

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** **(Child in Need and Child in Need of Protection)**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:**

Academic Support Policy  
Anti-Bullying Policy  
Behaviour Policy  
Online Safety Policy  
Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy  
Relationships and Sex Education Policy  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Whistleblowing Policy

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## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

This statutory policy sets out the arrangements made by the proprietors of the School as required by the Independent School Standards and Regulations 2014; Section 87(1) of The Children Act 1989, Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 (and any guidance issue by the Secretary of State) to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school. This policy and its effectiveness will be fully reviewed at least annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Compliance Committee; it will also be reviewed whenever new legislation or guidance are issued. It is designed to act as a handbook for safeguarding at BMS and therefore its contents may be subject to amendments in response to specific incidents or general trends both internal and external.

### **Statement**

Bedford Modern School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children defined for statutory purpose as: protecting children from maltreatment, preventing 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 and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

At BMS, we aim to create a warm and supportive environment where students feel safe and secure. In all matters of safeguarding we aim to respect and protect the rights of the individual as well as carefully considering how we support students with regards to

particular protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>. Equally **all** school staff will be fully trained, encouraged to share concerns, supported in their safeguarding role and encouraged to adopt an 'it could happen here' approach. The school will take action to promote a safeguarding culture amongst all members of its community and always act in the best interests of the child.

## 1. Policy Principles

This policy is one of a series of policies that sets out how the school will safeguard its students and enable all children to have the best outcomes. It sits above and works alongside the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy

This policy has been prepared using the guidance and principles set out in the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015
- Working together to Safeguard Children July 2018
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance 2021
- Guidance from Local Safeguarding Partners (which include Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton as well as any other partners from the areas in which students from the School reside.
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools
- SEND Code of Practice:0-25 years 2015
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools 2022
- School Attendance May 2022
- Children Missing Education 2016
- Guidance on Safer Working Practices 2019
- Statutory Guidance; Relationships, Education Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education
- Sharing of nudes and semi nudes: advice for people working in settings with children and young people December 2020
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010 Advice for schools
- Public Sector Equality Duty Advice for Schools

For the purposes of this policy the word 'child' or 'children' refers to any young person up to the age of 18. As BMS is located in Bedford Borough Local Authority, unless a child resides in a different authority, the School will follow procedures and protocols and follow advice for this area.

- 1.1 Governors and Leaders at Bedford Modern School are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of young people is embedded in all of the organisation's processes and procedures, and consequentially enshrined in its ethos. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, and all staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment where children can learn. Everyone

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<sup>1</sup> Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation

who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. The School expects **all staff** to share its commitment to create an open environment where staff and students feel able to raise concerns, where concerns will be listened to and where support services and other agencies are readily involved.

- 1.2 All professionals should make sure their approach is child centred and all staff must consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. When making decisions BMS staff will always respect and protect an individual's human rights in line with the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 1.3 Abuse in whatever form, always constitutes serious harm to the child. Suspicion, belief or evidence of abuse of a child, currently or in the past, must be passed to a person of authority in order for them to seek advice and evaluate the information. In most cases this will be to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jude Goodacre. The school supports Government advice: Think it, Report it.
- 1.4 It is accepted that child abuse can be a problem for children from all backgrounds and that any child may be in need of protection. All children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection: to feel safe, secure, valued, respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they have a concern. BMS will not discriminate against students because of any protected characteristic and will also seek to take positive action, if necessary, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting students with particular protected characteristics.
- 1.5 It is recognised that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of their previous experiences, level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. In addition some children have disproportionate vulnerabilities and may be more at risk of harm from specific issues.
- 1.6 The School accepts that peer-on-peer abuse can also occur and may be a sign that further problems are happening in a child's life.
- 1.7 The School will ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and procedures around cases of peer-on-peer abuse and accept that even if no cases are reported this does not mean that it is not happening. Staff will remain vigilant for cases of peer-on-peer abuse and will recognise that 'abuse is abuse' and should never be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.
- 1.8 The School accepts that no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. The School will work with other agencies as soon as possible (such as Children's Services and the Police) to support children who may benefit from early help (i.e. providing support either for a problem or to help stop a problem developing).
- 1.9 The School will work closely with Local Safeguarding Partners and in particular follow the guidance set out by Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire with regards to training for designated staff. In the case of individuals, the School will always reference threshold guidance for the relevant local authority depending on where the child resides permanently. The School will use Bedford Borough Integrated Front Door and Early Help for advice and guidance as needed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend local and HT forums.
- 1.10 The School is committed to ensuring effective record keeping enabling the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies to have access to a complete picture of any safeguarding concerns. Staff will make appropriate use of online Child Protection Systems. Information sharing will take into account GDPR but this will not be a limiting factor when deciding what information should be shared.
- 1.11 The School (including the Governors and the Head) will maintain an 'it could happen here' attitude and will be actively encouraged to report any concerns regarding other staff, including the Head, via the appropriate channels (Whistleblowing).

- 1.12 The School recognises the importance of safer working practices to keep all members of its community safe. All staff will be expected to read, sign and adhere to the School Staff Code of Conduct. In addition, teachers should adhere to the Teacher Standards 2012.
- 1.13 The School is committed to ensuring that children are kept safe from those that may do harm through its recruitment process and proper maintenance of its single central record. Potential staff will be checked as to their suitability, including verification of identity, qualifications and satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance). All volunteers, visitors and contractors will be subject to the appropriate checks as well as close supervision as deemed necessary.
- 1.14 The School accepts its duty to safeguard children and young people from violent extremism and takes positive steps to instil fundamental British Values. The School recognises that the possible radicalisation of children and young people is a current and real threat and treats such concerns as a safeguarding issue.
- 1.15 The School understands that the context in which children live can influence their ability to stay safe and should always be taken into account when making decisions about the best course of action when dealing with any safeguarding concerns.
- 1.16 The School recognises the impact of online technology on young people and is committed to safeguarding children through education for themselves as well as keeping parents as informed as possible.
- 1.17 The School promotes vigilance in all admissions and leavers procedures promoting a safeguarding response to any children who may go missing in education.
- 1.18 The School believes in creating a continuous learning environment and practice will constantly be reviewed and acted upon to ensure we always act in the best interests of the children.
- 1.19 The School will always seek to actively support parents/guardians through any safeguarding process and inform them of any action taken as quickly as possible. Where necessary this will be on the advice and with the support of external agencies.
- 1.20 The School recognises that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is suffering abuse or neglect and that mental health problems can also occur as a result of abuse or neglect. The School accepts that all staff have a responsibility to act immediately where a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern.
- 1.21 The School recognises its responsibility to promote young people's emotional health and well-being.

## **2. Aims**

- 2.1. To demonstrate how the School will foster an active and positive safeguarding culture in all aspects of school life and throughout the entire school community.
- 2.2. To clarify the processes in place for Child Protection in the event of suspected abuse.
- 2.3. To ensure all staff are aware of and have to access to the Key Contacts (including those responsible for Early Help) who will advise and guide in ensuring the best possible outcomes for all children and young people in the school.
- 2.4. To raise awareness of and provide guidance for the different types of abuse that occur including specific safeguarding issue such as FGM, forced marriage and sexting.
- 2.5. To set out the manner in which staff will be inducted and trained to enable them to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.
- 2.6. To reinforce the importance of good communication, thorough record keeping and careful evidence taking to enable all professional agencies to act in the best interest of the child.

### **3. Roles, Responsibilities and Key contacts.**

#### **3.1 The Governing Body**

The Governing Body fully accepts their responsibility to comply with their duties under legislation and will ensure that the policies, procedures and training within the school are effective and comply with the law at all times. A full description of the responsibilities can also be found in the Harpur Trust Safeguarding Policy 2021.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to ensure policies and procedures are fit for purpose and support the delivery of a whole school approach to safeguarding.
- Be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty as necessary) and local safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure they facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding.
- Recognise the importance of online safety, understand the responsibilities of monitoring online safety (including through filtering systems) and ensure it is embedded in a whole school approach to safeguarding
- Promote a positive safeguarding ethos with an attitude of 'it can happen here'.
- Through the Head and Leadership Team ensure that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.
- Maintain an overview of the systems, structures and curriculum (including co-curriculum) of the school to ensure it actively promotes safeguarding and enables the best outcomes for all children.
- Follow the guidelines as laid out in KCSiE 2022.
- Have a nominated Child Protection and Safeguarding Governor.
- Review the policies and procedures for Child Protection and Safeguarding at least annually, or more frequently as required, through the Compliance Committee and at a School Committee of Governors meeting.
- Take proactive steps to satisfy themselves that the duties outlined have been appropriately and efficiently discharged.
- Remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to Child Protection without delay.
- Ensure the School pays due regard to Government Guidance when dealing with safeguarding matters.
- Ensure that the school operates a thorough safer recruitment process, and that the Single Central Register is kept up to date and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure the School has a safeguarding response to children who go missing in education.
- Ensure that the School has a Staff Code of Conduct in place including a low level concerns policy.
- Through the Chair of Governors, receive and act upon any concerns about the Head via the whistleblowing process.
- Ensure the school is compliant with The Prevent Duty by maintaining an overview of how the school promotes Fundamental British Values.

This will be done by:

- Regular scrutiny at Committee meetings (School Committee and Education Sub Committee in particular) including a termly report and an annual report as well as an annual pastoral review.
- Regular meetings between the NSG and the DSL.
- Regular visits by the NSG to review practice and meet with staff/students/key stakeholders.
- External audits where necessary.

### **3.2 The Head**

The Head will:

- Promote a positive safeguarding culture with an attitude of 'it can happen here'.
- Ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- Ensure that sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children.
- Inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in all cases of suspected or alleged abuse in relation to allegations against staff.

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

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead sits with the Deputy Head Pastoral and Student Progress, Mrs Jude Goodacre, member of the School's Senior Leadership Team. The Deputy DSL will assume the responsibilities in the absence of the DSL and is the Senior Deputy Head, Mr Andrew Whomsley. The DSL in the Junior School is Mrs Paula Pacyna, and the Deputy DSL in the Junior School is Mrs Joanna Rex.

The DSL will:

- Take lead responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals themselves.
- Refer cases to the Channel Programme where there is a radicalisation concern and support staff who make referrals themselves.
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required and refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the police.
- Promote an 'it could happen here' culture and encourage all staff to 'Think it, Report it'.
- Understand the process for providing early help as an intervention, for example locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as Early Help assessments.
- Have a working knowledge of how Local Authority conduct a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute as required.
- Act as a point of contact with the three safeguarding partners.
- Liaise with the Head to inform him of any issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult
- As required liaise with the case manager and the designated officer at the local authority for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.
- Be available to discuss any safeguarding concerns during term time and out of school hours as deemed appropriate by the Head and Governing Body.

- Undergo formal training as provided and advised by the Local Safeguarding Partners at least every two years as well as taking active steps to keep up to date with new guidance, trends or safeguarding issues that are specific to the School.
- Liaise with other key members of school staff via the Safeguarding Committee to ensure that there is a thorough child-centred approach to individual children. This list includes the DSL, Deputy DSL, Mental Health Lead, School nurses and where appropriate the Attendance Officer, Director of Sport, Assistant Heads and Heads of Year.
- Liaise with outside agencies including following the protocols for the local area. Bedford Borough as well as from counties/areas in which the students reside, the police and schools liaison officer and the Local Authority Designated Officer and the Channel Programme.
- Maintain written (hand or electronic) records of any concerns relating to Child Protection, including those that do not require immediate referral and ensure the records are kept confidentially and securely, separate from student records.
- Ensure that information is shared proactively and in a timely manner.
- Understand the importance of information sharing as well as understanding relevant legislation on data protection including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.
- Transfer any student records to another school in a timely manner and in advance where to do so would promote better outcomes for those involved.
- Monitor attendance of all students and refer as appropriate to the Education Welfare Service in the first instance.
- Ensure process and procedures are in place to recognise and refer any children missing in education.
- Ensure all staff receive effective induction training on safeguarding when they join the School and then further updates as necessary with formal training at least every two years. Ensure that staff are aware of any training opportunities offered by the local safeguarding partners.
- Liaise regularly with the Safeguarding Governor, Dr Simon Lowe, to ensure the Governing Body is kept up to date on any ongoing issues or concerns.
- Keep all staff well informed of any additional guidelines, updates, serious case reviews as and when necessary, through regular briefings.
- Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and, working closely with the e-Safety Co-ordinator, ensure that staff are aware of their responsibility with regard to online safety and ensure that all members of the school community have regular advice about keeping themselves safe online. Liaise with the e-Safety Co-ordinator and anti-bullying group as and when evidence suggests further review in both areas is necessary.
- Recognise the additional risks that children with SEND and disabilities face online.
- Undergo and disseminate Prevent Training.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing or have experienced with teachers and school leadership staff. Ensure that staff know who these children are, and understand their academic progress and attainment, and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.

- Ensure that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.

### 3.4 All Staff

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 states that **all** school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. They should also:

- Have read and understood KCSiE 2022, at least Part 1 and Annex B or Annex A
- Participate in regular safeguarding training through newsletters, online or face-to-face including training on online safety.
- Promote a positive safeguarding culture, for example by challenging anyone on the premises who cannot be identified by a visitor or staff lanyard or badge.
- Leaders should also read and understand KCSiE 2022 Part 2.
- Be aware of systems within the school which support safeguarding. This includes the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff behaviour policies (Code of Conduct), Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policies.
- Understand the role of the DSL and be clear on the identity of the DSL and Deputies.
- Be aware of the Early Help process and be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.
- Be aware of the process for making referrals to social services understanding the importance of acting promptly if there is a concern about a child.
- Be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, and of what to do if a child makes a disclosure.
- Understand the term 'peer-on-peer abuse' and the steps which should be taken to respond to incidents or disclosures.
- Always act in the best interests of the child.
- Be aware of specific safeguarding issues such as radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, children missing in education and mental health.
- **Teachers are required by law to report to the police known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) involving a girl aged under 18.**
- Understand that appropriate internet filters and monitoring systems must be in place to keep students safe online.
- All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL.
- Know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected.
- If staff members have concerns about another staff member, then this should be referred to the Head.
- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the School's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Be aware of the School's Low Level Concerns Policy.
- Promote fundamental British Values as part of The Prevent Duty.
- Be aware that abuse, neglect and Safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events.
- 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 hurtful.



## KEY CONTACTS

### Bedford Modern School

DSL: Mrs Jude Goodacre [jgoodacre@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:jgoodacre@bedmod.co.uk)  
 Deputy DSL: Mr Andrew Whomsley [awhomsley@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:awhomsley@bedmod.co.uk)  
 DSL Junior School: Mrs Paula Pacyna [ppacyna@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:ppacyna@bedmod.co.uk)  
 Deputy DSL Junior School: Mrs Joanna Rex [jrex@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:jrex@bedmod.co.uk)  
 Mental Health Lead: Miss E Harbour [eharbour@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:eharbour@bedmod.co.uk)  
 Nominated Safeguarding Governor: Dr Simon Lowe [nsg@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:nsg@bedmod.co.uk)  
 Chair of Governors: Mrs Shirley Jackson [sjackson@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:sjackson@bedmod.co.uk)  
 E-Safety co-ordinator: Mr David Donoghue [ddonoghue@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:ddonoghue@bedmod.co.uk)  
 School Nurse: [nurses@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:nurses@bedmod.co.uk)

Key Contacts	
<b>Bedford Borough</b> Integrated Front Door (IFD) (MASH) Out of hours	Multiagency@bedford.gov.uk 01234 718700  0300 300 8123
<b>Central Bedfordshire</b> Central Bedfordshire Access and Referral Hub The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) For emergencies outside of working hours contact	0300 300 8585  0300 300 8123
<b>Luton</b> Rapid Intervention and Assessment Team Out of hours	<a href="mailto:mash@luton.gcsx.gov.uk">mash@luton.gcsx.gov.uk</a> 01582 547653 0300 3008125
LADO Bedford Borough	01234 276693 <a href="mailto:Lado@bedford.gcsx.gov.uk">Lado@bedford.gcsx.gov.uk</a>
Prevent	0207 340 7464 <a href="mailto:Counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk">Counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk</a>
Police Liaison	Richard Denton <a href="mailto:SchoolsLiaison@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk">SchoolsLiaison@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk</a>
Senior Education Welfare Officer, Bedford Borough Education Support Services	Jane Ward Tel: 01234 276625 <a href="mailto:jane.ward@bedford.gov.uk">jane.ward@bedford.gov.uk</a>
CAMHS	Jo Meehan Tel: 01234 310040 <a href="mailto:Jo.meehan@sept.nhs.uk">Jo.meehan@sept.nhs.uk</a>
Prevent Duty Bedfordshire Police Contact	Richard Denton Tel: (101) or 01234 275206 <a href="mailto:richard.denton@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk">richard.denton@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk</a> Anti-Terrorism Hotline Tel: 0800 789 321 DfE Dedicated Contact Tel: 0207 340 7264 <a href="mailto:counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk">counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk</a>
Children Missing Education Officer	Debi Momi Tel: (01234) 228178, ext, 42178 <a href="mailto:debi.momi@bedford.gov.uk">debi.momi@bedford.gov.uk</a>

NSPCC 24 Hour Helpline Childline	0800 800 5000 0800 1111
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#### 4. Definitions of Child Abuse

**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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

##### 4.1 Physical Abuse

**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.

- **Possible signs:**

Bruising (without satisfactory explanation), burns (often recurrent), bite marks, parent/carers frequently alleging illness in a child, body covered in hot weather, reluctance to do PE or shower, self-harm.

- **Impact of physical abuse:**

It can lead to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability and occasionally death. Harm may be caused directly by the abuse itself or by the abuse taking place in a wider family context of conflict. Physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour, emotional and behavioural problems and educational difficulties.

##### 4.2 Neglect

**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 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. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect's six forms:

1. Medical – withholding medical care including health and dental.
2. Emotional – lack of emotional warmth, touch and nurture.
3. Nutritional – lack of access to proper diet, which can affect their development.
4. Educational – poor school attendance prevents child from reaching their potential.
5. Physical – failure to meet child's physical needs.
6. Lack of supervision and guidance - putting child in dangerous situations.

**Possible signs of neglect:**

Constant hunger, poor personal hygiene, poor state of clothing, frequent lateness or non-attendance at school, untreated medical problems.

**Impact of neglect:**

Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health

and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress.

#### **4.3 Emotional Abuse**

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and 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 cyberbullying), 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.

**Possible signs of emotional abuse:**

Physical, mental and emotional development lags, over-reaction to mistakes, extremes of passivity or aggression, continual self-depreciation, self-harm, inappropriate emotional response to painful situations. It may be when an adult constantly behaves in an uncaring or hostile way towards a child or young person, perhaps by bullying, rejecting, frightening or criticising them.

**Impact of emotional abuse:**

Emotional abuse has an important impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially damaging in infancy. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may be features in families where children are exposed to such abuse.

#### **4.4 Sexual Abuse**

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Possible signs of sexual abuse:**

Genital pain or itching, bleeding, bruising, discharge, stomach pains, pregnancy, incontinence, UTIs or STDs.

**Impact of sexual abuse:**

Self-harm, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, depression, loss of or a poor self-esteem, aggressive behaviour, lack of trust, running away from home.

**In making professional judgements, take into account:**

The frequency of bruising/injury, context of injury, explanation from child and adult, parent response.

**N.B. 'Non-Accidental Injuries' may need to be followed up too.**

If injuries keep occurring, issues of neglect and level of supervision need to be discussed with appropriate agencies.

**Table 1**

<b>Type of Abuse</b>	<b>Physical signs</b>	<b>Behavioural Signs</b>
<b>Physical: causing physical harm to a child, which includes fabricating or deliberately inducing illness.</b>	Unexplained and unusual bruising, finger and strap marks, fractures, injuries, bite marks, cigarette burns, scalds, missing teeth	Fear of contact, aggression, temper, running away, fear of going home, reluctance to change or uncover body, depression, withdrawal, bullying or abuse of others
<b>Emotional: persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause adverse effects on a child's emotional development.</b>	Weight change, lack of growth or development, unexplained speech disorders, self-harm	Unable to communicate, fear of mistakes, fear of telling parents, withdrawn, few friends
<b>Sexual: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.</b>	Genital pain or itching, bleeding, bruising, discharge, stomach pains, pregnancy, incontinence, UTIs or STDs	Fear of someone, nightmares, running away, sexually explicit knowledge or behaviour, masturbation, bed-wetting, eating problems, substance abuse, unexplained money or gifts
<b>Neglect: 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.</b>	Hunger, dirty, ill-fitting clothes or inappropriate clothing, weight change, untreated conditions and continual minor infections	Being tired, early or late, absent, few friends, regularly left alone, stealing, no money, parent carer not attending

Table 1 identifies the four main types of abuse as set out in KCSiE 2022. The Table is designed to alert staff not only to the types of abuse, but also the different ways in which they manifest in individuals.

## **5. Specific Safeguarding issues**

### **5.1 Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due to more societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances.

Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

The School takes steps to protect children who may be particularly vulnerable through identification, close monitoring and mentoring and the use of a nurture list and through the use of an online system CPOMS. The School recognises that these children may be more likely to benefit from Early Help.

**A child who may have an increased risk of abuse:**

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is at risk of honour-based abuse such as FGM or forced marriage;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is a privately fostered child;
- Is persistently absent from education including persistent absences for part of the school day.

**Children with SEND or certain medical conditions** can face additional safeguarding challenges. This can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying.
- Communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.

Staff are trained to be alert to these concerns and act where necessary, and additional pastoral support is available for these students. All staff have guidance from the SENDCo and there is a comprehensive list of students who have SEND available to all teachers.

**Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT)**

Children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children, this includes children who are perceived to be LGBT who may also be vulnerable to being targeted. Risks are compounded where children lack a trusted adult they can talk to. Staff will endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for LGBT children to speak out/share their concerns.

## **5.2 Contextual Safeguarding**

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and

online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore, children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

### **5.3 Child on Child Abuse**

We recognise that 'abuse is abuse' and should never be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up.' Bullying, victimisation, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our students and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the wider community. All staff are expected to challenge abusive behaviour between peers, and this is included in induction training. Staff are reminded that even if there are no reports of peer-on-peer abuse it may still be taking place and they should be alert to any possible cases. Staff are also made aware that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys will be perpetrators but that all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

To minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse at BMS we work hard to promote and teach tolerance and mutual respect through our PHSE Programme and RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) curriculum, anti-bullying strategy and our promotion of Fundamental British Values. The School's Aims and Values are shared on a regular basis through assemblies, co-curricular activities and our house and student leadership systems as well as visual reminders around the school. We also commissioned an external audit to review our practice and are implementing actions directly related to the feedback. These include regular communication with key groups such as the Fawcett Society, a review of our CPOMS reporting systems, a review of places which are high risk for peer-on-peer abuse and a review of reporting mechanisms.

Students can report abuse through their form tutor or class teacher, Head of Year or through another trusted member of staff such as the School Nurses or the Wellbeing Team. They can use email, or they can drop an anonymous note into the box in the wellbeing room. Sixth Form monitors are trained in safeguarding and support in Common Rooms during break and lunchtime. Students are also educated in how to report abuse through national organisations such as thinkuknow, NSPCC or Childline.

However, we recognise that students are capable of abusing their peers. This abuse may take the form of:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudiced based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- 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 stand-alone 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;

- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as youth produced sexual imagery);
- 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).

Peer-on-peer abuse will always be considered a safeguarding matter and staff will follow the guidance on specific issues as laid out in this policy and in the anti-bullying strategy. In all responses the school will endeavour to put the students' welfare at the centre of its response. All incidents of peer-on-peer abuse will be recorded on CPOMs and will be actioned by the Pastoral Team under the guidance of either the Deputy Head Pastoral and Student Progress (DSL), Senior Deputy Head (Deputy DSL), Deputy Head of the Junior School (DSL) or Head of Junior School (Deputy DSL). When dealing with incidents the senior member of staff will decide which school policies (e.g., Senior School Behaviour Policy) and/or government guidance (e.g. Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in Schools) apply. If there is a possibility that a crime may have been committed the School will take advice from the police or Bedford Borough Integrated Front Door on the investigation of such allegations and will take all the appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved including the student or students accused of abuse.

Where allegations of abuse or assault have been made against one or more student, the School will undertake a thorough risk-assessment of the situation and risk-based decision-making will be carried out with a view to ensuring the safety of all students involved. Both the victim and perpetrator will be provided with appropriate support. When peer-on-peer abuse has occurred, it may be appropriate to refer the students involved to Children's Social Care or Early Help. Where this happens, the school will inform the student involved and their parents unless to do so is likely to cause the student harm.

A student (or students) against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation. A student may also be removed from certain classes or sleeping arrangements rearranged if the alleged incident occurs on a school trip.

If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of the Local Safeguarding Partners, the student's parents are informed as soon as possible, and that the student is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

Data on peer-on-peer abuse will be reviewed regularly by the Safeguarding Team, Senior Leaders and Governors to spot any trends and take any necessary action to address issues and concerns.

#### **5.4 Abuse and Technology**

Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse their peers online. This can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

The School has a specific Online Safety Policy, which covers specific issues in more detail.

Cyber-bullying is covered in more detail in the Anti-Bullying section of the Behaviour Policy. Following the advice in Preventing and Tackling Bullying, the School will take disciplinary action where cyber bullying occurs. It will be treated as peer-on-peer abuse.

## **5.5 Honour-based Abuse/Violence**

Honour-based violence is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims, which can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Males can also be victims, sometimes as a consequence of their involvement in what is deemed to be an inappropriate relationship, if they are gay, or if they are believed to be supporting the victim. Honour-based abuse cuts across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities, usually where a culture is heavily male dominated. Relatives, including females, may conspire, aid, abet or participate in honour-based abuse, for what might seem a trivial transgression. For more information click on the link below:

[https://www.bedford.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/children\\_young\\_people/safe\\_guarding\\_children\\_board/professionals/honour\\_based\\_abuse.aspx](https://www.bedford.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/children_young_people/safe_guarding_children_board/professionals/honour_based_abuse.aspx)

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practice FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. For more information click on link below:

[https://www.bedford.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/children\\_young\\_people/safeguarding\\_children\\_board/professionals/female\\_genital\\_mutilation\\_fgm.aspx](https://www.bedford.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/children_young_people/safeguarding_children_board/professionals/female_genital_mutilation_fgm.aspx) or look at Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (April 2016) below:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/512906/Multi\\_Agency\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_on\\_FGM\\_-\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512906/Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance_on_FGM_-_FINAL.pdf)

**Teachers are required by law to report to the police known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) involving a girl aged under 18**

**Forced Marriage** should not be confused with an arranged marriage. Arranged marriages often work very well. Forced marriages are where one or both people are 'forced' into a marriage that their families want, without the valid consent of both people, where physical pressure or emotional abuse is used. Victims are sometimes persuaded to return to their country of origin under false pretences. For more information click on the link below:

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/children\\_young\\_people/safeguarding\\_children\\_board/professionals/forced\\_marriage.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/children_young_people/safeguarding_children_board/professionals/forced_marriage.aspx)



**Breast Ironing**, also known as 'Breast Flattening', is the process whereby young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education. For more information click on the link below: [http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/children\\_young\\_people/safeguarding\\_children\\_board/professionals/breast\\_ironing.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/children_young_people/safeguarding_children_board/professionals/breast_ironing.aspx)

## **5.6 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

CSE and CCE occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual or criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual activity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources. This abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females and children or adults. It may be a one off or a series of incidents over time from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. For more information click on link below:

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/children\\_young\\_people/safeguarding\\_children\\_board/professionals/child\\_sexual\\_exploitation.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/children_young_people/safeguarding_children_board/professionals/child_sexual_exploitation.aspx)

CSE and CCE can affect young people from any social, cultural or economic background. Warning signs include non age-appropriate relationships, gifts including drugs, alcohol and money or use of inappropriate sexual terminology.

## **5.7 Serious Violent Crime**

Indicators that may signal a child is at risk of serious violent crime include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing or signs of an assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

## **5.8 County Lines**

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines. Children can be targeted in school or recruited online using social media.

## **5.9 Cybercrime**

Cybercrime is a criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. All staff are aware that children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

## **5.10 Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents**

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members as well as people known but not related to the victim and by strangers.

Community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example people loitering nearby.

Time and care is taken to ensure that all students are provided with safety advice on a regular basis especially as they get older and are granted more independence.

### **5.11 Children and the Court System**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. Guidance is available to support children, and external agencies will also provide support which the School will ensure students and families have access to.

Making child arrangements through family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. Sometimes the School is asked to engage with CAFCAS and supports children going through or after this process.

### **5.12 Homelessness**

Being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL and Deputies are aware of how to refer through to the local Housing Authority to support as needed. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

Homelessness can also occur for 16- and 17-year-olds who are living independently from their parents or guardians. Children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the DSL will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

### **5.13 Mental Health**

All staff are aware that mental health problems can in some cases be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff observe children and identify and record any whose behaviour suggest they may be experiencing mental health problems or are at risk of developing one. Where staff have specific concerns about a child's mental health and consider it a safeguarding concern it is referred to the DSL in line with this policy.

The DSL and Deputies work closely with external agencies including CAMHS to refer any child who is displaying mental health problems. The School uses an evidence-based approach recording evidence and observations to share and does not attempt to make diagnosis. However, staff will escalate and re-refer if they feel there is need.

The School works to ensure it follows the advice and guidance in Preventing and Tackling Bullying and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools. In September 2021, a Mental Health Lead will be in post to lead the whole school approach to mental health in line with the Government Green Paper.

### **Elective Home Education**

Where a parent/carers has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the School will work with other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered

what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

### **Alternative Provision**

The cohort of students in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, it is important that governing bodies and proprietors of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that their students may be vulnerable to. Where students are placed in alternative provision, the School will ensure that relevant safeguarding policies and practice are in place.

### **5.14 Domestic Abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 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 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 be married or become civil partners. If the two people have an intimate relationship with each other, have shared responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of domestic abuse applies to children if they see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and they are related to the abusive person. This can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

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 background and domestic abuse can take place both inside and outside the home.

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

### **5.15 Children Missing from Education (CME)**

A child missing from education is a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll or being educated elsewhere. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation.

#### **Children Missing from Education (including safeguarding response)**

BMS fully accepts its responsibilities to provide a safeguarding response to Children Missing from Education and understands as a school it plays a key role in ensuring children do not become CME.

A child missing from education is not in itself a child protection matter, and there may be an innocent explanation for this. However, regular school attendance is an important safeguard and unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability.

Schools should endeavour to deal with this problem in three ways:

- By preventing poor school attendance and truancy.
- By acting once absence occurred to establish children's safety and try to get them back to school.
- By taking action to trace children whose whereabouts are not known.

BMS will inform both **Bedford Borough and the relevant Local Authority** (i.e. the one in which the child resides) when a child's name is about to be deleted from the admission register under all fifteen grounds outside the standard transition points (Junior School Year 6 into 7 and Senior School Year 11 into 12).

When removing a name, the notification to the Local Authority will include (a) the full name of the student, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the student normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the student's future address and destination school and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the student's name is to be removed from the admission register.

The school will **make reasonable enquiries** to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with Local Authority before deleting the student's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8 (1), sub paragraphs (f) (iii) and (h) (iii).

BMS will notify the Local Authority **within five days** of adding a student's name to the admission register at a **non-standard** transition point.

As an independent school, BMS does not use CTF files. However, where these files are sent by a students' previous school, BMS will either accept or reject the file.

A child may be removed from the school following a written request from parents to educate at home. In the event of this happening, the relevant Local Authority and Early Help service will be informed.

If any member of the school staff has reason to believe a child is missing from or about to be missing from education, they must inform the DSL. The DSL will then inform the Local Authority, Early Help, or in the case of a Child in Need or a Child in Need of Protection, MASH or the police.

In the following circumstances, a referral to Children's Services and /or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime.
- The child is subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- The child is subject of Section 47 enquiries.
- The child is looked after.
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household.
- There is a history of the family moving frequently.
- There are serious issues of attendance.

All Practitioners should follow the appropriate Local Authority CME procedures.

## 5.16 Private Fostering

Private Fostering occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative care for a child (under the age of 16 or under the age of 18 if the child is disabled) for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. By law, children's services must be informed in such cases.

## 5.17 Prevent Duty

Schools are required under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

At BMS we protect children from radicalisation by building their resilience, promoting Fundamental British Values and should provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

The Leaders and Governors of Bedford Modern School ensure that Fundamental British values are promoted throughout the school both implicitly and explicitly for example through the structure of the Student Government or during the Remembrance Day Service. Where the school has a programme of individual speakers (for example in the Sixth Form), care is taken to ensure there is a balanced view, especially on controversial topics and each speaker will be risk assessed and recorded on the central register.

The DSL acts as the Single Point of Contact for Prevent. The School ensures that preventative measures are in place such as ensuring appropriate restrictions on internet sites are in place.

**Channel** is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist-related activity.

Staff should be particularly aware of the dangers of social media and the internet in the radicalisation of young people.

Any child suspected of becoming radicalised should be reported via the normal safeguarding procedures. All relevant staff receive online Prevent training.

## 5.18 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Any allegations of sexual violence or harassment will be treated seriously, and any victim will be supported and kept safe. All staff will be aware that any such allegation should be treated as a safeguarding concern for all involved and the DSL should be informed immediately.

When dealing with such allegations, the guidance, *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2021* and *KCSiE 2022* will be followed. Where necessary a risk assessment will be put in place to protect those involved.

Support from the police, 'What If' at MASH or from Social Services may be sought or the School may decide it is most appropriate to handle the decision internally. In this case it will be a discussion between the DSL, Head and Senior Deputy Head. Decisions and discussions will be recorded at all times using CPOMS. Whatever the

decision, it will be underpinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

[Preventing Child Sexual Abuse & Keeping Children Safe | NSPCC](#)

Call us on 0808 800 5000, email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) or fill in our online form.

### **5.19 Sharing nudes and semi nudes**

The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' means the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image-sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'.

The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)<sup>[footnote 4]</sup> It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

- children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer;
- children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online;
- images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame.

Further guidance on the motivations for taking and sharing images and videos can be found in [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people section 1.6](#).

The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes can happen publicly online, in 1:1 messaging or via group chats and closed social media accounts.

Nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams may include more than one child or young person.

Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal which makes responding to incidents involving children and young people complex. There are also a range of risks which need careful management from those working in education settings.

Disclosures should follow the normal safeguarding practices and protocols and the guidance set out in the online safety policy. Where sharing of nudes or semi nudes is suspected or possible the School will always follow the procedures laid out in UK Council for Child Internet Safety and Government guidance as below. Staff who become aware of youth-produced sexual imagery should be also aware of [Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice](#) (January 2018). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609874/6\\_2939\\_SP\\_NCA\\_Sexting\\_In\\_Schools\\_FINAL\\_Update\\_Jan17.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609874/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf)

## **5.20 Upskirting**

The taking of a picture under another's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear.) It is now a criminal offence.

## **6. Training and Induction**

Governors and School Leaders will ensure that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning. The DSL, working with the Senior Deputy Head and the Deputy Head of the Junior School with the support of the Senior Leadership Team, takes responsibility for ensuring that all staff have training to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and know what to do if they have a concern about a student or a member of staff.

### **Induction:**

All new staff are required to read KCSiE 2022 Part 1 and Annex B, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and the Senior School Behaviour Policy prior to starting employment. A small number of staff in agreement with the Head, Senior Deputy Head and the Director of Operations will read Annex A only. All new staff will receive bespoke Safeguarding Training by the DSL. New teaching staff are also assigned a mentor who acts as a support for any questions or concerns and makes sure the school's protocols and systems are understood.

Induction Training includes:

- Definition of safeguarding.
- Role and identity of DSL and Deputies.
- Importance of early identification and Early Help.
- Four main categories of abuse.
- What to do if a child is at risk of serious harm including how to make a referral to Children's Social Care.
- Know what to do if a child makes a disclosure.
- How to react to peer-on-peer abuse including accepting that it does happen here but understanding that children can find it hard to report.
- Awareness of online safety.
- Understanding of the Code of Conduct including low levels concerns policy.
- Specific safeguarding issues including Children Missing in Education Response.
- Whistleblowing.
- What to do if you are concerned about a member of staff (including supply staff).

### **Training**

- All teaching staff and support staff who have contact with the students, receive regular training every year about their responsibilities with regards to Safeguarding and Child Protection. All staff will be updated on a more regular basis (at least once per year) as and when new information/changes come to light.

- An INSET course for all staff on Safeguarding takes place at least annually and often termly. In addition, all staff receive an updated copy of the safeguarding training handbook each year, which clearly sets out the school's policy and procedures. Clear records are kept which are constantly updated and any staff who were unable to attend training will attend an additional session or complete an online course.
- Safeguarding bulletins are sent out every term and an 'e-safety' briefing is also sent out to staff and parents at least twice a year.
- All staff received a copy of Part 1 KCSiE September 2022 at the beginning of the Autumn term 2022 which staff read and confirmed that they understood. All staff who work directly with children also receive a copy of KCSiE Annex B. All staff received a copy of the Code of Conduct.
- In addition, Leaders and Managers will ensure that all staff are trained in any relevant safeguarding process and procedures relating to their role within the school.

In addition to the DSL and the Senior Deputy Head, the Junior School Head, Junior School Deputy Head, Mental Health Lead, Heads of Year and CCF Contingent Commander/Outdoor Education Co-Ordinator, have also attended the two-day safeguarding inter-agency training from the Local Safeguarding Partners LCSB (Central Beds/Luton/Beds Borough).

Staff will also receive appropriate training to enable them to teach Safeguarding to children through everyday tutoring, PSHE and RSE Education.

The School is committed to being reflective and reviews any serious cases both internally and within the Harpur Trust to ensure lessons are learned and best practice is in place.

## **7. Whistleblowing**

The School promotes an environment in which children and adults feel confident to express concerns regarding the behaviour of a member of staff.

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear or repercussion.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Harpur Trust Whistleblowing policy.

If a member of staff feels unable to follow the school protocols on whistle blowing, they may contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## **8. Procedures for acting when abuse by a member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) is alleged**

In the event of an allegation, the school will follow the guidance below referring closely to the duties as an employer and employee as laid out in part four KCSiE 2022.



This process should be followed if an allegation is made that might suggest a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college. If there is an allegation that a person has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

This relates to members of staff, supply staff and volunteers who are currently working at the School regardless of whether this is where the abuse took place. Allegations against teachers who are no longer teaching will be referred to the police, as will historical allegations.

The School recognises its duty of care towards employees and will provide support and a named contact for anyone who is suspended. If the School is not the employer, responsibility is still recognised. At any stage of consideration or investigation, all unnecessary delays should be eradicated, and the allegations will be dealt with quickly to provide effective protection for the child and to support the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Common sense and judgement will be applied when dealing with allegations. The School will not undertake their own investigations of allegations without prior consultation with the LADO, or in the most serious cases, the police, so as not to jeopardise statutory investigations. In borderline cases discussions with the LADO can be held informally and without naming the school or individual.

All allegations are to be reported straight away to the Head (Case Manager). In his absence it would be reported to the Chair of Governors who would ensure that the LADO is informed without delay. If the Head is the subject of an allegation this should be reported to the Chair of Governors without informing the Head or DSL first. The Chair of Governors will inform the LADO without delay within 24 hours and any action taken should be by the Chair or other members of the Governing Body.

If a student makes an allegation against the DSL with responsibility for Child Protection, the member of staff receiving the allegation must immediately inform the Head who will inform the Chair of Governors or the Governor with specific responsibility for Child Protection, currently Dr Simon Lowe. They will ensure the LADO is informed without delay.

The case manager will discuss the case with the LADO to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action. There may be situations where the case manager will want to involve the police immediately or they may discuss this with the LADO.

The initial discussion may lead to a decision that no further action is to be taken. In this case the decision and a justification will be recorded by both the case manager and the LADO with an agreement reached on who should record what.

The case manager will inform the accused person as soon as possible following the consultation with the LADO making sure they have as much information as possible. If a strategy meeting is needed and/or if police and children's social services need to be involved, the case manager will not do that until those agencies have been consulted and agreed what information can be disclosed to the accused.

Careful consideration will be given to whether the circumstances warrant the accused being suspended from contact with children at the School or whether alternative arrangements can be put in place until a resolution has been reached. All options to avoid suspension will be considered.

When it is clear that investigation by the police or children's social services is unnecessary, the LADO and the case manager will agree the next steps. This will depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available and will range from no further action to dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in the future.

If further enquiries are needed an investigation will normally be undertaken by a senior member of the school staff.

The School recognises the duty of care towards those involved and will ensure that the procedures for support and confidentiality as laid out in KCSiE 2022 part four (page 60 and 61) are followed.

If the accused person resigns this will not prevent an allegation being followed up.

The investigation and subsequent decisions, actions and recording of information will be conducted in line with other relevant policies and following the guidance as laid out in KCSiE 2022 part four.

If the school (as the employer) thinks an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child, or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child, a referral to the DBS will be made in line with statutory responsibility.

Where qualified teachers are registered, any misconduct referrals (that is those which are not child protection-related) must be reported to the Teaching Regulation Agency.

If a child is involved information must be recorded on a yellow (Cause for Concern) form or as a CPOMs incident under the category of Child Protection. Where necessary referrals will be made to Children's Social Care or Early Help; this may be done by the LADO. This may happen whether or not an allegation is substantiated. If the allegation is shown to be deliberately malicious, the Head will consider whether any disciplinary action is necessary against the student who made it or whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible.

The school will always apply a 'lessons learnt' rule and aim to make any relevant changes to policy and practice as deemed necessary.

Allegations found to be malicious are removed from personnel records. Records are kept of all other allegations but those not substantiated, unfounded or malicious are not referred to in employer references.

**Note: any member of staff may make a referral to external agencies.**

### **8.1 Low-level Concerns (Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold)**

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, BMS promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the School are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold outlined in KCSiE 2022) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.

### **What is a low-level concern?**

The term 'low-level' does not mean that it is insignificant. While a low-level concern does not meet the thresholds outlined in KCSiE 2022 paragraph 338, it could be any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the School may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct.
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

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

- Being over friendly with children.
- Having favourites.
- Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phone.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive behaviour.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

### **Sharing low-level concerns**

Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported to the Head. Where a concern is raised about the Head this should be reported to the Chair of Governors or it may be reported directly to the LADO.

BMS will ensure that the safeguarding environment encourages staff to feel confident to self-refer where 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.

Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by an agency or contractor, the same procedure will be followed, and their employer notified about the concern.

### **Responding to low-level concerns**

Any low-level concerns will be investigated by the DSL or Deputy DSL who will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking to the person who raised the concern, to the individual involved and any witnesses. The investigation will help categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may be taken.

### **Recording low-level concerns**

All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing on the 'low-level concerns log'. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and any action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will have responsibility for recording information on the log and the Head's Assistant will provide administrative support as necessary.

The log will be reviewed termly and will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, at least until the individual leaves employment. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter will be referred to the LADO.

The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the School that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes will be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

## **9. Promoting Safeguarding and Prevention**

It is the aim of Bedford Modern School to create a warm and supportive environment where students feel safe and secure. We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult provide an essential framework within which our students can live increasingly independent lives. BMS has a set of values and an Expectations Charter all members of the school community are expected to demonstrate through all aspects of school/college life. This is underpinned by our pastoral care and behaviour policy. Sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment are not tolerated

Students are actively encouraged to talk, and they are listened to sympathetically. Their viewpoint is valued, and their opinions regularly sought.

Teaching and support staff provide guidance through the pastoral system or as subject staff. All are aware of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting concerns regarding students' well-being, including possible cases of abuse. Assemblies are held regularly which promote safeguarding, mental health and online safety and additional assemblies are held, when necessary, in response to any concerns. Sixth Form Monitors and Year 13 students receive full safeguarding training from the DSL to enable them to support both staff and younger children.

Through the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) programme, responsible attitudes to adult life and parenthood are engendered and students' awareness is raised. This also includes covering relevant issues through Relationship Education in the Junior School, and Relationships and Sex Education in the Senior School.

Students are taught online safety through a variety of methods including system monitoring which allows staff to facilitate educational conversations as necessary. Students are made aware of a variety of support mechanisms in place to help them keep safe. ([See paragraph 13 for more information.](#))

The School has both a vertical and horizontal pastoral structure to support children develop and thrive. Heads of Year, assisted by Assistant Heads of Year, manage teams of tutors who are responsible for the day-to-day pastoral care of the students. In the Sixth form tutor groups are divided into clusters which are overseen by Senior Tutors and ultimately the Director of Sixth Form. The House system is run by the senior students, overseen by Heads of House and the Senior Head of House. Its

vertical ethos encourages younger students to mix with older students in a safe and supportive environment.

Peer-to-peer support is at the heart of the School's success. Each year group has a team of monitors, led by the Senior Monitors and Head Boy and Girl and their Deputies. The monitors are on duty at break and lunchtime and work to promote social interaction and communication within the year group. They also act as role models and mentors to the younger students.

We believe that Bedford Modern School promotes the welfare, health and safety and guidance of every student through its positive, safe and stimulating environment.

### **9.1 Multi Agency Working**

The school is committed to working with external agencies including but not limited to the three local safeguarding partners (primarily those in Bedfordshire but also where necessary surrounding counties), CAMHS, CHUMS, and various local charities such as Mind Map and Aquarius. The school will be proactive in seeking help and advice at the earliest possible point. The School will also promote the sharing of information between agencies in order to act in the best interests of the child and will encourage TAF meetings which bring together all of the agencies as well as the parents and where necessary the child. The School recognises the importance of the voice of the child and will seek to gain and include this at each step.

### **9.2 Early Help**

All staff are trained to be alert to the signs of abuse and encouraged to record any concerns. All staff are aware that certain children ([see paragraph 5.1](#)) are more vulnerable and likely to benefit from Early Help. Staff at BMS are encouraged to record any information (however insignificant it may seem) that may be relevant using the electronic system CPOMS.

Bedford Modern School is completely committed to Early Help as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2019):

*Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.*

As individual teachers we are aware when things are not going well for a child and it is our responsibility to ensure that any identified need is reported to either the Deputy Head of Junior School, Head of Year, Deputy Head Pastoral, Deputy Head Academic, Director of Sixth Form, Senior Deputy or Head as appropriate. In this way we can ensure that issues are fully discussed, and the necessary guidance or referral made to support the child. In the first instance staff should discuss early help requirements with the DSL. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an Early Help assessment.

### **9.3 Education Welfare Officer**

Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement. If attendance becomes a concern, then appropriate actions will be undertaken to draw this to the attention of parents and, if necessary, communication will be made with the Education Welfare Service to inform them of our concern. Children missing education must be dealt with appropriately and in a timescale that will disadvantage the student least. We will make reasonable enquiries where a student is absent without the School's

permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more or at any stage where there are concerns over the reasons for an absence.

#### **9.4 Children's Social Care including Children in Need (Section 17) and Children in Need of Protection (Section 47)**

Where a child has been identified as being a child in need or a child in need of protection, the School will work to ensure it liaises with the relevant individuals to ensure a co-ordinated offer. The DSL will ensure that staff know who these children are and understand their academic progress and attainment. The DSL will encourage all staff to maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort and will also support teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

If the DSL or Deputies feel a child is at risk of harm, they will always refer to the thresholds for the local authority in which the child resides and report to the relevant authority.

If the DSL or members of the Safeguarding Team are concerned about the action being taken by external agencies this matter will be discussed during the regular safeguarding meeting. If agreed it will be escalated, and the Head will be informed. Any complaints regarding conduct of professionals involved in supporting children will be shared with the DSL and discussed with the Head before contacting the relevant authorities.

The law with respect to Child Protection covers all children under the age of 18. Students who are 18+ may decide themselves whether to report abuse to the police, but they will still be supported by the School.

### **10. What to do if you are concerned about a child's welfare:**

If you **suspect** that a child is being abused, alert the DSL, the Deputy Head Pastoral and Student Progress, Jude Goodacre, who will advise on the best course of action. This may include referrals to pastoral support, Early Help or Children's Services. In her absence you should speak to the Senior Deputy Head, Andrew Whomsley or the Mental Health Lead, Emma Harbour. In the Junior School talk initially to the Deputy Head, Paula Pacyna, or if she is absent Jude Goodacre. You will subsequently need to document your concern in writing using CPOMS (amber safeguarding category) or on the yellow Cause for Concern form as soon as possible and alert the Safeguarding Team. If the abuse has been perpetrated by another child, refer both children.

If you **know** that a child is being abused you must speak **immediately** to the DSL, Jude Goodacre, or, in her absence the Senior Deputy Head, Andrew Whomsley, or the Head. **Do not delay your report.**

**If, at any point, there is a risk of serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. You can call the emergency numbers listed in this document. Anyone can make a referral. If there is an immediate risk to the child's safety, call the police. You can also call the NSPCC 24-hour helpline. You do not need parental consent to refer through to statutory agencies.**

- Even if unsure always discuss your concerns with the DSL, Jude Goodacre, or, in her absence, the Senior School Deputy Head (Andrew Whomsley), Junior School, Junior Deputy Head (Paula Pacyna). If you think it, report it.

- Put your concerns in writing either using the yellow Cause for Concern Form or using CPOMs Yellow Form section) with dates and details of these suspicions and pass to the Safeguarding Team.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.
- It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.
- 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. Staff should not be prevented from allowing professional curiosity to prompt a conversation with the DSL and should think carefully about the importance of building a trusted relationship with a child where abuse is suspected.

## 11. What to do if a child makes a disclosure:

### Guidance for Staff

- A disclosure may happen at any time.
- Do not panic and think things have to happen instantly. It is more important that the right decision is made and therefore immediate referral to the DSL is essential.
- It is important to remind the child that you will have to pass on their concern.
- Confidentiality should not be promised. Make it clear that staff have a responsibility to share relevant information with the Deputy Head Pastoral (who is the DSL).
- If you talk to a child, do so with tact and sympathy. Listen, but do not offer an opinion.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- When asking questions always ask open questions using the **TED** principle of **T**ell me, **E**xplain to me, **D**escribe to me.
- Do not let the child take the blame. A child cannot be held responsible for abuse received at the hands of an adult, older sibling or carer.
- Make careful and detailed legible notes (on the yellow form) – they may be needed later. Record the date, event, observation, disclosure and action taken.
- Pass the information and a written account to the DSL, Jude Goodacre, immediately.
- The DSL, Jude Goodacre, will either seek guidance from the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) or contact the Social Services Duty Desk. **She will decide whether it is appropriate to contact parents. Do not contact parents yourself.**

## 12. General Principles of Confidentiality

- All staff should be aware that personal information about a child and his/her family is confidential and should only be given to an appropriate person.
- If abuse is suspected accurate information must be given to the DSL immediately.

- Other teachers need only know enough to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed child.
- If a child makes a disclosure, the child should be kept informed of who knows and why.
- Promises of confidentiality must not be given as a teacher has a duty to protect a child from abuse; all abuse must be reported.
- Teachers should not, in any circumstances, remove a child's clothing. They should only note those marks which they have noticed, or which are brought to their attention by the child.
- No further examination should be carried out.
- Teachers should not photograph the injury.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

If staff (teaching or support) hear worrying information about children from other parents, neighbours or even other children, this should be passed on to the DSL.

### **12.1 Monitoring and Record Keeping**

The School can play a vital role in helping children and those who are suspected of being abused, by monitoring and recording certain aspects of the child's progress and behaviour in school.

Evidence from reports and reviews into the deaths of children indicate the vital importance of record keeping as indicated in the *'Working Together to Safeguard Children – a guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children March 2018'*. Early Help Assessment Referral Forms will be used by the School as well as references made to the referral thresholds as set by the Local Safeguarding Partners in which the child resides, to ensure support is provided as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life.

<http://www.bedford.gov.uk/earlyhelp>

All staff are responsible for passing the following information to the DSL:

- Patterns of attendance.
- Changes in mood.
- Changes in classroom functioning.
- Relationships (with peers and adults).
- Behaviour.
- Statements made by the child, comments, stories, 'news', drawings.
- General demeanour and appearance.
- Home/family changes.
- Medicals.
- Response to PE/Sport.
- Injuries/marks – past and present.

The DSL will decide when to start and finish monitoring the child and decide upon further action to be taken.

The online management system, CPOMs, will be used to record all relevant information. All teaching staff, and where appropriate support staff, will have access to CPOMs and should input any concern however small using the 'add an incident' button.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that records are shared promptly when children transfer schools and also ensuring a proactive approach when there are concerns about a child's wellbeing.



## **12.2 Referrals to Social Services (through MASH)**

When the School makes a referral, thought must be given to the type of referral – 'What if', Early Help, child in need or child in need of protection.

For 'What if' ring MASH and ask for 'What if' advice.

Child in Need – use Early Help Assessment Referral Forms

<http://www.bedford.gov.uk/earlyhelp>

- Child Protection – ring The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or equivalent for the area in which the child resides.
- When referring, anything said by the child should be written down as a verbatim report.
- Information will be recorded in factual, non-emotive, non-judgmental terms, with notes of the time, date and context of the events in question. A reference will be made on the child's file.
- The file will be kept centrally and confidentiality will be respected. Child Protection records will be kept securely locked either hard copy or electronically using the CPOMs system. A reference should be made on a child's school file that a Child Protection File exists. When the child transfers to a new school, the Child Protection File will be forwarded to the receiving school.

## **12.3 Child Protection Records, the Data Protection Act and GDPR**

Child Protection records can be kept on computer and are exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984. From September 2018, all Child Protection records will be kept online in CPOMS. For manual records the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989 exempt information relating to child abuse from the requirement of disclosure. However, in cases of alleged child abuse which come to court, the court may require the School to provide its Child Protection records. The school is fully GDPR compliant and recognises and promotes that a fear of breaching data protection regulations should not stop staff taking action where necessary for the purposes of safeguarding and child protection.

## **12.4 Supporting the Child**

If abuse is suspected, accurate information will be given only to the DSL. The School accepts that other staff need know only enough to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed child.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of worth. They may experience feelings of helplessness, humiliation or self-blame.

## **13. Safer recruitment**

Bedford Modern School is committed to safer recruitment and acts at all times in compliance with the Independent Standards Regulations. In addition to its safe recruitment procedures as set out in KCSiE 2022, members of staff (including contractors where appropriate), school proprietors and Governors are subject to the necessary child protection checks before starting work. A single Central Register is in place to record this.

All visitors are supervised at all times and required to wear a visitor badge or lanyard. All staff including Governors wear a lanyard or their staff badge when in school.

## 14. Online Safety

The School will ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL and any parental engagement.

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

**content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.

**contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

**conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, for example: making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying

**commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If students or staff are at risk it can be reported to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Our students are therefore taught how to stay safe in the online environment and how to mitigate risks, including but not limited to the risk of identity theft, bullying, harassment, grooming, stalking, radicalisation and abuse. Both the online safety policy and the ICT AUP are available online and cover both fixed and mobile internet devices provided by the school (such as PCs, laptops, webcams, tablets, whiteboards, digital video equipment, and so on), as well as all devices owned by students and staff brought onto school premises (such as personal laptops, tablets, smart phones). All users whether staff, governors, students or guests must read this policy and the ICT AUP prior to using their provided login details and upon their first login they must click/accept these policies. All parts of this Online Safety Policy and ICT AUP should be understood fully prior to acceptance and any questions that arise should be directed to the e-Safety Coordinator or the ICT Services and Innovations Manager.

When children use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems.

Procedures to keep children safe online are regularly reviewed by the DSL and the e-Safety Co-ordinator. Information is regularly shared with staff and parents.

## 15. Visitors to the school

### Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff. If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification. Visitors are expected to sign in using the electronic system and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and the organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or Educational Psychology Service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise students or staff.

Whilst this policy attempts to cover all eventualities, it is vital that it is always viewed in conjunction with government advice for schools and statutory guidance.

**Mrs J Goodacre**  
**Deputy Head (Pastoral and Student Progress)**  
**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

**October 2022**  
**Interim Review February 2023**

### Visitor's Notice

We extend a warm welcome to all our visitors; please familiarise yourself with these important safety issues:

1. All visitors should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and should pay attention to the Safeguarding information below.
2. All visitors must sign in and out and will be accompanied at all times.
3. Visitors must wear their lanyard provided by reception at all times and be prepared to provide identification if requested.
4. Visitors should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance which may affect their behaviour whilst on site (including prescribed medication).
5. Visitors must not discriminate against any member of the school community because of any protected characteristic.
6. Abuse of any kind towards students, members of staff, volunteers or visitors will not be tolerated.
7. Visitors must not use a mobile phone whilst walking around the site and are not permitted to take photos or videos of children in the school (unless specific permission has been granted by a member of the Leadership Team).

### Fire Action

1. In the event of a fire or other emergency the evacuation sounders will activate.
2. Please stay with your host and leave the building by the nearest emergency exit.
3. Please do not stop to collect personal possessions.
4. Please report to the visitor assembly area which is at the front of the School.
5. Please do not re-enter the building until advised to do so.

### What to do if you have a concern

#### Key Contacts

#### Bedford Modern School



DSL: Mrs Jude Goodacre  
[jgoodacre@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:jgoodacre@bedmod.co.uk)

If you **suspect** that a child is being abused, speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Deputy Head Pastoral, Jude Goodacre, who will advise on the best course of action.

**If, at any point, there is a risk of serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. You can call the emergency numbers listed in this handbook. Anyone can make a referral. If there is an immediate risk to the child's safety, call the police. You can also call the NSPCC 24 hour helpline.**

**NSPCC 24 Helpline 0800 800 5000  
Childline 0800 1111**



DSL: Mrs Paula Pacyna  
[ppacyna@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:ppacyna@bedmod.co.uk)

If you **suspect** that a child is being abused, speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Deputy Head of Junior School, Mrs Paula Pacyna who will advise on the best course of action.

**If, at any point, there is a risk of serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. You can call the emergency numbers listed in this handbook. Anyone can make a referral. If there is an immediate risk to the child's safety, call the police. You can also call the NSPCC 24 hour helpline.**

**NSPCC 24 Helpline 0800 800 5000  
Childline 0800 1111**