



## **Safeguarding Policy**

Author – Mr D Brown

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## OUTLINE

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding them and promoting their welfare. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt and restorative action. In line with this understanding, any adult working or volunteering in the Trust community has a responsibility to recognise when a child or young person may be in need or be vulnerable in some way, and to respond to this recognition in a timely and appropriate way.

### SAFEGUARDING DEFINITION:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's 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.

*("Working Together to Safeguarding Children" DfE 2018)*

### CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITION:

Child Protection is a part of the safeguarding agenda. It refers to the action that is required to be undertaken to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

THIS POLICY ENCOMPASSES CHILD PROTECTION.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18 (Children Act 1989 and 2004) and this is term used throughout the rest of this policy.

## RATIONALE:

In the Laurus Trust we recognise the responsibility we have under Section 175 of the Education and Inspections Act 2002, to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This policy demonstrates the Trust's commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation.

Staff and volunteers working in the Trust have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to the correct persons or services for support and intervention. Everyone working or volunteering in the Trust is trained to recognise signs of concern and in line with this policy must report concerns following school and local authority procedures.

Staff and volunteers and sessional workers are updated on safeguarding issues frequently across the year – The Designated Safeguarding Lead will run sessions for staff. These updates include learning from serious case reviews and local learning reviews on how to improve practice to prevent children from harmed.

As a trust we believe that the welfare of every child is paramount and we take safeguarding very seriously. Therefore, should staff have any concerns they feel are of a safeguarding nature, they are expected to report, record and take the necessary steps to ensure that the child is safe and protected and that key staff are aware promptly of any such concerns. We are aware that this can lead to challenge from parents/carers, but at all times we collectively work to ensure that the child is at the heart of all our decisions and that we act in their best interests.

As part of our commitment to and compliance with safeguarding legislation and guidance; we also refer to:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused. 2015](#)
- [Keeping children Safe In Education 2020](#)
- [Guidance for safer working practice for staff working in education settings. October 2015](#)
- [Greater Manchester Safeguarding Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying advice](#)
- [Sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges](#)
- [Mental Health and behaviour in schools November 2018](#)
- [Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. February 2018](#)
- School online safety policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff use of mobile phones and Social Media Policy

## Information sharing and confidentiality

We take data handling and information sharing seriously. Trust staff have received appropriate training in relation to information sharing and confidentiality. We have a trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure that our Trust is compliant with confidentiality and information sharing requirements. The DPO is Mrs Paula Murphy.

Sharing information enables practitioners and agencies to identify and provide appropriate services that safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where we share information in relation to safeguarding or a child protection matter we follow local and national guidance, we pay particular regard to [Information sharing advice for practitioners in safeguarding services](#) and [Data Protection Toolkit for Schools](#)

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the welfare of children is understood and promoted at all times. In the Laurus Trust we understand that the welfare of the child is paramount.

We strive to ensure that all children regardless of their age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity are protected from harm in all its forms. All staff and volunteers have an equal responsibility to act on concerns, suspicions or disclosures that lead them to suspect or understand a child may be at risk of harm. As part of our duty of care we also work to ensure that students and staff involved in safeguarding and child protection issues receive appropriate support.

All staff and volunteers understand what to do if there are concerns or allegations about any adult working or volunteering in any of our schools during or outside of the normal school day.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, sessional workers, students, agency staff or anyone working on behalf of the Laurus Trust. We expect that this policy takes primacy over other agency policies when work is being delivered on this site or on our behalf, as we maintain a duty of care to all in our community of schools.

## LANGUAGE:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Early Help refers to mechanisms 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.

Child Protection refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Trust in either a paid or voluntary capacity and will be used from this point on in this document.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached the age of 18. Students who are 18 years of age or older will be considered as children with regards to the application of this policy.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role including; step-parents, foster parents, carers and adoptive parents.

## PREVENTION

We will establish and maintain an ethos where:

Children feel safe and secure in an environment which allows them to learn, and develop on a journey to achieving their full potential. We will educate and support our children in an inclusive, supportive and non-judgemental environment.

Children understand that there are adults in school whom they can talk to if worried, scared or facing difficulty. We will work hard to be a restorative staff team who actively listen and respond.

Staff development and awareness in respect of safeguarding is given the highest priority across the Trust to ensure we all fully understand and implement the national and local agenda. All our staff and volunteers are required to read Keeping Children safe in Education (KCSiE) Part 1 and annex A. All staff are required to undertake annual safeguarding training and update training in line with KCSiE 2020.

Staff development ensures that all members of the trust are alert to how mental health problems can underpin behaviour issues and recognise that under the Equality Act 2010, some mental health issues will meet the definition of disability. Processes ensure that pupils experiencing mental health problems are well supported effectively, working with external support where needed.

We provide frequent, appropriate opportunities for Personal, Social and Health Education throughout the curriculum, ensuring children develop skills and understanding on their journey to adulthood which will enable them to be safe; develop the skills to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships (both online and in the physical world); and where to find sources of support.

Children are supported in recognising risks in various forms including on the internet. That children understand what kind of physical contact and virtual contact is acceptable and are able to recognise inappropriate pressure from others, including that which threatens their personal safety and well-being and give them strategies to counter this.

Staff feel empowered to share safeguarding concerns in a swift and timely way bringing them to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/ or the Head of School. Accepting that safeguarding is the responsibility of all in our community, staff feel able to ask safeguarding questions and receive appropriate feedback following up on concerns as part of this shared responsibility to safeguard children.

Emerging issues and themes are proactively addressed and fed back to the [Local Authority \(LA\)](#) and local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) to ensure a multi-agency awareness and that strategies are developed.

There is a clear approach to substance misuse (drugs and alcohol). Any issues of drugs and substance misuse are recorded and there are strategies to educate children appropriately delivered throughout our schools and curriculums.

We use the mechanisms and services available to understand the range of issues which may make a child vulnerable and ensure children and young people receive the most appropriate support or referral and access to other provision; actively supporting multi agency planning for those children and, in doing so, providing information about the 'voice of the child' and the child's personal experiences and perspectives as evidenced by observations or information provided.

Our schools' arrangements for consulting with, listening and responding to students are that we make sure that our children know that members of staff are always prepared to listen to them. Children are made aware that they can report any concerns verbally to any member of staff, and we will act upon this.

Our schools will use an anonymous questionnaire annually and Student Voice that specifically asks children how safe they feel in their school.

In addition members of our staff are mindful of the need to actively listen to children at all times during the school day. Staff members are asked to report the content of these conversations to senior leaders through established meeting structures in school, whether or not there are concerns expressed by the children. We do this to ensure that we have a constant overview about how our children are feeling in school throughout the year.

Our schools' arrangements for consulting with, listening and responding to parents/carers are that we keep channels of communication open at all times. None teaching Heads of Year and senior staff with much reduced teaching timetables are always available to listen and respond to parents/carers, either in person at the school, or by telephone or email.

There is a commitment to the continuous development of staff with regard to safeguarding training:

- All staff access training annually with regular updates across the academic year.
- We undertake SSCP 'endorsed' Basic Awareness training and all new staff, as part of their induction, access safeguarding training within the first term of their employment/placement.
- The Designated Lead and/or deputy attends DSL safeguarding training on bi-annual basis

## DEFINITIONS

Staff are trained and supported to understand the types of abuse that some children experience and work to the following definitions:

**All schools are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues may overlap with one another.**

**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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Complex safeguarding:** is used to describe criminal activity (often organised) or behaviour associated to criminality, involving often vulnerable children where there is exploitation and/or a clear or implied safeguarding concern.

In Stockport domestic abuse has been included within this definition in acknowledgement of the similarities between the process of grooming and controlling victims of domestic abuse and those subject to complex abuse and the need for a specialist and sensitive approach to working with children and families at highest risk of all these areas of concerns to reduce risk and effect positive outcomes. Stockport family have agreed that the following areas are encompassed within complex safeguarding:

- Domestic Abuse including honour-based violence and forced marriage
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Serious Organised Crime – including Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Modern slavery and Trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Radicalisation and Extremism

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):** is a form of child sexual abuse, it involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts or money) as part of a grooming process. Ultimately, this results in them engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups.

All staff are alert to possible indicators and will raise concerns as appropriate. They are aware of the pan Greater Manchester CSE policy and procedures and of the school screening tool (SERAT) including where to find it, how to complete it and what happens next.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual 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. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.  
(Child Sexual Exploitation, DfE, Feb 2017)

### Children and young people who harm others (also referred to as Peer-on peer abuse):

We understand that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This may include:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Gender based violence/sexual assaults
- Sexting and upskirting
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Initiating/hazing type violence and rituals

Staff are clear on our procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse and such matters are always taken seriously. We regularly address this issue via PHSE lessons regarding healthy relationships, School Nurse Team input and year group assemblies.

### Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of a school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff in the trust, but especially the designated safeguarding leads (or deputys) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust will ensure that every member of staff and person working on behalf of the Trust:

- Knows the name of the DSL and any deputies in their school and understands his/her role and responsibilities.
- Understands they have an individual responsibility to refer safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- Will receive training at the point of induction so that they know:
  - their personal responsibility / code of conduct / teaching standards
  - Have read and adhere to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
  - SSCP child protection procedures and how to access them
  - the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse at the earliest opportunity
  - how to support and respond to a child who discloses abuse/ significant harm
  - their duty concerning unsafe practices of a colleague.
  - the DSL will disclose any information about a student to other members of staff **only** on a need to know basis
  - the school will undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement with other agencies wherever this is appropriate.
  - the school will ensure that parents/carers have an understanding of their obligations re: Child Protection by intervention as and when appropriate.
  - to develop effective links with relevant agencies in relation to safeguarding (child protection)
  - to ensure that, where there are unmet needs, an assessment of early help is initiated
  - to send appropriate representatives to case conferences, core groups, child protection review meetings and LAC reviews and PEP Meetings.

Where a member of staff is concerned that a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead via CPOMS, or their Deputy, without delay. A written record will be made of these concerns as immediately following the disclosure/concern being raised via CPOMS.

Where staff have conversations with a child who discloses abuse they follow the basic principles:

- listen and remain calm
- never ask a child if they are being abused
- make a record of discussion to include time, place, persons present and what was said (child language – do not substitute words)
- advise you will have to pass the information on
- never take photographs of any injury

- never record a child
- never undress a child to physically examine them
- allow time and provide a quiet space for support
- At no time promise confidentiality to a child or adult.

We will notify any Lead Social Worker if:

- a student subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) or TAC Plan is excluded (fixed term or permanent)
- there is an unexplained absence of a student on a CPP of more than 2 days or 1 day following a weekend, or as agreed as part of a CPP.
- if a child is missing and there is a need to follow Local Authority policy and any statutory guidance on Children Missing Education (CME).
- We will also notify the Virtual School if a LAC student is excluded.

We will notify the social worker and Virtual School Head in the appropriate Local Authority if:

- a pupil who is in the care of any Local Authority is at risk of/at the point of being excluded (fixed term or permanent)
- there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who is in the care of any Local Authority of more than 2 days or 1 day following a weekend, or as agreed as part of their care plan and/or personal education plan (PEP)
- if a young person in Local Authority Care is missing and there is a need to statutory guidance on Children Missing Education (CME)
- additional concerns arise

We understand that parents often hold key information about incidents, allegations or concerns therefore, **in the majority of situations; the Designated Safeguarding Lead or key staff member of staff will speak to the parents and gain their consent** to discuss any matters with other relevant agencies. There will be very few instances where, to speak to the parents, could further endanger the child. In those situations, they would still consult/refer, but would have clearly recorded reasons as to why they had not gained parental consent.

### The use of 'reasonable force'

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in our schools to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. See school's Reasonable Force Policy

### Students who harm others (peer- on- peer abuse)

We believe that all students have the right to be taught in a safe environment to enable them to optimise their learning and achievement. We expect all students to have respect for themselves and others and work to ensure everyone in our community feels safe, valued and supported. The Trust promotes the values of honesty, acceptance, inclusion and fairness within a caring, restorative and nurturing environment.

Students at our schools have a variety of needs, some being very complex. We aim to provide a high level of pastoral care and support for all students and encourage appropriate and cooperative behaviour. Underpinned by this support, students are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour with appropriate strategies offered to enable this.

### SAFER USE OF THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY (including Early Years provision)

The Laurus Trust recognises that in a modern learning environment, use of the Internet, multimedia devices and digital imaging facilities are part of everyday requirements. However, a child/young person's safety will remain the priority of the school.

All staff are aware that any items that have capability for use of the Internet or the creation of digital images (including mobile phones) must be used by children/young people under appropriate supervision and in accordance with the schools Acceptable Use Policy. If any such item that belongs to a member of staff is brought onto a school site, it is the responsibility of that staff member to ensure that these items contain nothing of an inappropriate nature and that they are used in line with school policy – see Acceptable Use Policy.

If there is any suspicion that any multimedia device or computer contains any images or content of an inappropriate nature it will be locked, secured and, the Head of School or DSL will be informed immediately and the steps laid out in Sexting in School and or When to call the Police – guidance for schools and colleges may be applied.

### Use of mobile phones

Mobile phones have a place in settings, especially on outings when they are often the only means of contact available to settings and can be helpful in ensuring children are kept safe.

We will:

- Only use mobile phones appropriately, and ensure staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse and know how to minimise the risk.
- Ensure the use of a mobile phone does not detract from the quality of supervision and care of children.
- Ensure all mobile phone use is open to scrutiny.
- Ensure staff are vigilant and alert to any potential warning signs of the misuse of mobile phones.
- Ensure staff are responsible for their own behaviour regarding the use of mobile phones and understand how to avoid putting themselves into

compromising situations, which could be misinterpreted and lead to potential allegations.

- Ensure the use of mobile phones on outings is included as part of the risk assessment, for example, how to keep personal numbers that may be stored on the phone safe and confidential.
- Adhere to the school's policies on the recording of images and the use of equipment – E-safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy are available on the school websites.

### Work mobile phones

To protect children we will ensure that the work mobile:

- Is only used by allocated people.
- Is protected with a password/ PIN and clearly labelled.
- Is stored securely when not in use.
- Is not used in areas such as toilets and changing rooms
- If used for taking photographs, the images are deleted regularly and are taken in line with prior written parent/carer permission.

### Personal mobile phones

To protect children we will ensure that personal mobiles:

- Will not be used in sight of or around students and will be switched off whilst staff are on duty
- Are not used to take pictures of the children attending the setting or that images are not shared.
- Will not be used to take photographs, video or audio recordings in our setting.
- Are not used to contact parents or children –exception will only be by agreement with the SLT.

Visitors are not permitted to use mobile phones or other camera/ internet enabled devices without the express permission of the Head of School. Signs are clearly displayed informing visitors of this.

In line with Keeping children safe in education 2020, we have a clear policy on the use of mobile technology in the school.

Clear instructions and guidance is given to all students on the use of mobile technology.

## Cameras: Photography and Images

Most people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. However, due to cases of abuse to children through taking or using images, we must ensure that we have safeguards in place.

To protect children we will:

- Obtain parents' and carers' consent for photographs to be taken used for or published (for example, on our website or displays).
- Ensure the school's designated camera is only used in the school and any images taken will not be emailed as it may not be secure. (In some instances, it may be required to seek parental permission to email images, but the potential risks must be made clear to parents).
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed, and only use the child's first name with an image.
- Ensure that personal cameras are not used to take photographs, video or audio recordings in our school without prior explicit consent from the school.
- Ensure that all images are stored securely and password protected. Where images are stored the setting will register with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), in accordance with data protection laws.
- Ensure where professional photographers are used DBSs, references and parental consent will be obtained prior to photographs being taken.
- Ensure 'acceptable use' rules regarding the use of cameras and camera enabled devices by children are embedded in practice.
- Ensure the use of cameras is closely monitored and open to scrutiny.

## YOUTH PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY

Sexting' describes the use of technology to share sexual and sexually implied content. This content includes texts, photos of partial nudity and sexual images or video. This could be shared between partners, peers and strangers. Individuals may use a range of technology to share the content.

*The sharing of naked pictures is not a new thing but the speed with which you can share & the potential audience size has dramatically changed as a result of the online world.*

Whilst professionals refer to the issue as 'sexting' there is no clear definition of 'sexting'. Many professionals consider sexting to be 'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. Yet when young people are asked 'What does sexting mean to you?' they are more likely to interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know'. Similarly, many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.

This advice only covers the sharing of sexual imagery by young people. Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools and other agencies when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management.

On this basis this advice introduces the phrase 'youth produced sexual imagery' and uses this instead of 'sexting.' This is to ensure clarity about the issues this advice addresses.

'Youth produced sexual imagery' best describes the practice because:

'Youth produced' includes young people sharing images that they, or another young person, have created of themselves.

'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent.' A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context.

'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos (and this is what is meant by reference to imagery throughout the document).

*Sexting in schools & colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people*  
(DfE, Nov 2016)

[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)

'Sexting' (self-generated inappropriate images) is one of a number of 'risk-taking' behaviours associated with the use of digital devices, social media or the internet. It is accepted that young people experiment and challenge boundaries and therefore the risks associated with 'online' activity can never be completely eliminated. However, The Laurus Trust takes a pro-active approach in its ICT and Enrichment programmes to help students to understand, assess, manage and avoid the risks associated with 'online activity'. The school recognises its duty of care to its young people who do find themselves involved in such activity as well as its responsibility to report such behaviours where legal or safeguarding boundaries are crossed.

There are a number of definitions of 'sexting' but for the purposes of this policy sexting is simply defined as:

- Inappropriate images or videos generated by children under the age of 18, or

- Of children under the age of 18 that are of a sexual nature or are indecent.
- These images are shared between young people and/or adults via a mobile phone, hand held device, computer, 'tablet' or website with people they may or may not know.
- Up skirting, 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

There are many different types of sexting and it is likely that no two cases will be the same. It is necessary to carefully consider each case on its own merit. However, it is important that The Laurus Trust applies a consistent approach when dealing with an incident to help protect young people and the school. For this reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Head of School in the absence of the DSL) needs to be informed of any 'sexting' incidents. The range of contributory factors in each case also needs to be considered in order to determine an appropriate and proportionate response. All colleagues are expected to be aware of this policy.

Further advice can be found here:

<http://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/Managing-Sexting-Incidents/Sexting-Advice.aspx>

[Sexting In Schools Jan17.pdf](#)

## CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber bullying is defined and covered in the individual school's Anti-Bullying policy

## ONLINE & GAMING SAFETY

The internet and internet gaming are enjoyed by many people and are often activities families can enjoy together. However, use of the internet and online games isn't without risk.

As part of our approach to online safety we will support pupils and their families in understanding the potential risks of online activity and how best to avoid them. We will work with parents and carers to support them in the following:

- teaching e-safety in the curriculum
- offering parental information
- raising awareness of online grooming
- teaching our children how to report abuse or concerns

Parental advice is available here – [https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11\\_13/Need-advice/Gaming/](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_13/Need-advice/Gaming/)

At The Laurus Trust we ensure that we have suitable filtering and monitoring systems in place, as described in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020*.

## Mental health and wellbeing

Our staff are reminded 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. They are also aware of how children's lived experiences, can impact on their mental health and wellbeing, behaviour and education. Where staff are concerned that a child or young person may be experiencing issues or displaying behaviour that causes concern, they will report this to the DSL in accordance with our safeguarding procedures

## SUPPORTING VULNERABLE STUDENTS

### Vulnerable Students

If a student discloses that they have witnessed domestic violence or it is suspected that they may be living in a household, which is affected by family violence, this will be referred to the DSL. The Trust acknowledges the additional need for support and protection of children who are vulnerable by virtue of disability, homelessness, refugee/asylum seeker status, the effects of substance abuse, mental health and learning disability within the family, those who are young carers, mid-year admissions and students who are excluded from school or subject to a managed transfer. We acknowledge that children who are affected by abuse or neglect may demonstrate their needs and distress through their words, actions, behaviour, demeanour, schoolwork or other children. The Trust has a strong commitment to an anti-bullying policy and will consider all coercive acts and inappropriate child on child behaviour and sexual activity within a safeguarding context.

The Trust will endeavour to support vulnerable students through:

- Its ethos and culture which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment; giving students a sense of being valued.
- Its behaviour policy -aimed at supporting vulnerable students in school. All staff will agree a consistent approach, working to support children in developing positive behaviour.
- Liaison with other appropriate agencies which support the student.
- Developing supportive relationships.
- Recognition that children living in difficult home environments are vulnerable and are in need of support and protection.
- Monitoring student welfare, keeping accurate records and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary.
- Ensuring designated safeguarding staff and their team have the opportunity to attend face to face SSCP training and network updates.

(For example safeguarding child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, drugs / alcohol substance misuse, Female Genital Mutilation-FGM, etc.)

- Ensuring information is transferred safely and securely when a student with a child protection record transfers to another school. Also notifying Key Workers or Social Workers where a child leaves school (as appropriate)
- Operation Encompass

### Children with special needs and disabilities

We ensure that all trust staff have knowledge and understanding of the additional barriers which can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with special needs/disabilities.

These barriers **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 SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

We recognise that where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. These children may be receiving statutory social care support and recognised as Children in Need, or currently or previously in local authority care as looked-after children.

We ensure that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, and their high prevalence of special educational needs and mental health needs, can impact on their behaviour and education. We ensure that this is responded to through an appropriately individualised graduated response which is reflected in the design and application of our individual school policies including our teaching and learning and behaviour policies.

We regularly review our training and practice to enable staff to respond to these specific needs.

## EARLY IDENTIFICATION RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING NEEDS

The Trust acknowledges the findings of Serious Case Reviews, local learning reviews and audits. Findings are shared with all staff as part of a culture of improvement and learning. The DSL ensures s/he has information from the relevant local Safeguarding Board in relation to learning reviews and ensures this information is passed on to staff to promote improvement in respect of safeguarding. As part of our ongoing culture of vigilance and development we will share learning and responses from any other relevant issues to ensure we are offering the safest environment for our students and staff.

All staff within the trust know how to pass on any concerns no matter how 'small or low level' they seem. In accordance with local and national guidance all staff receive regular training and updates to help them identify when a child is vulnerable. We ensure that the most appropriate referrals are made in a timely manner. We seek to work in a transparent way with our families and where appropriate will share our concerns directly with parents and indicate possible routes of support. We actively support multi agency approaches when supporting children and families. We do this based on an awareness that early help and intervention can prevent future escalation of any presenting issues. We aim to provide information from the child's point of view in the context of their lived experience as evidenced by observations or information provided. Where staff have concerns they will always alert the DSL.

In the Trust we have staff that are trained and can support colleagues to identify and respond to:

- Neglect
- Drug/substance/alcohol misuse (both student and parent)
- Child sexual exploitation / trafficked children
- Children missing education
- Domestic abuse
- Peer relationship abuse
- Peer abuse
- Risky behaviours
- Sexual health needs
- Obesity/malnutrition
- On line grooming
- Inappropriate behaviour of staff towards children
- Bullying, including homophobic, racist, gender and disability. Breaches of the Equality Act 2010.
- Self-Harm
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Young carers
- The potential additional needs of some learners such as- Looked After Children (LAC), previously LAC, those who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and children whose families are seeking asylum.
- How an Education Health Care (EHC) plan links with other safeguarding processes

The DSL is a member of the School Senior Leadership team. The DSL and their deputy, in line with local and national guidance, receive regular training and updates to equip them with the skills and knowledge to deliver in this role. A DSL is always available to school staff when school is open including before and after school activity.

Laurus Trust staff contribute to assessments and actively support multi- agency planning for children. Staff have an understanding of their local authorities Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Intervention model and make decisions based on a

child's development needs, parenting capacity and family & environmental factors to support referrals.

In contributing to meetings, in addition to information about the child's academic functioning, the school provides information about the 'voice of the child' and the child's experiences of life as evidenced by observations or information provided through the multi-agency forum.

### **Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children**

In line with statutory guidance each school within the trust also has a named Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Young People who undertakes the responsibilities within the school to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school's roll. The Designated Teacher works closely with parents, carers, social workers, Virtual School Heads and the school's DSL where any safeguarding concerns arise.

## **EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION**

Laurus Trust seek to protect children and young people from the influences of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to;

- Extremist Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology
- Islamic extremist ideology
- Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups
- Extremist animal rights movements.

The current threat from terrorism and extremist groups in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people. Groups may seek to influence vulnerable children and involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation.

The Laurus Trust is clear that where there is concern in respect of exploitation of this kind it will be treated as safeguarding concern.

Prevention work and reductions of risks will include the SMSC, PSHE curriculum, SEND policy, assembly policy, integration of students by gender and SEN, the application of the anti-bullying policy and a commitment to building and maintaining an inclusive and fair school environment and community. We will apply an appropriate schools letting policy. Whilst the education of children is the prime purpose of our schools it is recognised that our schools operate in the wider community. Its facilities are therefore only available to local groups when this does not conflict with either the interests of its students or the wellbeing and workload of its staff.

## **OTHER SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

**Domestic abuse/violence:** In our Trust we believe that all our pupils have the right to be safe at school and also in their own homes. We are aware that some children may be living in situations where they are directly or indirectly affected by incidents of

domestic abuse or violence. Where we are concerned that domestic abuse or violence is present in the home we will follow our safeguarding and domestic abuse processes. If a school is made aware of any domestic violence issues, we would signpost to the appropriate agency. The Trust is part of Operation Encompass.

**Honour Based Violence (HBV) including Forced Marriage (FM):** Our staff have been trained to understand honour based violence and forced marriage; they are alert to possible indicators. They are aware that forced marriage is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage; that it is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence and that HBV and FM can affect both young men and women.

The schools within the Trust would never attempt to intervene directly; where this is suspected, nor would we speak to parents before sharing our concerns with appropriate agencies.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** All Members of the Trust are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. They have been made aware of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM and will act accordingly on any concerns or disclosures. We will also follow national guidance on mandatory reporting requirements.

**Breast Ironing:** Key staff have been made aware of an act of abuse performed on young girls (from around the age of 9 years old) in which their breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded, burned with heated objects or covered with an elastic belt to prevent or delay the development of their breasts. Where such abuse is suspected or disclosed staff will follow safeguarding and child protection systems.

**The criminal exploitation of children:** The criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs.

**Human trafficking** is defined by the United Nations, in respect of children, as "the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by such means as threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation." **Any** child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim.

As a Trust we are alert to the possible indicators both for our children and their families. Any concerns will be reported using our safeguarding and child protection

processes. In addition to Greater Manchester guidance we also refer to [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines](#).

## SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE

Serious Youth violence (including knife crime) has a huge impact on children and the communities in which they live. It is a societal problem and it cannot be tackled by schools or single agencies alone.

At The Laurus Trust we will seek to support, help and protect children on the school sites, and to teach our children/young people about the dangers of weapons/knives and other related dangers. We understand that violence and knife crime do not exist in a vacuum and children who are victims or perpetrators may also be experiencing multiple vulnerabilities. If we become aware that a child or young person is vulnerable, we will use the most appropriate interventions and pathways to address these needs, such as completing an Early Help Assessment, Child protection referral or support from Stockport Youth Offending Service.

## Exceptional Circumstances (closures, partial closures, home learning)

At The Laurus Trust if we find that there is a need to close or partially close any of the schools in The Trust, and offer home learning, we will ensure that any communication, information sharing, and the use of online learning platforms is in line with privacy and data protection requirements.

All communication with pupils, parents and carers will take place using school communication systems; for example, school email accounts, phone systems and agreed platforms **e.g. Microsoft Teams and Sharepoint. Should exception be required this will be with permission of the Head of School.**

There is an expectation that staff and pupils will engage with home learning by adhering to the principles described in our existing staff code of conduct, pupil behaviour policy and online acceptable behaviour policies. Where we have issued additional guidance in relation to online working, this will be circulated via school systems and staff will be advised accordingly.

Staff and pupils will be advised how to share concerns as part of any alternative arrangements.

In making our arrangements we will be cognisant of [Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

## Site safety

We take the safety of staff and pupils seriously and have in place a range of measures to protect and promote the wellbeing of all on site. This includes controlled access to our

premises such as; undertaking appropriate checks, signing visitors in and out and issuing guidance on acceptable conduct on site.

As part of our response to the Covid-19 pandemic we may need to introduce additional steps and measures in response to local and national guidance. Where this occurs, we will aim to communicate changes via our usual notification routes.

## SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

The Trust pays full regard to DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2020 and with reference to the 'Position of Trust' offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003). We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the Trust is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult.

We do this by:

Operating safer recruitment practices including appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and reference checks, verifying identity, academic and vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking previous employment history and ensuring the person has the right to work in the UK. Our practices also includes undertaking interviews and checking if individuals are barred or prohibited from working with children in accordance with DBS and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. In line with statutory guidance we maintain a single central record to evidence checks completed for staff and volunteers working in our schools community. This document is reviewed termly by a senior member of staff and the Safeguarding Governor.

Every volunteer member of staff (including supply staff and those contracted to deliver sports or other activities such as counselling) has a 'safeguarding induction' and we ensure that staff and volunteers adhere to a published code of conduct and other relevant professional standards at all times. This extends to before and after school activities. Staff and visitors are aware of the requirements in respect of phone usage, camera enabled devices, social media and on-line conduct. Other professionals and visitors to our schools are made aware of the requirement and expectations we have in respect of safeguarding our children including the use of mobile and camera enabled devices.

We ensure that:

- Any disciplinary proceedings against staff related to Child Protection matters are concluded in full in accordance with Government guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020" and SSCP, LADO and HR Policy, procedures and guidance.
- All staff and other adults on school sites are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with students and parents/carers, following the Code of Conduct.
- Adequate risk assessments are in for volunteers and holiday activities (directly related to school).

- Staff are clear how to raise a concern, where to find 'whistleblowing policies' and are confident to report concerns of misconduct.

## GOVERNING BODY DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Governing Bodies fully recognise their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in accordance with Government guidance and pays particular regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

The Governing Bodies have agreed processes which allow them to monitor and ensure that the school:

- Have robust safeguarding procedures in place.
- Operates safer recruitment procedures and appropriate checks are carried out on newly appointed staff and other adults working on the school site.
- Have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult on site.
- Has appointed a member of the Leadership Team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding and Child Protection issues.
- Will take steps to remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses with regard to safeguarding arrangements.
- Is supported by the Governing Body nominating a member responsible for liaising with the LA and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse against the Head of School; this is the Chair.
- Carries out an annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Carries out an annual safeguarding Audit in consultation with the Governing body.

As the safeguarding of students is a function of the Local Authority (LA). The Trust requires all schools to have their own Safeguarding Policy which details the relevant local referral procedures.

## Equality Impact Statement

Names and titles of people involved with this assessment	<b>Emma Warrington SENDCO</b>														
Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Race</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion &amp; belief</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexual orientation</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>SEND</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion & belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SEND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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SEND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>														
Summary of any issues/proposed changes	N/a														
Date															
Date of next review	September 2021														