



## Birchwood High School Child Protection Policy

At a glance:

Whilst it is important to familiarize yourself with this statutory school policy and the latest DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, this 'at a glance' section gives you the basic facts if you need to have them quickly to hand.

- Vigilance, clarity of action and a culture of thinking 'it could happen here' are fundamental to effective Child Protection at Birchwood High School.
- If you are concerned or are informed of any potential safeguarding situation in school, you must immediately inform the relevant Head of Year/Deputy DSL (these two terms are used interchangeably throughout this policy) or the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in person or through CPOMs. The Attendance Officer Debbie Le Gallienne administers CPOMS which is the school's electronic Child Protection Management system.
- You can inform any one of these Heads of Year, DSLs or the Principal if you are unable to find the correct person
- If you are concerned or are informed about a potential safeguarding situation outside school, you need to make an immediate call to the LEA Out-of-Hours Children Services (0300 123 4043) or Dial 999 and ask for the Police.
- If you are concerned about the actions of a member of staff in terms of child protection, inform the Principal straight away.
- Please remember that concerns about members of staff with regards to improper conduct should be dealt with through the school's Whistleblowing Policy and matters should also be referred to the Principal.
- If the Principal is not contactable or there are concerns about the Principal, you should contact Ms Catherine Gater, Chair of Governors via the school or in consultation with a DSL.

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## 1 Introduction

At Birchwood High School, we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. We need to adopt an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned, thereby creating a culture of vigilance. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child. Safeguarding is defined as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health and /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. Schools and colleges and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). The School works alongside other organisations including social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safer Recruitment Policy, Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy, Code of Conduct/Staff Behaviour Policy, E-safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Usage Policy.

### Purpose of a Child Protection Policy

To inform staff, parents, volunteers and governors about the school's responsibilities for safeguarding children under the age of 18.

To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out. Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures

The school follows the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board - a guide to procedure and practice for all professional staff in Hertfordshire who work with children. An annual report is sent to Hertfordshire County Council for checking and validation.

### School Staff & Volunteers

All school staff and volunteers are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with children. They should be aware of the important role the school has in the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and the appropriate referral process. All school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

Temporary staff and volunteers will be made aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures by one of the DSLs.

### Mission Statement

To establish and maintain an ethos and culture where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened and responded to when they have a worry or concern.  
To ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.  
To include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse. At Birchwood pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. At Birchwood we believe it is important that students are taught to recognize when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interest of the child.

## 2 Statutory Framework

In order to protect children from harm the school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2021)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Part One- information for all school and college staff (DfE, September 2021) – Appendix 3

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)
- Section 26, The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (PREVENT duty)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74 ,Serious Crime Act 2015)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- The Children Act 2004
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175/157)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures (Electronic)

Birchwood will follow guidance in relation to the specific safeguarding issues outlined in the Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff (DfE - September 2021). This will include the Prevent Duty Guidance in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Furthermore Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by Section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) will place a statutory duty upon staff, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. It will be rare for staff to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

### **Safeguarding Children – general principles and practice**

- Schools should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Area Child Protection Committee
- All members of staff at Birchwood High School have a key role in monitoring and reporting any possible child protection or safeguarding concern. This role is an essential part of the school’s Staff Code of Conduct.
- It is legally required that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and that the school holds evidence that they have understood the school’s statutory safeguarding obligations.
- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and neglect and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- Schools should have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse
- The Designated Safeguarding Leads should have responsibility for coordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies
- The DSLs and the Deputy DSL leads should undergo updated child protection training every two years
- All staff should receive mandatory update training within a three year cycle. Records and logs of CP training should be kept centrally
- All new members of staff will receive initial ‘in-house’ CP training and thereafter full training within 6 months of commencing employment
- A copy of the CP policy, including KCSIE (2021) Part one and Annex A, alongside the Staff Code of Conduct and the Behaviour Policy should be provided to staff upon induction. All staff and governors must complete a quiz run by the Safeguarding Network to prove that they have understood KCSIE 2021.

### **3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Leads for Child Protection in this school are Sam Stopps and Sally Feather Levey. The Deputy DSLs for Child Protection in this school are the Heads of Year (see below). Their specific roles are as follows:

- Mr Stopps - DSL (Year 7-11)
- Ms Feather Levey - DSL (Year 12-13)
- Ms Munro - Deputy DSL (Year 7)
- Ms Payne – Deputy DSL (Year 8)
- Mr Ruggins - Deputy DSL (Year 9)
- Mr Stock - Deputy DSL (Year 10)
- Mr Noblett - Deputy DSL (Year 11)
- Ms Hassani – Deputy DSL (Year 12)

- Mr Clift - Deputy DSL (Year 13)
  - Mr Torrance - Deputy DSL (Sixth Form)
  - Ms Willsmore – Deputy DSL (Behaviour Support Lead)
- 
- A member of staff should contact the relevant person immediately if they are concerned about a child's welfare. They can communicate as follows:
    - Seeing a Head of Year in person – or if they are teaching, a DSL regardless of the child's age.
    - Emailing the Head of Year or DSL.
    - Entering the information on the school's electronic Child Protection Management system, CPOMs (<https://birchwood.cpoms.net/login>).
    - The designated governor for safeguarding is Ruth Bamlett.

It is the role of the DSL for Child Protection to:

- Ensure that the school operates within the legislative framework and recommended guidance
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the Hertfordshire ACPC procedures
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff  
Induction training is mandatory and includes the child protection policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Code of Conduct, the role of the DSL and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.  
DSLs attend training every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at regular intervals in the interim.  
All other staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually.  
Safer recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process.
- Encourage a culture of listening and responding to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.
- Ensure that the Principal is kept fully informed of any concerns - especially ongoing enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to Children, Schools and Families Social Work Team)
- Liaise with Social Work Teams over suspected cases of child abuse
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept separate from the academic file
- These are electronically recorded in a secure place and marked 'Strictly Confidential' (CPOMs)
- Submit reports to, and ensure the school's attendance at Child Protection Conferences
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children about whom there are concerns following a child protection concern
- If, after referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving the DSL should press for reconsideration by the Hertfordshire CP Team to ensure that the child's situation improves. They should also share these concerns with the Principal.
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support
- Share information with appropriate staff in relation to a child's looked after (CLA) legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an Interim Care Order or Care Order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. At Birchwood the SENCO has this responsibility and liaises with the DSL as appropriate.
- Ensure they have details of the CLA's social worker and the name of the virtual school Head Teacher in the authority that looks after the child – again this is the remit of the SENCO.

#### 4 The Governing Body

Governing bodies and proprietors must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must also review this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in their schools or colleges are effective and comply with the law at all times. All governors are required to undertake a Section 128 check before being recruited.

The nominated governor for child protection is Ruth Bamlett. The responsibilities placed on governing bodies and proprietors include:

- their contribution to inter-agency working, which includes providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified
- ensuring that an effective child protection policy is in place, annually reviewed together with a staff behaviour policy ensuring staff are provided with Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021) –Annex A and are aware of specific safeguarding issues
- appointing a designated safeguarding lead who should undergo child protection training every two years
- meet with the lead DSL to review procedures and overview the effectiveness of CP arrangements
- prioritise the welfare of children and young people and creating a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns
- make sure that children are taught about how to keep themselves safe.

## **5 School Procedures (please refer to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for additional information)**

If staff members have any concerns about a child they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the designated safeguarding lead to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to Children’s Services by ringing 0300 123 4043. If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the DSL immediately. The member of staff must also record information regarding the concerns promptly. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations. The DSL will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children’s Services. If it is decided to make a referral to Children Schools and Families this will be done with prior discussion with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

When making an assessment, the DSL will consider Contextual Safeguarding - i.e. whether environmental factors in a child’s life may be a threat to their safety and / or welfare.

If no DSL is available, staff should speak to the Principal or a member of SLT or, if need be, take advice from the local children’s social care (KSCIE 2021, para 56).

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, the DSL should make a referral to Children’s Services and/or the police immediately

While it is the DSLs role to make referrals, any staff member can make a referral to Children’s Services. If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children’s Services and/or the Police immediately. If there is a concern that a family might have plans to carry out FGM, this must be reported to the Police immediately. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the school has concern or who is subject to a Child Protection Plan and a written record will be kept. If a pupil who is/or has been the subject of a Child Protection Plan changes school, the DSL will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving school, in a secure manner, to a named person, and separate from the child’s academic file.

If concerns are raised or observations made out-of-school hours without immediate access to a DSL, any member of staff can make a direct referral by telephoning Children’s Services Out of Hours Service (SOOHS). The Public Emergency Out of Hours number is 0300 123 4043.

## **6 When to be Concerned**

All staff and volunteers should be aware that the main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Staff should be aware that, while always acting in the child’s best interest, some children may need early help.

Families First is Hertfordshire's programme of early help services for families. A directory of early help services is available at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst) and can help staff and families find information and support to prevent escalation of needs and crisis.

All staff should be aware of the early help process, and understand their role in being aware of and identifying problems as they arise, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment of a child's needs. This also includes staff monitoring the situation and feeding back to the DSL any ongoing/escalating concerns so that consideration can be given to a referral to Children's Services (Safeguarding and Specialist Services).

Further guidance on these types of abuse including 'signs' are listed in Appendix 2.

Staff and volunteers working within the School should also be alert to the potential need for early help for more vulnerable children. For example:

- Children with a disability and/or specific additional needs.
- Children with special educational needs.
  - Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:
    - there may be 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 can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
    - difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.
  - At Birchwood we identify pupils who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe by:
    - The DSLs and SENCO work closely together to support our vulnerable students. For example, they may be part of a protective behaviours group, receive additional training around social skills, keeping safe or relationships. These students are encouraged to develop a relationship with a member of staff, in PLC for example, or their form tutor or head of year, so that they are likely to be open with them.
- Children who are acting as a young carer.
- Children who are showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- Children whose family circumstances present challenges, such as substance abuse, adult mental health or learning disability, domestic violence
- Children who are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he/she presents with indicators of possible significant harm:
  - › Has any injury, which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's injuries
  - › Regularly has unexplained injuries
  - › Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given)
  - › Gives confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained
  - › Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude
  - › Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and /or inappropriate to his or her age
  - › Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.
  - › Any other cause to believe that a child may be suffering harm, including evidence of self-harm

## **Mandatory Reporting Duty**

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals, including teachers, to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. This is a mandatory reporting duty. See Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021): Annex A for further details.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

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

### **Serious violence**

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may 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 assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of serious violence, they must contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

### **Honour based violence (HBV)**

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBV, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

The statutory definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be found in the guidance document Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

The definition is:

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 under the age of 18 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 also occur through the use of technology.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

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

Vulnerabilities:

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

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

More information can be found in:

Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

## Peer on peer abuse

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse. Abusive and bullying behaviour of other children can cause severe harm. This behaviour could be physical (such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling), sexual or emotional and may include gender based violence/ sexual assaults, sexting, teenage relationship abuse, peer-on-peer exploitation, serious youth violence, sexual bullying, harmful sexual behaviour, initiating group violence and rituals.

'Upskirting' 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. It is now a criminal offence under the Voyeurism Act 2019 and may constitute sexual harassment.

When considering whether behaviour is abusive, it is important to consider:

- whether there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or
- whether the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- whether there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.
- The DSLs are aware of the recommended Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool by the Brook Advisory Service for assessing and responding appropriately to sexualised behaviour. [www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool](http://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool).
- Staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and should not be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up". Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.
- Incidents will be recorded on CPOMS and will be investigated by the DSL in the first instance. Victims and perpetrators will be supported in school by pastoral staff and by external agencies if additional support is required.
- In order to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse the school we:
- Provide a developmentally appropriate PSHE curriculum which develops students' understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe.
- Have systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued.
- Develop robust risk assessments where appropriate (eg Using the Risk Assessment Management Plan and Safety and Support Plan tools).
- Have relevant policies in place (eg behaviour policy) and incidents will be dealt with under this policy.

The UKCCIS Guidance: Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents, and safeguarding young people (2017) is a useful guidance document.

Where there is an allegation or concern that a child has abused others, you can also refer to Section 4.4 of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures Manual, 'Children Who Abuse Others':

[http://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_chil\\_abuse.html](http://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_chil_abuse.html)

## 7 Dealing with a Disclosure – practical guidelines

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff / volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child, but not make promises, which may not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality – as this may not be in the best interests of the child
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen, rather than ask direct questions
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- Make a written record (see Record Keeping)
- Pass information to one of the DSLs promptly during school hours or this should be done verbally and immediately if you believe the child is at immediate risk of danger. If this is not the

case, the member of staff should report the disclosure via CPOMS and ensure that the DSL is aware of this by contacting them directly.

### **Staff Support:**

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

## **8 Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in schools.

- All staff in schools, both teaching and non-teaching staff, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services and the Police).
- If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's sake. Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.
- Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. KCSIE (2021) paragraph 75 states: 'The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe'. Paragraph 77 adds: ' This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent'. See 'Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (2018)

## **9 Communicating with parents**

Birchwood High School will ensure the child protection policy is available publicly via the school website or by other means. Parents should be informed prior to referral, unless it is considered to do so might place the child at increased risk of significant harm by:

- The behavioural response it prompts e.g. a child being subjected to abuse, maltreatment or threats / forced to remain silent if alleged abuser informed
- Leading to an unreasonable delay
- Leading to the risk of loss of evidential material;
- Placing a member of staff from any agency at risk.

## **10 Record-Keeping**

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Not destroy the original records in case they are needed by a court.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury.
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumption.

All records need to be given to the DSL promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer. Relevant documentation and evidence will need to be recorded on CPOMS promptly to alert the DSL. If the matter is urgent, staff should ensure they speak to a DSL in person.

## **11 Allegations Involving School Staff/Volunteers**

If a child makes an allegation about a member of staff or is witnessed to have behaved in a way that may harm the child emotionally or physically, this matter must be brought to the attention of the Principal, Dr. Chris Ingate. If the concerns are about the Principal, then the Chair of Governors should

be contacted. The Chair of Governors at this school is Catherine Gator. In her absence, the Vice Chair Gill Turner should be contacted. Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the school's designated safeguarding lead and make any referral via them.

In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Principal and a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, allegations should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the DSL if appropriate make any referral via them. (See Keeping Children Safe in Education: Part Four, DfE 2021, for further information).

An allegation is any information, which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child
- Behaved toward a child in a way which indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

This applies to any child the member of staff/volunteer has contact with in the personal, professional or community life.

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification, it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Actions to be taken include making a written record of the allegation using the informant's words - including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present. This record should be signed and dated and immediately passed on to the Principal. The recipient of an allegation must not unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

The Principal will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern to CSF social care in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (Children's Services – 01992 555420). SOOHS (Out of Hours Service-Children's Services) – 0300 123 4043

If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for further action through the HSCB Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures, the Principal must immediately make a referral to Children's Services on 0300 123 4043.

If it is decided that the allegation does not meet the threshold for referral to Children's Services, the Principal and Local Authority Designated Officer will consider the appropriate course of action, e.g. joint evaluation meeting, internal investigation.

The Principal should, as soon as possible, following briefing from the Local Authority Designated Officer, inform the subject of the allegation.

For further information see: HSCB Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures (2010) Section 4.1.1 Managing Allegations Against Adults who work with Children and Young People  
General concerns about Child Protection Practice / Whistleblowing

Staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime. The school has a separate Whistleblowing Policy which identifies procedures should be in place for such concerns to be raised with the school's management team.

## **12 The 'Prevent Duty' and Radicalisation**

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. School staff

should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to the Channel programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school's core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

We must also ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. Schools should ensure that suitable filtering is in place. It is also important that schools teach pupils about online safety more generally.

Students can be taught about online safety in assemblies, PD sessions or by outside speakers. To minimize inappropriate use of mobile phones, students are expected to have their phones switched off in school from 8.50 am to 3.25 pm. Students will be sanctioned as per the Behaviour Policy if this rule is breached. We believe we have a duty to attempt to keep our students safe from online bullying and other risks while they are in our care. On occasion, however, students may be given permission by their teacher to use their phones in a lesson for a given purpose.

Internet management: Birchwood High School subscribes to HICS internet filtering platform (Herts for Learning) broadband internet access – this proxy filtering has been updated to ensure that students are not able to access inappropriate images, videos or literature that promotes extremism or terrorism in addition to the usual internet filters around violent or pornographic material. Internet use is monitored and effectively managed with individual user histories monitored and action taken when required.

For further guidance and information on Prevent legislation:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/445977/3799\\_Revised\\_Prevent\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_England\\_Wales\\_V2-Interactive.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance_England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf)

### **13 Children Missing From Education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or criminal exploitation of children. Appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses will be put in place for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. We use Truancy Call as well as personalised calls to parents. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).

3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
  - a. leave school to be home educated
  - b. move away from the school's location
  - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
  - e. are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

## 14 Private fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

School staff should notify the designated safeguarding lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements.

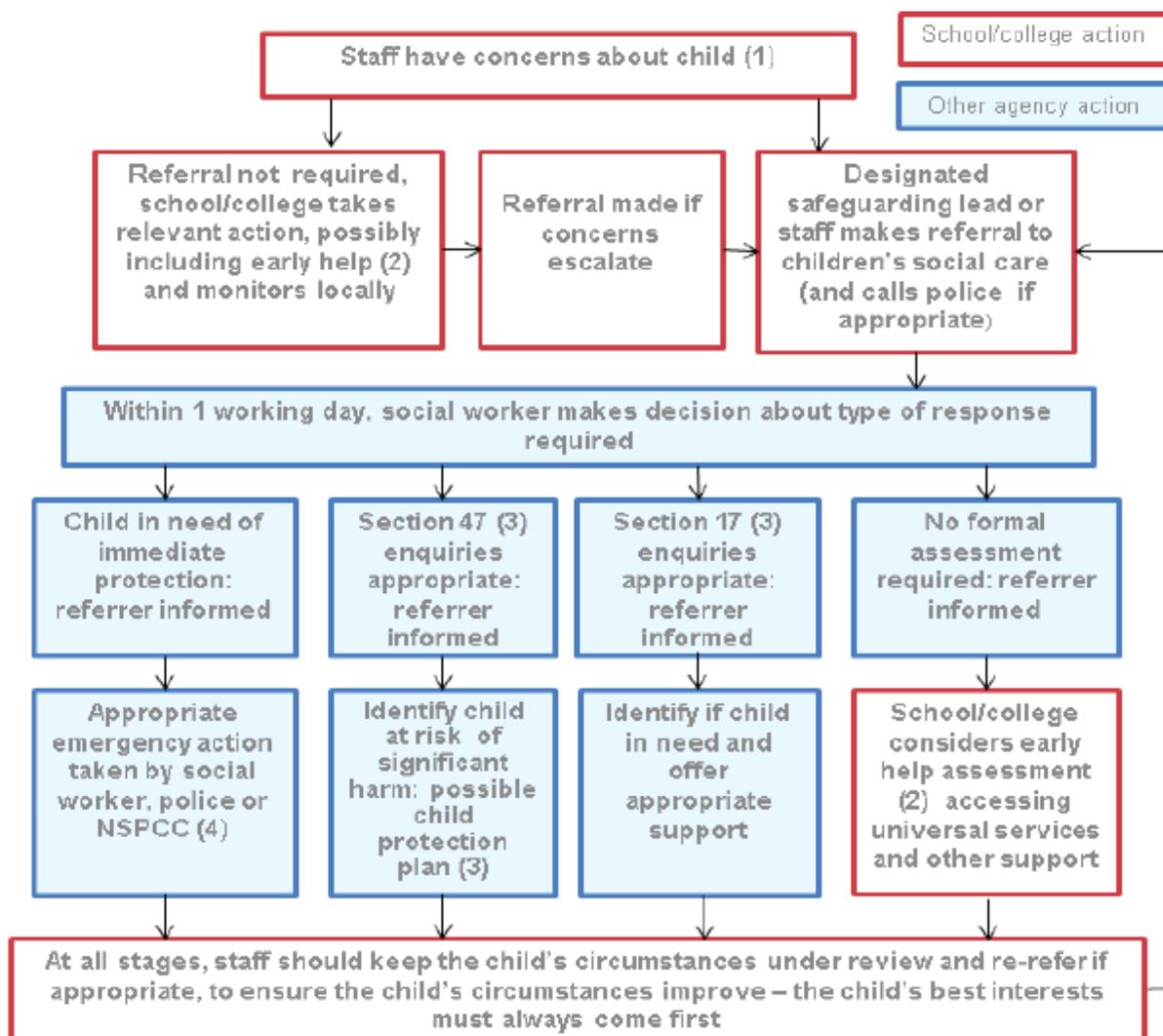
On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

## 15 Useful contacts

<b>DSLs</b>	<b>Sam Stopps</b>	<b>01279 655936 (sstopps@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)</b>
	<b>Sally Feather Levey</b>	<b>01279 655936 (sfeather@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)</b>
<b>Principal</b>	<b>Chris Ingate</b>	<b>01279 655936 (cingate@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)</b>
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Catherine Gator</b>	<b>(cgator@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)</b>
<b>Hertfordshire LADO Team</b>		<b>01992 555420</b>

## Appendix 1

### Flow diagram to show the steps taken to record, review and take action with regards to child protection



## Indicators of abuse and neglect

<b>Physical abuse</b>	
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.	
<b>Child</b>	
Bruises – shape, grouping, site, repeat or multiple	Withdrawal from physical contact
Bite-marks – site and size Burns and Scalds – shape, definition, size, depth, scars	Aggression towards others, emotional and behaviour problems
Improbable, conflicting explanations for injuries or unexplained injuries	Frequently absent from school
Untreated injuries	Admission of punishment which appears excessive
Injuries on parts of body where accidental injury is unlikely	Fractures
Repeated or multiple injuries	Fabricated or induced illness -
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Family/environment</b>
Parent with injuries	History of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence.
Evasive or aggressive towards child or others	Past history in the family of childhood abuse, self-harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault
Explanation inconsistent with injury	Marginalised or isolated by the community.
Fear of medical help / parents not seeking medical help	Physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.
Over chastisement of child	

<b>Emotional abuse</b>	
The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as	
over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.	
<b>Child</b>	
Self-harm	Over-reaction to mistakes / Inappropriate emotional responses
Chronic running away	Abnormal or indiscriminate attachment
Drug/solvent abuse	Low self-esteem
Compulsive stealing	Extremes of passivity or aggression
Makes a disclosure	Social isolation – withdrawn, a 'loner' Frozen watchfulness particularly pre school
Developmental delay	Depression
Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting,	Desperate attention-seeking behaviour

thumb sucking)	
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Family/environment</b>
Observed to be aggressive towards child or others	Marginalised or isolated by the community.
Intensely involved with their children, never allowing anyone else to undertake their child's care.	History of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence.
Previous domestic violence	History of unexplained death, illness or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family
History of abuse or mental health problems	Past history in the care of childhood abuse, self harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault
Mental health, drug or alcohol difficulties	Wider parenting difficulties
Cold and unresponsive to the child's emotional needs	Physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.
Overly critical of the child	Lack of support from family or social network.

### **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.

### **Child**

Failure to thrive - underweight, small stature	Low self-esteem
Dirty and unkempt condition	Inadequate social skills and poor socialisation
Inadequately clothed	Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
Dry sparse hair	Abnormal voracious appetite at school or nursery
Untreated medical problems	Self-harming behaviour
Red/purple mottled skin, particularly on the hands and feet, seen in the winter due to cold	Constant tiredness
Swollen limbs with sores that are slow to heal, usually associated with cold injury	Disturbed peer relationships
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Family/environment</b>
Failure to meet the child's basic essential needs including health needs	Marginalised or isolated by the community.
Leaving a child alone	History of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence.
Failure to provide adequate caretakers	History of unexplained death, illness or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family
Keeping an unhygienic dangerous or hazardous home environment	Past history in the family of childhood abuse, self harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault
Unkempt presentation	Lack of opportunities for child to play and learn
Unable to meet child's emotional needs	Dangerous or hazardous home environment including failure to use home safety equipment; risk from animals
Mental health, alcohol or drug difficulties	

**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.

**Child**

Self-harm - eating disorders, self-mutilation and suicide attempts	Poor self-image, self-harm, self-hatred
Running away from home	Inappropriate sexualised conduct
Reluctant to undress for PE	Withdrawal, isolation or excessive worrying
Pregnancy	Sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to age/stage of development, or that is unusually explicit
Inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn	Poor attention / concentration (world of their own)
Pain, bleeding, bruising or itching in genital and /or anal area	Sudden changes in school work habits, become truant
Sexually exploited or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners	

**Parent****Family/environment**

History of sexual abuse	Marginalised or isolated by the community.
Excessively interested in the child.	History of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence.
Parent displays inappropriate behaviour towards the child or other children	History of unexplained death, illness or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family
Conviction for sexual offences	Past history in the care of childhood abuse, self harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault
Comments made by the parent/carer about the child.	Grooming behaviour
Lack of sexual boundaries	Physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.