may be used off the premises or in a safe place e.g, staff room or when authorised by the setting manager to use their device.

All mobile phones, personal iPads or other personal devices must be securely put away and may only be used in a room where there is no child present. In an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in the privacy of the office with permission of the manager or the deputy manager.

School devices may be used by teachers where there are children present, but any images captured must be erased from the device if a teacher leaves the school site with this device, unless this is for the purposes of an educational school trip.

Pupil's Mobile Devices

Highfield and Brookham does not allow the use of mobile phones on school site for children. The only exception is for international pupils who need mobile devices to contact home. In this case, children's phones should be free of any social media and only have the apps necessary for contacting home- such as Whatsapp or WeChat.

Personal mobile phones – staff and visitors (includes internet enabled devices)

- Staff ensure that contact details of the setting are known to family and people who may need to contact them in an emergency.
- Staff to ensure that they take a school mobile phone when going on outing or for school pick-ups. School mobile to be used only in emergencies .
- Members of staff do not use personal equipment to take photographs of children.
- Parents and visitors do not use their mobile phones on the premises. There is an exception if a visitor's company/organisation operates a policy that requires contact with their office periodically throughout the day. Visitors are advised of a private space where they can use their mobile.

Smartwatch and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities

We recognise there are many health benefits for the use of smartwatches such as counting steps and heart rate. To ensure the safe wearing and use of Smart Watches and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, staff must ensure that:

- A watch has to be worn in 'flight mode' or Bluetooth is disconnected, this will ensure there is no internet connectivity to access notifications or Wi-Fi.
- They agree to random spot checks by the Head EYFS or Nursery Manager to confirm the above.
- Staff understand they may not use their watch to receive calls or check messages during working hours and whilst on EYFS premises (except in the staff room) as this creates distraction and potential dangers.
- Staff have to be vigilant of others checking their watches and remind them of the Nursery policy and procedures of the safe wearing of a smart watch and other electronic devices with imaging capability. (EYFS statutory framework Sept 2025)
- Staff should not use their Smart Watch to access photos or images whilst on nursery premises (indoors or outdoors) and whilst on local trips/outings.
- Where ongoing technology advances the nursery reserves the rights to request the removal of a Smart Watch if the safety of a child[ren] is at risk.

Physical Intervention and Restraint

This can be found as a standalone policy on the staff area under School Policies. There are occasions when physical contact with pupils is proper and necessary, for instance during demonstrations, coaching or giving First Aid. Young children and those with special educational needs may need physical prompts and children in distress may need comfort. Teachers must be aware of children who are sensitive to contact for cultural or other reasons and use their professional judgement according to individual circumstances.

Other Potential Safeguarding Issues

School is aware that other issues may have an effect on the wellbeing of the pupils, and as such should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Experienced Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD);
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement;
- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Is within the court system;
- Has family members in prison;
- Is at risk of modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism, trafficking or exploitation;
- Is involved in Cybercrime

This is not an exhaustive list but the school will provide support to children, families and staff, when the need arises.

Highfield and Brookham assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the wellbeing and safety of its pupils, particularly extra-familial harms. These can take a variety of different forms and pupils can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their

own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

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. Staff should be aware of the need to highlight children whom they believe are at risk. Staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues but may notice behaviours that may be of concern. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by adding an incident on CPOMS or speaking to the DSL or any of the DSL's.

Looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children and previously looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

Children with a social worker

At Highfield and Brookham, we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most pupils.

This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.

We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

Boarding School

Research has shown that children can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings. All boarding schools and residential special schools comply with the National Minimum Standards for their particular setting and are appropriately inspected. All boarding staff should be aware of the following points:

- Staff should maintain professional standards of behaviour and appropriate boundaries at all times in relationships between themselves and the pupils, themselves and the parents
- Relationships between residential boarding staff and pupils are key to a happy and successful boarding experience for pupils, but teachers must be aware of the guidelines set out in the Code of Conduct at all times, within the boarding environment
- Boarding staff should be aware of the potential for abuse of children by their n the boarding environment
- The procedure for reporting concerns is the same as for non-boarding pupils

Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DSL and the school should notify the local authority of the circumstances.

On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

The Role of Directors

In accordance with Part 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), the governing board:

- Will ensure that all directors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training will be regularly updated.
- Have a nominated Safeguarding Director to oversee the safeguarding policy and procedures at Highfield and Brookham
- Meet with the key members of the Child Protection Team termly (at the very least the DSL) to discuss safeguarding matters (procedural and policy related)
- Are presented with an annual audit of safeguarding at Highfield and Brookham school, delivered by the DSL at a full governing body meeting (which is included in the minutes) and the safeguarding director signs this off
- Review any policy changes and sign off the safeguarding policy annually
- Are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

Link between Legal Duties and Safeguarding

Highfield and Brookham are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act (1998), the Equality Act (2010) and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Highfield and Brookham will always follow the Human Rights Act (1998) to respect and protect an individual's human rights.

Under the Human Rights Act, it is unlawful for schools and colleges to act in a way that is incompatible with the Convention. The specific convention rights applying to schools and colleges are:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination, and
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to education.

Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances.

Highfield and Brookham has an obligation under the Equality Act (2010) to not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Policy Review and Update Record:

Fully Updated: December 2015 Phillip Evitt, Headteacher, Highfield, Sophie Baber, Headteacher, Brookham

Reviewed and updated: September 2018, P.Evitt, S.Baber, A.Kingsbury, E.Graham, W.Mills

Reviewed and updated: September 2019, A. Kingsbury and E.Graham

Reviewed and updated: September 2020, A. Kingsbury and E. Graham

Reviewed and updated: April 2021, A. Kingsbury and E. Graham

Reviewed and updated: September 2021 P. Evitt, S. Baber, C. Lumsden, A. Baker, G. Hunter

Reviewed and updated: May 2022, A.Baker following external audit

Reviewed and updated: September 2022, S. Cryer, S. Baber, C. Lumsden, A. Baker, G.Hunter

Reviewed and updated: September 2023, M. van den Berg, A. Baker, S.Cryer

Reviewed and updated September 2024, M van den Berg, S. Cryer, C. Lumsden,

Reviewed January 2025, M van den Berg, Anne Marie McAteer (external audit)

Fully Updated- following external audit September 2025 M van den Berg, S. Cryer, C. Lumsden, A. Baker, G.Hunter

APPENDIX A

Detailed Responsibilities for All Staff

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children.

We will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and adults by:

- **acting at all times according to what is in the best interests of the child;**
- valuing children, listening to and respecting them and involving them in decisions which affect them;
- keeping an open mind at all times, and adopting an 'it could happen here' approach;
- never tolerating bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism or any other forms of discrimination, affording all individuals a sense of being valued
- ensuring the curriculum affords opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, particularly when using technology, in emotional and physical relationships and, where appropriate, in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour;
- engendering a culture of tolerance and respect between genders, in which sexist or sexualised language or behaviour is never tolerated, and where staff are confident in understanding and recognising what normal sexual development in young people is vs harmful sexual behaviour;
- exercising our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 by ensuring all staff attend 'Prevent' training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour;
- keeping up to date with changes in government guidance, and in changes and evolutions in the risks that can put children at risk of harm;
- supporting attendance and taking action if a child is missing school regularly. We have a duty of care to monitor the attendance for pupils registered at our setting, identify children missing from education and take appropriate action. By monitoring and reviewing attendance at Highfield on a regular basis, it allows staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils to the best of our ability. Staff should refer to the school's 'Children Missing from Education' policy;
- holding more than one emergency contact number for each pupil (via the school's Schoolbase system) to allow the school to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is identified;
- appointing a senior member of staff as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a Designated Safeguarding lead for EYFS and creating a team of DDSL's across the school ensuring these persons have the time, funding, support, training and resources to perform their role effectively; ensuring that there is always cover for these roles;
- making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of and committed to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and also understand their individual responsibility to take action, including an understanding of the local early help process;

- identifying any concerns early and providing appropriate help to prevent them from escalating;
- sharing information about concerns with relevant agencies, and involving children and their parents/carers appropriately;
- acknowledging and actively promoting that multi-agency working is often the best way to support children and their families;
- taking the right action, in accordance with West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) multi-agency safeguarding procedures, if a child discloses or there are indicators of abuse;
- keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous safeguarding and child protection records, ensuring they are kept securely and ensuring that these are transferred immediately and securely as and when a child leaves;
- recruiting staff and volunteers (including host families) safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in accordance with statutory guidance and legal requirements. All members of the school's HR team have received safer recruitment training and in conjunction with the school's safer recruitment policy a minimum of one interview panel member will have completed safer recruitment training.
- providing effective management for the above through induction, support and regular training appropriate to role;
- adopting a Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers which includes staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media;
- ensuring staff and volunteers understand about 'whistleblowing';
- promoting a culture in which staff feel able to report to senior leaders what they consider to be unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the school's Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken;
- dealing appropriately with any allegations/concerns about the behaviour of staff, including supply staff and volunteers, in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance;
- giving appropriate guidance through the school's behaviour policy, to support all pupils;
- ensuring pupils' self-awareness of safeguarding and welfare matters is developed at levels appropriate to their maturity, through curricular and extra-curricular events, where a trusting climate is established (for example, PSHE lessons, tutor time, assemblies, year group meetings and circle time);
- providing guidance on the safe use of electronic equipment, including access to the internet;
- encouraging, amongst all staff, a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, as well as a knowledge of how to manage the requirement to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality whilst never promising a child that they will not tell anyone else about a disclosure;
- developing positive partnerships and nurturing a commitment to open and honest relationships with parents and carers at all stages of a pupil's education.

APPENDIX B

Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial context by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. A body map to record bruises/marks on a child's body can be used when recording an incident on CPOMS. These should be used if you are concerned about bruising or injuries on a child.

Emotional Abuse: 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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including 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 of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-

givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; provide suitable accommodation. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- Look unkempt and uncared for
- Change their eating habits
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- Appear fearful
- Be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- Self-harm
- Frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- Show signs of not wanting to go home
- Display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- Challenge authority
- Become disinterested in their school work
- Be constantly tired or preoccupied
- Be wary of physical contact
- Be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age ²

Acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.

APPENDIX C

RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Staff working with children must maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child. If staff have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately. Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local children’s social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Fears about sharing information and GDPR concerns must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy.

[Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers](#) (DfE 2018) provides advice and guidance on this matter.

Immediate danger or at risk of significant harm

If any member of staff believes a child to be in immediate danger or at risk of harm, they should refer this to children’s social care and/or the police immediately. They do not need to liaise with the DSL before making the referral. The safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount.

Anyone can make a referral to Social Care and/or the Police, not just the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Having made a referral directly, the member of staff must then inform the DSL that the referral has been made at the earliest opportunity.

Early Help

Effective use of early help is the most effective way of promoting the welfare of children and reducing the risk of problems escalating.

All staff must be aware of children who are at increased risk and where early help may be required. This includes children in the following circumstances, as indicated in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, accessible [here](#), pages 13-15:

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;
- has unexplained or frequent absences from school
- Are in danger of exclusion from school
- 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 care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol 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;
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

All staff may have a role to play in the early help process. This includes:

- Identifying emerging problems;
- Liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- Sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment;
- In some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.

Where the school assesses that early help might be necessary, contact will be made with the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership in order to seek further guidance and for an early help assessment to be carried out.

In order to be most effective, this early help assessment should take place with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers, and with all relevant professionals.

Local authority children's social care should set out the process for how this assessment will happen.

The school refers to the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership's threshold / Continuum of Needs document, which includes the process for early help assessments and the type and level of early help services available (Appendix 6).

During the early help process, the DSL will support the staff member acting as lead professional in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment, as appropriate. When early help support is in place, this will be kept under constant review by the lead professional and DSL. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving a referral to children's social care must be given consideration.

Further detail about the process of Early Help is on the West Sussex website [here](#).

Supporting the Pupil at Risk

We recognize that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self-blame.

Highfield and Brookham may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

The School will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school's Behaviour Policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. All staff will agree on a consistent approach which focuses on the behaviour of any offence committed by the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self-worth. The school will endeavour to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse, which has occurred.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy because a bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

- Appropriate Risk Assessments should the abuse be child-on-child and the victim and alleged perpetrator be in the same school.
- Liaison with other agencies who support the children such as Children's Services, the Multi Agency Support Hub, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the School Counsellor, the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Services and the Education Welfare Service.
- Keeping records and notifying Children's Services as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern.

Responding to the child who discloses (i.e. talks about) abuse

It can take a good deal of courage for a child to talk to an adult about abuse. The child may have to betray a person who is close to them and loved by them and they are risking a great deal in the hope you will believe what they say.

Helpful responses:

- Remain calm, approachable and receptive; make it clear that you are taking them seriously; avoid showing shock or disbelief.
- Listen carefully to what is said, without interrupting. Best practice is to wait until the end of the disclosure and immediately write up a thorough summary. There is no need to find a 'witness', as this could inhibit the child from saying more. However, it is recognised that this is acceptable and a preferred approach for some colleagues, allowing the second member of staff to take notes. If making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking.
- Ask questions for the purposes of clarification only, and avoid asking leading questions or pressing for more information. Questions should be asked in an open manner (remember TED: Tell me, Explain, Describe). It is important to bear in mind that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation so it is essential that staff do not ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate the abuse.
- Reassure them that they are right to tell you and that they should not feel guilty.
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others, i.e. do not promise to keep the matter confidential or a 'secret'.

What not to do:

- Do not make assumptions.
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Do not make any promises you cannot keep including keeping the information secret.
- Do not share concerns with the parents; if appropriate, this will be done by the DSL after a discussion with Children's Services.
- Where physical injuries have been observed, note these carefully but they should not be photographed. The type and location of the injury can be noted in CPOMS on the body

map function at a later stage. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the child's body; if appropriate, draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or injury, to help the child explain.

What to do next:

- **Ensure the child is safe;** if you feel that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, contact social services and / or the Police immediately.
- Make an immediate, careful record of what was said using the child's words, in handwritten format, or directly on CPOMS. Record facts not opinions or interpretations, as well as any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, noting the date, time, any names mentioned, and to whom the information was given. Ensure that the record is signed and dated. See Appendix 3 below for detailed record keeping guidance.
- Report the disclosure or indicators of abuse to the DSL or DDSL immediately and **without delay**, who will then contact social services or other external agencies. Staff at schools with boarding provision can seek advice in the first instance from local Family Support teams. (See Appendix 1 for contact numbers).

Please note, a child protection referral from a professional cannot be treated as anonymous.

- Pass all hand-written records to the DSL (or DDSL) immediately. If you are able to, please also enter the record on CPOMS in a timely manner – NO copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer. This includes the original notes as these constitute prima facie evidence and may be needed by a court. Records should be kept by the DSL in a secure, designated file separate from the child's academic records. An electronic file will also be maintained on CPOMS.

What happens next:

The advice of the LADO will be sought by the DSL about when communication with the individual involved and the parents/carers involved should take place and by whom. The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether doing so is likely to place the child at risk of harm from their actions or reactions - for example in circumstances where there are concerns that a serious crime such as sexual abuse, domestic violence or induced illness has taken place. The reason for the decision not to contact parents first will be recorded in the child's school child protection file.

Where there is no disclosure by a child but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that s/he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the DSL and Child Protection Agencies, following a referral from the DSL.

A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentiality might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not

happy with the outcome s/he can press for reconsideration and if following this, s/he still believes the correct action has not been taken, can refer the concerns directly to social workers.

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and a child protection case in general, is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the DSL.

What to do if you suspect a child is being abused (without a disclosure)

- Discuss your concerns immediately and without delay with the DSL.
- Do not share concerns with parents. This will be done by the DSL after a discussion with Children's Services if so advised.

Further advice for all staff dealing with children can be found in the government guidance document, [*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused \(March 2015\)*](#).

Response from Children's Services Family Support (Social Care) to a school referral

- **Referral**

Once a referral is received by the relevant team, a manager will decide on the next course of action within one working day. When there is concern that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be decided more quickly and a strategy discussion held with the Police and Health professionals and other agencies as appropriate (section 47 Children Act 1989). The DSL should be told within three working days of the outcome of the referral. If this does not happen s/he will contact the duty worker again.

- **Assessment**

All assessments should be planned and co-ordinated by a qualified social worker. They should be holistic, involving other professionals, parents/carers and the children themselves as far as practicable. Assessments should show analysis, be focused on outcomes and usually take no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. School staff have a responsibility to contribute fully to the assessment.

- **Section 47 Enquiries (regarding significant harm)**

The process of the investigation is determined by the needs of the case, but the child/young person will always be seen as part of that process and sometimes without parents' knowledge or permission. On occasions, this will mean the child/young person is jointly interviewed by the

Police and social workers, sometimes at a special suite where a video-recording of the interview is made.

- **The Child Protection Conference**

If, following the Section 47 enquiries, the concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and school staff will be invited to attend - normally the Head or DSL. This person will produce a written report in the correct format (a pro forma is available on the WSSCB website). This will be shared with the child/young person and his/her family before the conference is held. A copy will also be sent to the person chairing the initial CPC at least 24 hours in advance.

More information is in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures ('Child Protection Conferences') on the WSSCP website. If the DSL disagrees with the decisions made by social workers regarding the outcome of the referral and/or the conclusions of the assessment senior managers (under the escalation policy available on the WSSCP website), *particularly* if the child's situation does not appear to be improving, they must raise their concerns **immediately**.