



Orange Tree School

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

OTS Oakleigh Pk and Ridgeway Sites

Independent School Standards: Paragraph 7 and 34

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy pays regard to national guidance issued by the Secretary of State, including 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (**September, 2026**), 'Working Together to Safeguard



DOCUMENT DETAILS	
Applies to:	• All Staff • External suppliers or visitors • Regulatory / Legal bodies • Other (e.g. Parents) • Hospital Staff
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Policy Summary

Purpose

Orange Tree School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every pupil. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the school adopts a child-centred approach in which the best interests, wishes, feelings and individual needs of children are considered throughout safeguarding practice.

This policy sets out the school's arrangements for identifying, responding to, recording and managing safeguarding and child protection concerns. It explains the responsibilities of all staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), senior leaders and the Advisory Board, and should be read alongside *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026* and the school's related safeguarding policies and procedures.

Key expectations

All staff must:

- maintain an attitude of "it could happen here";
- know the identity of the DSL and Deputy DSLs and understand how to report concerns;
- read **Part One of KCSIE 2026 in full** and complete required safeguarding training and updates;
- recognise indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, modern slavery and other safeguarding harms, including those occurring online or outside the home;
- understand that safeguarding concerns frequently overlap and that children may experience multiple forms of harm;
- act immediately on concerns and never assume that another person will take action;
- listen to children, take their concerns seriously and never promise confidentiality;
- understand and respond appropriately to child-on-child abuse, including harassment, violence, harmful sexual behaviour, misogyny and misandry;
- recognise that children who display harmful or abusive behaviour may themselves have safeguarding needs;
- understand the school's arrangements for early support, Family Help and referrals to statutory services;
- share safeguarding information appropriately and without allowing data protection concerns to prevent necessary information sharing; and
- understand their responsibilities in relation to online safety, filtering and monitoring and emerging risks associated with technology and generative AI.

Summary of Key Changes – September 2026

This policy has been comprehensively reviewed and updated to reflect Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children and current statutory safeguarding guidance.

In addition to reflecting changes in national guidance, this review incorporates learning from Orange Tree School's safeguarding practice, safeguarding reviews, professional reflection and quality assurance activity during 2025–26.

Governance and Statutory Updates

- Updated to reflect *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.
- Updated to reflect *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.
- Legal framework reviewed and updated to reflect current legislation and statutory guidance.
- References and terminology updated throughout to reflect current safeguarding expectations.
- Updated to reflect the removal of the former condensed KCSIE Annex A; all staff are now expected to read Part One of KCSIE in full.
- Safer recruitment arrangements updated to reflect changes to regulated activity, the removal of the supervision exemption and associated DBS requirements, including requirements affecting volunteers.
- Updated expectations regarding safeguarding responsibilities for trainee teachers, supply staff, contractors and third-party organisations.

Safeguarding Culture

- Strengthened child-centred safeguarding approach throughout the policy.
- Greater emphasis on early intervention, Early Help and Family Help, reflecting updated national terminology and arrangements.
- Introduced a whole-family approach to safeguarding.
- Increased recognition of family strengths, protective factors and wider support networks.
- Expanded guidance on professional curiosity, respectful challenge and reflective practice.
- Greater recognition that different forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation may overlap and that children may experience multiple safeguarding harms.
- Reinforced the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that effective safeguarding relies upon a culture of vigilance, openness and professional accountability.

Leadership and Decision-Making

- Expanded responsibilities of the Advisory Board, Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- New section clarifying the safeguarding decision-making responsibilities of the DSL.
- Strengthened arrangements to ensure appropriate DSL or Deputy DSL cover and access to safeguarding information.
- Strengthened guidance on information sharing, safeguarding decision-making and professional judgement.

- Enhanced governance, monitoring and safeguarding quality assurance arrangements.

Recognising and Responding to Harm

- Expanded guidance on recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Modern slavery more explicitly recognised as a safeguarding concern, including its relationship with child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.
- Strengthened guidance on child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE), including coercion, organised networks and the risk of children being criminalised for behaviour connected with their exploitation.
- Strengthened approach to child-on-child abuse, harassment and violence, including early identification and intervention.
- Greater recognition that children displaying harmful or abusive behaviour may themselves have safeguarding and support needs.
- Expanded recognition of misogynistic and misandrist behaviour, including behaviour occurring online.
- Strengthened guidance on serious violence, including weapons, peer conflict, risk assessment, safety planning and early intervention.

Supporting Children

- Strengthened attendance as a safeguarding issue.
- Greater recognition of contextual safeguarding and children's lived experiences.
- Expanded guidance regarding children with additional vulnerabilities.
- Strengthened recognition of safeguarding barriers and additional considerations affecting children with SEND.
- New section recognising the safeguarding needs of children with medical conditions and the importance of effective partnership working with health professionals.
- New guidance recognising the needs and vulnerabilities of young carers.
- Expanded guidance concerning mental health, self-harm, suicidal ideation and suicide risk where these may indicate or create safeguarding concerns.
- Updated safeguarding guidance relating to lesbian, gay and bisexual children and children questioning their gender.
- New guidance on safeguarding arrangements for alternative provision and work experience placements.
- New guidance regarding safeguarding expectations where external organisations use School premises.
- New safeguarding considerations relating to sport and sporting activities.

Online Safety and Technology

- Updated online safety guidance to reflect current and emerging technology risks.
- New and expanded guidance regarding:
 - o Artificial Intelligence (AI) and generative AI;
 - o deepfakes and AI-generated or manipulated imagery;
 - o sextortion;
 - o technology-facilitated abuse; and

- o emerging online risks.
- Updated terminology and guidance concerning the making and sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated or altered images.
- Strengthened filtering and monitoring arrangements.
- Clarified that filtering and monitoring effectiveness is reviewed at least once every academic year, with appropriate involvement from senior leaders, the DSL and IT.
- New guidance concerning mobile phones and safeguarding.
- New guidance on responding to incidents involving nude, semi-nude or indecent images and the safe handling of electronic devices containing such content.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Sexual Violence

- Updated guidance reflecting the strengthened KCSIE 2026 approach to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Greater recognition of harmful sexual behaviour as existing on a continuum and requiring an appropriate safeguarding response.
- Strengthened guidance regarding consent and responding to incidents.
- Reinforced the need to consider the safeguarding needs of both the victim and the child alleged to have displayed harmful behaviour.
- Strengthened expectations regarding early intervention and preventing harmful behaviour from escalating.

Professional Practice

- Strengthened expectations regarding professional boundaries between staff and pupils.
- Clearer guidance on avoiding favouritism and maintaining professional relationships.
- Expanded safer working practice expectations.
- Strengthened guidance on low-level concerns and allegations against staff.
- New guidance regarding attachment, dependency and maintaining healthy professional relationships with pupils.
- Updated expectations concerning reasonable force and restrictive intervention, including consideration of safeguarding implications.

Information Sharing and Record Keeping

- Clarified parental consent arrangements.
- Strengthened guidance regarding lawful, proportionate and timely information sharing.
- Reinforced that data protection legislation does not prevent appropriate safeguarding information sharing.
- Updated recording and safeguarding decision-making expectations.
- New guidance regarding the secure and timely transfer of child protection records when pupils move to another education setting.
- Strengthened expectations regarding access to safeguarding information where DSL responsibilities are covered by another appropriately trained person.

Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass

- Updated guidance concerning domestic abuse and its impact on children.
- Updated arrangements relating to Operation Encompass and the School's response to information received concerning children affected by domestic abuse.
- Strengthened expectations regarding appropriate support and safeguarding responses following notification.

Trips, Visits and Off-Site Activities

- New guidance confirming that safeguarding arrangements may change following dynamic risk assessments.
- Staff must follow current safeguarding instructions and must not rely on previous permissions or previous practice.
- Clarification that each off-site activity is risk assessed individually.
- Strengthened safeguarding expectations where pupils attend alternative provision, work experience or other off-site education.

Continuous Improvement

Strengthened arrangements for:

- safeguarding audits;
- reflective practice;
- governance oversight;
- learning from safeguarding practice reviews;
- inspection findings;
- annual review of filtering and monitoring effectiveness; and
- continuous policy development.

Staff should be particularly aware of the following expectations:

- All staff must read Part One of KCSIE 2026 in full.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, but safeguarding decisions remain the responsibility of the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Staff must recognise that abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding harms may overlap.
- Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that could reasonably be perceived as favouritism.
- Safeguarding decisions may change at any time following new information or dynamic risk assessments.
- Previous permissions or arrangements must not be assumed to apply to future activities.
- New and emerging technology, including generative Artificial Intelligence, deepfakes and AI-generated imagery, presents safeguarding risks which staff must recognise and report.
- Staff must not search, copy, forward or delete nude, semi-nude or indecent images on a child's device and must report concerns immediately to the DSL.
- Child-on-child abuse, harassment and violence must never be dismissed as "banter", "just having a laugh" or an inevitable part of growing up.

- Children displaying harmful behaviour may also have safeguarding needs which must be considered.
- Mental health concerns, self-harm or suicidal ideation may indicate an underlying safeguarding concern and must be responded to appropriately.
- Professional curiosity, early intervention, Family Help and effective partnership working remain central to safeguarding practice.
- Information must be shared appropriately where necessary to safeguard a child; concerns about data protection should not prevent appropriate safeguarding action.

This summary highlights the principal changes made since the April 2026 version of the policy and incorporates the key changes arising from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. It should be read alongside the full Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which remains the authoritative document.

Table of Changes for September 2026

Area	KCSIE 2026 change / key expectation
Part One for all staff	The former condensed Annex A has been removed. All staff are expected to read Part One in full.
Early Help / Family Help	Terminology and processes have been updated to distinguish universal services and community-based Early Help from the targeted early help level of Family Help and statutory intervention.
Abuse, neglect and exploitation	Greater emphasis is placed on overlapping safeguarding harms, professional curiosity and recognising exploitation alongside abuse and neglect.
Modern slavery	Modern slavery is expressly identified within safeguarding indicators and is linked particularly to child criminal and sexual exploitation.
Child-on-child abuse	Strengthened throughout and now described as “Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)”. It is explicitly recognised as a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator and as something that can be prevented through early intervention.
Misogyny and misandry	KCSIE strengthens references to misogyny and recognises abusive, harassing, misogynistic and misandrist behaviour, including online behaviour.
Nudes and semi-nudes / AI	Terminology has been updated to “making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes”. This includes images altered or generated using AI, including deepfakes/deep nudes. All incidents require an appropriate safeguarding response.
CCE/CSE	Guidance is strengthened around organised networks, gangs, coercion, modern slavery and the risk of children being criminalised for behaviour occurring as part of their exploitation.
Mental health and suicide risk	Significantly expanded guidance on recognising mental-health-related safeguarding concerns, including self-harm, suicidal ideation and risk of suicide.
Serious violence	Strengthened expectations around identifying serious violence, weapons, peer conflict, risk assessment, safety planning and early evidence-based intervention.
Sport	A new safeguarding section addresses sport, including safeguarding, welfare, dignity, inclusion and relevant equality considerations.
School premises	New guidance addresses safeguarding requirements relating to school premises and their use.
DSL cover	Schools should have robust arrangements to ensure appropriate DSL/deputy cover and access to safeguarding information when the DSL is unavailable.
Information sharing	Considerably expanded guidance reinforces proportionate and timely safeguarding information sharing, including consideration of risk.
Generative AI	New guidance addresses the safe and effective use of generative AI in education and associated safeguarding considerations.
Mobile phones	KCSIE includes a new section on school mobile-phone policy and

	expectations.
Filtering and monitoring	Effectiveness must be reviewed at least once every academic year, with appropriate SLT, DSL and IT involvement; checks should cover internet-connected devices in relevant locations and be recorded.
Reasonable force / restrictive intervention	Updated to reflect current guidance concerning restrictive intervention and safeguarding.
Alternative provision	Strengthened safeguarding expectations where children attend alternative provision.
Young carers	A new section identifies young carers and their particular safeguarding and support needs.
SEND	Additional barriers to recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns affecting children with SEND are highlighted.
Medical conditions	A new section addresses safeguarding children with medical conditions.
LGB and gender-questioning children	Guidance has been substantially updated concerning safeguarding and support for children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their gender.
Safer recruitment / regulated activity	The Crime and Policing Act 2026 removes the supervision exemption from regulated activity. KCSIE consequently changes the position for volunteers and associated DBS arrangements.
Volunteers	The safer recruitment provisions for volunteers have been rewritten, including DBS requirements and regulated activity.
Trainee teachers and third parties	Safeguarding responsibilities concerning trainee teachers, supply staff and contracted staff are strengthened, including the shared responsibilities of schools and third-party organisations.
Harmful sexual behaviour / sexual violence	Part Five has been substantially rewritten to emphasise the continuum from harmful sexual behaviour through to sexual violence, alongside strengthened guidance on consent and responding to incidents.
Operation Encompass	Guidance has been updated, including expectations around responding to information concerning children affected by domestic abuse.
Temporary accommodation	New information addresses the temporary accommodation notification duty.
Child protection records	Information-sharing and DSL responsibilities are strengthened, including timely and secure transfer of safeguarding information when children move settings.

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1. Introduction

Orange Tree School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child and young person. We believe that all children have the right to learn, develop and achieve in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where they are protected from harm and where their voices are heard, respected and valued.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding and promoting their welfare. At Orange Tree School, safeguarding is central to our ethos, our culture and every aspect of school life.

The school adopts a child-centred, whole-family approach to safeguarding. While the welfare of the child remains paramount, staff recognise that understanding the strengths, needs, relationships and circumstances of parents, carers and wider family networks can help identify risk, build resilience and improve outcomes for children.

The school recognises that children can only achieve their best outcomes when they feel safe, secure and supported. We are committed to creating an environment where children feel able to talk about their worries, know that they will be listened to and are confident that appropriate action will be taken to protect them.

Orange Tree School recognises that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect or exploitation due to their individual circumstances or experiences. This includes, but is not limited to, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), children with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), children who are looked after or previously looked after, children living in kinship care arrangements, young carers, children missing education, and those experiencing mental ill health, domestic abuse, exploitation or other forms of adversity.

The school recognises that safeguarding responsibilities may begin before birth. Where concerns arise during pregnancy, practitioners should consider the need for timely help, support and protection for the unborn child and family and should share concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

This policy applies to all children regardless of their living arrangements or legal status, including children living with birth parents, extended family members, kinship carers, adoptive families, foster carers or in residential care.

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents, carers, local safeguarding partners and other agencies to promote the welfare of children and to ensure that concerns are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity. We recognise the importance of providing timely support through Early Help and Family Help and of working collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and families.

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including the Advisory Board, employees, agency staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, students on placement and anyone working on behalf of the school.

This policy should be read alongside the Staff Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and all other safeguarding-related procedures adopted by the school.

2. Statement of Intent

Orange Tree School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. The school recognises that effective safeguarding is fundamental to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to learn, develop and achieve within a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment.

The welfare of the child is paramount. All decisions made by the school will place the best interests of the child at the centre of safeguarding practice and will be informed by the views, wishes and feelings of the child wherever possible.

The school is committed to creating and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture in which:

- children feel safe, valued and respected;
- children know who they can talk to if they are worried or need help;
- staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- concerns are recognised early and acted upon promptly;
- safeguarding practice is child-centred, collaborative and evidence-informed;
- staff are supported through regular safeguarding training and supervision; and
- leaders and governors provide effective oversight and challenge to ensure safeguarding arrangements remain robust.

Orange Tree School recognises that safeguarding is broader than child protection. It includes promoting children's physical and mental health, protecting them from abuse, neglect and exploitation, preventing impairment of their health or development, ensuring they grow up with safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The school is committed to working openly and constructively with parents, carers and families wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. We recognise that positive partnerships with families are central to improving outcomes for children and that providing support at the earliest opportunity can prevent concerns from escalating.

The school will work collaboratively with local safeguarding partners, children's social care, health professionals, the police, education providers and other relevant agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare. We recognise our statutory responsibilities to contribute to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and to share information lawfully and appropriately where it is necessary to protect children.

Orange Tree School is committed to equality of opportunity and recognises that some children may face additional barriers or vulnerabilities. Safeguarding arrangements will be responsive to the individual needs of each child and will take account of factors including age, disability, special educational needs, communication needs, culture, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexual orientation and family circumstances.

Orange Tree School is committed to maintaining an anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture. Staff are expected to recognise, challenge and respond appropriately to racism, discrimination, prejudice and bias, understanding that these may increase children's vulnerability, influence their experiences and affect access to support. Safeguarding practice will actively consider equality, diversity and disproportionality to help ensure that all children receive safeguarding support that is fair, equitable, timely and responsive to their individual needs.

The school will maintain clear safeguarding procedures, ensure that concerns are recorded accurately and acted upon without delay, and regularly review safeguarding practice to promote continuous improvement.

Safeguarding arrangements will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local safeguarding procedures.

3. Safeguarding Team

Orange Tree Oakleigh Park

The DSL is Hayley Hunter. In the absence of the DSL, child protection matters will be dealt with by the most senior deputy DSLs who is Lucy Price. In the absence of both Hayley and Lucy, matters will be dealt with by one of the other deputy DSLs: Evie Waldren and Jake Beeson. Other trained DSLs who you can speak to are Zoe Ramshaw (headteacher) and Helen Carmel. All DSLs can be contacted by emailing dsl@orangetreeschool.org.

OTS Ridgeway

The DSL is Barbara Maleki. In the absence of the DSL, child protection matters will be dealt with by the deputy DSL Sanchia Simon. In the absence of either, please speak to the headteacher Zoe Ramshaw.

The school staff work closely with the Ellern Mede hospital safeguarding team, and all students are inpatients at the hospital. The school is located on the hospital grounds.

Ellern Mede Hospital Safeguarding team

EM Hospital Safeguarding Team (for any historical, family, clinically related, or concerns raised about inpatient care / treatment):

1. EMR-safeguarding@ellernmede.org

Hospital GROUP DSLs are:

1. Fiza Raza (Social Work Department Lead & Safeguarding Lead)
2. Janice Coleman (Clinical Services Manager)
3. Nancy Maicoo (Operations Director)
4. Dr Hind Al-khairula (Medical Director)

Serious concerns involving any DSLs or site managers need to go to SMT. EMGSMT@ellernmede.org or LA / CQC (below)

Hospital Manager – Nancy Maicoo –

Safety Lead – Fiza Raza

Peter Curtis (proprietor)– Tel 0208-957774

Barnet LADO - Rob Wratten

MASH LADO –is the first point of call

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 020 8359 4066. The MASH team are available Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.15pm and Friday 9am to 5pm.

Outside these hours you should report any concerns that need an immediate response to our emergency duty team on 020 8359 2000

4. Acronyms

This policy contains a number of acronyms used in the Education sector. These acronyms are listed below alongside their descriptions.

Acronym	Long form	Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence	Computer systems and software that are able to perform tasks that ordinarily require human intelligence, such as decision-making and the creation of images.
CCE	Child criminal exploitation	A form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
MASH	Multi agency safeguarding hub	The single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns.
CSE	Child sexual exploitation	A form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage, increased status or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	The service that performs the statutory check of criminal records for anyone working or volunteering in a school.
DfE	Department for Education	The national government body with responsibility for children's services, policy and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.
DPO	Data protection officer	The appointed person in school with responsibility for overseeing data protection strategy and implementation to ensure compliance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act.
DSL	Designated safeguarding lead	A member of the senior leadership team who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the school.
EEA	European Economic Area	The Member States of the European Union (EU) and three countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; excluding Switzerland).
EHC plan	Education, health and care plan	A funded intervention plan which coordinates the educational, health and care needs for pupils who have significant needs that

		impact on their learning and access to education. The plan identifies any additional support needs or interventions and the intended impact they will have for the pupil.
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency	An agency sponsored by the Department for Education with accountability for funding education and skills training for children, young people and adults.
FGM	Female genital mutilation	All procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
UK GDPR	UK General Data Protection Regulation	Legislative provision designed to strengthen the safety and security of all data held within an organisation and ensure that procedures relating to personal data are fair and consistent.
HBA	'Honour-based' abuse	So-called 'honour-based' abuse involves crimes that have been committed to defend the honour of the family and/or community.
HMCTS	HM Courts and Tribunals Service	HM Courts and Tribunals Service is responsible for the administration of criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales. HMCTS is an executive agency, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice.
IICSA	Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse	The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse is analysing case files from the Disclosure and Barring Service to learn more about the behaviours of perpetrators who have sexually abused children in institutions, and to understand institutional responses to these behaviours.
KCSIE	Keeping children safe in education	Statutory guidance setting out schools and colleges' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
LA	Local authority	A local government agency responsible for the provision of a range of services in a specified local area, including education.
LAC	Looked-after children	Children who have been placed in local authority care or where children's services have looked after children for more than a period of 24 hours.

5. Definitions

LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer plus	Term relating to a community of people, protected by the Equality Act 2010, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or other protected sexual or gender identities.
NPCC	The National Police Chiefs' Council	The National Police Chiefs' Council is a national coordination body for law enforcement in the United Kingdom and the representative body for British police chief officers.
PLAC	Previously looked-after children	Children who were previously in local authority care or were looked after by children's services for more than a period of 24 hours. PLAC are also known as care leavers.
PSHE	Personal, social and health education	A non-statutory subject in which pupils learn about themselves, other people, rights, responsibilities and relationships.
RSHE	Relationships, sex and health education	A compulsory subject from Year 7 for all pupils. Includes the teaching of sexual health, reproduction and sexuality, as well as promoting positive relationships.
SCR	Single central record	A statutory secure record of recruitment and identity checks for all permanent and temporary staff, proprietors, contractors, external coaches and instructors, and volunteers who attend the school in a non-visitor capacity.
SENCO	Special educational needs coordinator	A statutory role within all schools maintaining oversight and coordinating the implementation of the school's special educational needs policy and provision of education to pupils with special educational needs.
SLT	Senior leadership team	Staff members who have been delegated leadership responsibilities in a school.
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency	An executive agency of the DfE with responsibility for the regulation of the teaching profession.
VSH	Virtual school head	Virtual school heads are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the local authority they work for, and all children who currently have, or previously had, a social worker.

5. Definitions

The terms "children" and "child" refer to anyone under the age of 18.

For the purposes of this policy, "safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children" is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of pupils as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting pupils from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Ensuring that pupils grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all pupils to have the best outcomes.

For the purposes of this policy, “consent” is defined as having the freedom and capacity to choose to engage in sexual activity. Consent may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, and can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. A person only consents to a sexual activity if they agree by choice to that activity, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Children under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity. The age of consent is 16.

For the purposes of this policy, “sexual violence” refers to the following offences as defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with their penis, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally penetrate the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of their body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Sexual assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally cause another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

For the purposes of this policy, “sexual harassment” refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline, inside or outside of school. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a pupil’s dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and create a hostile, offensive, or sexualised environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence. Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to:

- Sexual comments, such as sexual stories, lewd comments, sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and sexualised name-calling.

- Sexual “jokes” and taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes, and displaying images of a sexual nature.
- Online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. This includes:
 - o The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
 - o Sharing unwanted explicit content.
 - o Upskirting.
 - o Sexualised online bullying.
 - o Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
 - o Sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats.

For the purposes of this policy, “upskirting” refers to the act, as identified the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, of taking a picture or video under another person’s clothing, without their knowledge or consent, with the intention of viewing that person’s genitals or buttocks, with or without clothing, to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Upskirting is a criminal offence. Anyone, including pupils and staff, of any gender can be a victim of upskirting.

For the purposes of this policy, the “consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos”, colloquially known as “sexting”, is defined as the sharing between pupils of sexually explicit content, including indecent imagery. For the purposes of this policy, “indecent imagery” is defined as an image which meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Nude or semi-nude sexual posing
- A child touching themselves in a sexual way
- Any sexual activity involving a child
- Someone hurting a child sexually
- Sexual activity that involves animals

6. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

In particular, the school has had regard to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026);
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions (DfE)
- The Children Act 1989;
- The Children Act 2004;
- The Education Act 2002;
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended);
- The Equality Act 2010;
- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
- The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015;
- The Data Protection Act 2018;
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025;
- The Prevent Duty Guidance;
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges;
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026;
- Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners; and
- local safeguarding partnership procedures.

The school recognises that safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance continue to evolve. This policy will therefore be reviewed annually and updated sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance or local safeguarding arrangements require amendments to ensure continued compliance and best practice.

All members of the school community are expected to comply with this policy and with the statutory safeguarding responsibilities applicable to their role.

7. Safeguarding Principles

Orange Tree School believes that effective safeguarding is founded upon strong relationships, professional curiosity, early intervention and a shared commitment to protecting children from harm.

Orange Tree School recognises that effective safeguarding within a specialist setting requires clear professional boundaries, consistent multi-disciplinary working and coordinated safeguarding decision-making. Whilst all staff have a responsibility to identify and report concerns, safeguarding decisions will be led by appropriately designated safeguarding professionals to ensure that children receive safe, consistent and proportionate support.

The school is committed to the following safeguarding principles:

Child-Centred Practice

Children's welfare is paramount. Safeguarding decisions will always place the child's needs, safety and best interests at the centre of professional decision-making.

The school adopts a child-centred approach within a whole-family context. While the child's welfare remains paramount, safeguarding decisions will take account of the circumstances, strengths and needs of the wider family where this supports the child's safety and wellbeing.

Children will be listened to, taken seriously and supported to express their views. Their wishes and feelings will be considered when determining appropriate safeguarding action, in accordance with their age, understanding and individual needs.

Where children experience communication, learning or emotional barriers, the School will take appropriate steps to understand and represent their wishes and feelings using the most suitable methods available.

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

Every adult working in or on behalf of the school has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All staff are expected to recognise concerns, respond appropriately and report safeguarding issues without delay in accordance with this policy.

Early Identification

The school recognises the importance of identifying concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Where children or families may benefit from additional support, the school will work with parents, carers and partner agencies to provide or access appropriate Early Help and Family Help services before concerns escalate wherever possible.

In considering the most appropriate support, the school will recognise family strengths, protective factors and wider family or community support networks that may help improve outcomes for children.

Multi-Agency Working

Safeguarding is most effective when agencies work together.

The school is committed to effective partnership working, timely information sharing and constructive professional challenge to improve outcomes for children.

Professional Curiosity

All staff are expected to demonstrate professional curiosity by asking appropriate questions, seeking clarification where information is unclear and maintaining respectful challenge where concerns remain.

Assumptions will not be made regarding a child's circumstances or level of risk.

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

Safeguarding practice will recognise and respond to the diverse experiences and needs of children.

The school will ensure that safeguarding arrangements are inclusive, equitable and responsive to individual circumstances, recognising that some children may require additional support to remain safe.

Continuous Improvement

The school will regularly review safeguarding practice through monitoring, supervision, reflective practice, audits, staff training and governance arrangements to ensure that safeguarding remains effective and reflects current statutory guidance and emerging risks.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff; governors, volunteers, contractors and visitors have an important role in protecting children from harm and promoting their welfare.

Orange Tree School recognises that effective safeguarding depends upon clear leadership, defined responsibilities, appropriate training and a culture in which concerns are identified, shared and acted upon promptly.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board has strategic responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements at Orange Tree School are effective and comply with current legislation and statutory guidance.

The Advisory Board will:

- ensure that the school fulfils its statutory safeguarding responsibilities;
- approve and review this policy at least annually;
- ensure that safeguarding remains a standing item within governance arrangements;
- receive appropriate safeguarding reports from the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead;

- ensure that safeguarding policies, procedures and training remain effective and compliant with current legislation;
- appoint an appropriate member of the leadership team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensure that adequate time, funding, training, supervision and resources are provided to enable the role to be carried out effectively;
- ensure that safer recruitment procedures are robust and consistently implemented;
- monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding through reports, audits and challenge;
- ensure that allegations against adults working with children are managed in accordance with statutory guidance; and
- promote a culture in which safeguarding is recognised as everyone's responsibility.

The Advisory Board will satisfy itself that safeguarding arrangements remain effective through regular monitoring, quality assurance and policy review.

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of safeguarding arrangements within the school.

The Headteacher will:

- promote a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school;
- ensure that safeguarding remains central to all aspects of school life;
- support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in carrying out their statutory responsibilities;
- ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding induction and regular safeguarding training;
- ensure that safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately and in accordance with statutory guidance;
- ensure that appropriate action is taken where children may be at risk of harm;
- ensure that safeguarding procedures are implemented consistently across the school;
- support staff in exercising professional curiosity and professional challenge where concerns arise;
- ensure that sufficient resources are available to support safeguarding arrangements; and
- report safeguarding matters to the Advisory Board as appropriate.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The school has appointed a senior member of staff to undertake the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety. The full responsibilities, authority and operational arrangements for the role are set out in the next section, "The Designated Safeguarding Lead".

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

The school has appointed appropriately trained Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) to provide operational support to the DSL.

Deputy DSLs will:

- support the DSL in carrying out safeguarding responsibilities;
- act in the absence of the DSL;
- receive safeguarding concerns and take appropriate action where necessary;
- contribute to safeguarding record keeping;
- support staff in managing safeguarding concerns; and
- undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Whilst activities may be delegated to Deputy DSLs, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All Staff

Every member of staff has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All staff will:

- maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' where safeguarding concerns arise;
- read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 in full;
- know the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs;
- recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- understand that safeguarding includes both children who may be at risk of harm and those who may present a risk to others;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately in accordance with this policy;
- understand that any member of staff may make a referral to Children's Social Care if a child is at risk of significant harm and must do so where necessary to protect a child.
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- contribute to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for all children;
- participate in safeguarding training and updates;
- understand their responsibilities in relation to online safety, filtering and monitoring;
- remain professionally curious where information is incomplete or concerns persist; and
- understand that safeguarding continues beyond the school environment and includes online behaviour, attendance, mental health and wider contextual safeguarding risks.

Volunteers, Agency Staff, Contractors and Visitors

All adults working with or alongside children at Orange Tree School are expected to contribute to safeguarding children.

Volunteers, agency staff, contractors and visitors will:

- comply with the school's safeguarding procedures;

- receive appropriate safeguarding information on arrival;
- know how to report safeguarding concerns;
- understand their responsibility to protect children from harm; and
- work within the expectations set out in the Staff Code of Conduct and other relevant safeguarding procedures where applicable.

The level of safeguarding induction and supervision provided will reflect the nature of the individual's role and their contact with children.

Children

Orange Tree School believes that children have an important role in helping to create and maintain a safe environment.

The school will encourage children to:

- understand how to keep themselves and others safe;
- speak to a trusted adult if they are worried or concerned;
- report bullying, harassment, abuse or unsafe behaviour;
- behave respectfully towards others;
- develop resilience, confidence and positive relationships; and
- understand how to stay safe both offline and online.

Children will be listened to and their views, wishes and feelings will be taken into account when decisions affecting them are made.

9. The Designated Safeguarding Lead

Orange Tree School recognises that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) plays a critical role in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective, child-centred and compliant with statutory guidance.

The DSL is a senior member of the leadership team with the appropriate status, authority, training and capacity to carry out the responsibilities of the role effectively.

The school will ensure that the DSL is provided with sufficient time, funding, supervision, resources and support to fulfil these responsibilities.

During term time, the school will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead or an appropriately trained Deputy DSL is always available during school hours to provide safeguarding advice and respond to concerns. Appropriate cover arrangements will be maintained whenever the DSL is unavailable.

The DSL will be supported by appropriately trained Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s). Whilst activities may be delegated, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL.

Lead Responsibility

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the school. Orange Tree School has two sites and the DSLs on each site take the lead responsibility for their sites.

This includes responsibility for:

- managing child protection and safeguarding concerns;
- promoting a strong safeguarding culture;
- supporting staff in safeguarding practice;
- ensuring compliance with statutory guidance;
- coordinating multi-agency safeguarding work;
- overseeing safeguarding records;
- leading safeguarding training and awareness; and
- providing strategic safeguarding advice to the Headteacher and Advisory Board.

Managing Safeguarding Concerns

The DSL will:

- receive reports of safeguarding concerns from staff;
- assess the level of risk presented;
- decide upon the most appropriate course of action;
- make referrals to Children's Social Care where a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm;
- consult with safeguarding partners where appropriate;
- liaise with the Police and other agencies when necessary;
- monitor children who are the subject of safeguarding concerns;
- ensure appropriate support is provided for children and families; and
- maintain oversight of safeguarding actions until concerns are resolved.

The DSL will ensure that safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly and that no unnecessary delay occurs where a child may be at risk of harm.

Safeguarding Decision-Making

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has lead responsibility for coordinating safeguarding decision-making within the school. In the absence of the DSL, this responsibility automatically goes to the next most senior member of the safeguarding team.

All staff have a responsibility to recognise, respond to and report safeguarding concerns. However, staff must not make decisions that fall within the designated responsibilities of the DSL unless specifically authorised to do so.

Safeguarding decisions led by the DSL may include:

- assessing the nature and level of risk;
- determining whether a referral to Children's Social Care or another agency is required;
- deciding when and how parents or carers should be informed;
- coordinating safety and risk-management plans;
- determining what information should be shared and with whom;
- directing the school's response following a disclosure or safeguarding incident; and
- reviewing whether existing safeguarding arrangements remain appropriate.

Staff must seek advice from the DSL where they are uncertain about the correct course of action. They must not independently depart from an agreed safeguarding plan or substitute their own safeguarding decision for that of the DSL or a DDSL leading on a case.

Nothing in this section prevents a member of staff from making a direct referral to Children's Social Care where necessary. However, wherever circumstances permit, the DSL should be informed so that safeguarding action can be coordinated effectively.

Information Sharing and Record Keeping

Effective safeguarding depends upon timely, accurate and appropriate information sharing.

Orange Tree School recognises that sharing information is an essential part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Decisions about information sharing will always place the safety and welfare of the child at the centre of professional decision-making.

Staff will have regard to the Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners and will ensure that information is shared lawfully, proportionately, accurately, timely and securely where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child.

The school will share information:

- with Children's Social Care, the Police and other safeguarding partners where necessary to protect children;
- in accordance with statutory guidance and data protection legislation;
- where there is a lawful basis to do so;
- proportionately and only with those who need to know; and
- without unnecessary delay where a child may be at risk of harm.

The school recognises that the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 do not prevent the sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard children.

Staff should never assume that consent is required to share safeguarding information where doing so may place a child at increased risk or where another lawful basis for sharing information exists.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide advice to staff where uncertainty exists regarding information sharing. However, if the DSL is unavailable and a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff must take appropriate action without delay.

Wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so, the school will work openly with parents and carers regarding safeguarding concerns. However, parental consent will not be sought where doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm or could prejudice a child protection enquiry.

Where appropriate, the school will maintain accurate records of information shared, the reasons for sharing and any decisions made.

Family Help and Early Help

Orange Tree School is committed to identifying and responding to children's needs at the earliest possible stage. We recognise that providing timely support can prevent concerns from escalating and improve outcomes for children and their families.

The school recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes providing help and support as soon as problems emerge. All staff have a responsibility to identify children who may benefit from additional support and to share concerns promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

10. Early Help and Family Help

Where appropriate, safeguarding assessments and planning will recognise family strengths, protective factors and wider support networks alongside identified risks. Building on existing strengths can improve outcomes for children while maintaining a clear focus on the child's safety and welfare.

Family help is a coordinated approach that brings together targeted early help and statutory support under section 17 to provide a seamless offer to children and families.

At Orange Tree School, family help will:

- provide consistent relationships for children and families
- be led by a designated lead practitioner
- involve a multi-disciplinary team
- be supported by a family help plan

Early Help and Family Help are voluntary, collaborative approaches that bring together services to provide coordinated support for children and families whose needs cannot be met by a single agency alone.

Staff should be alert to children who:

- display changes in behaviour, presentation or emotional wellbeing;
- have attendance or punctuality concerns;
- experience difficulties at home;
- are affected by parental mental ill health, substance misuse or domestic abuse;
- are young carers;

- have emerging mental health needs;
- may be at risk of exploitation, neglect or abuse;
- require additional support due to special educational needs or disabilities (SEND); or
- would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency.

Where concerns are identified, staff should discuss these with the DSL without delay.

The DSL will consider the most appropriate response, which may include:

- providing support within the school;
- engaging with parents or carers, where appropriate;
- coordinating an Early Help or Family Help assessment;
- making referrals to external agencies; or
- referring to Children's Social Care where statutory intervention is required.

The school recognises that the provision of Early Help or Family Help does not replace child protection procedures. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, an immediate referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

The school will work collaboratively with families and partner agencies wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so, recognising that effective partnership working is central to improving outcomes for children.

Wherever appropriate, the school will work openly with parents and carers and seek their agreement before sharing information or making referrals. However, consent will not be sought where doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm, prejudice a safeguarding enquiry or compromise a criminal investigation.

The school will follow local safeguarding partnership threshold guidance when determining whether Early Help, Family Help or statutory intervention is required.

Family Group Decision-Making (FGDM)

The school supports the use of Family Group Decision-Making where appropriate.

FGDM enables families to come together to develop and agree plans that safeguard children and promote their welfare. The school will contribute to and support these processes as part of a collaborative, child-centred approach.

Recognising Abuse and Neglect

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur in any family, community or organisation, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, culture, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

Staff should understand that safeguarding concerns rarely present as a single incident. Children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, and concerns may develop gradually over time.

Abuse may be perpetrated by:

- adults;
- other children;
- family members;
- individuals known to the child; or
- strangers, including those communicating through online platforms.

Safeguarding concerns should always be considered in the context of the child's lived experience, individual circumstances and wider environment.

Staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" and exercise professional curiosity whenever concerns arise.

Definition of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm includes ill-treatment that is not physical, including the impact on children of seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others, particularly in the context of domestic abuse.

Children may be abused by adults or by other children.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate abuse that also occurs offline.

Types of Abuse

The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

The statutory definitions contained within *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* should be applied when recognising and responding to concerns regarding these forms of abuse.

Staff should also be aware of the wider safeguarding issues identified within statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- child-on-child abuse;
- child criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;

- domestic abuse;
- serious violence;
- county lines;
- online abuse;
- technology-facilitated abuse;
- so-called honour-based abuse;
- female genital mutilation (FGM);
- forced marriage;
- radicalisation and extremism;
- mental health;
- children missing education;
- private fostering;
- modern slavery and trafficking; and
- other safeguarding concerns identified through local safeguarding arrangements.

The school recognises that safeguarding issues may overlap, and children may experience multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously. Staff should therefore consider the child's circumstances holistically and seek advice from the DSL whenever concerns arise.

The detailed procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns are set out later in this policy.

The Four Categories of Abuse

The school recognises the four categories of abuse identified within statutory guidance.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse 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

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection

and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including 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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence and regardless of whether 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 clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is 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 misuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing or 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 caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Indicators of Abuse

The school recognises that no single indicator will, in itself, confirm that a child is being abused or neglected. Equally, the absence of visible signs does not mean that abuse has not occurred.

Staff should remain alert to patterns of behaviour, changes in presentation and other indicators that may suggest a child is at risk.

Possible indicators include, but are not limited to:

- unexplained injuries or repeated injuries;
- frequent absences or poor attendance;
- sudden changes in behaviour, mood or academic performance;
- anxiety, withdrawal or low self-esteem;
- age-inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language;
- poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing or persistent hunger;
- self-harm or suicidal ideation;
- repeated missing episodes;
- signs of coercion, exploitation or controlling behaviour;
- unexplained gifts, money or possessions;
- excessive secrecy regarding online activity;
- fear of going home or of particular individuals; and
- disclosures made directly or indirectly by the child.

Staff should not attempt to investigate concerns themselves but should report all safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Abuse Can Occur Anywhere

The school recognises that abuse may occur:

- within the family;
- within the community;
- in educational settings;
- in residential settings;
- online;
- through peer relationships;
- through organised networks; or
- in any environment where a child interacts with others.

Children may experience abuse from one or multiple individuals and may be subject to more than one form of abuse at the same time.

Safeguarding assessments should therefore consider the child's individual circumstances, family context, peer relationships and wider environmental factors.

Vulnerability and Protective Factors

While any child can be a victim of abuse or neglect, some children may be particularly vulnerable due to their individual circumstances.

This includes, but is not limited to, children who:

- have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND);
- have speech, language or communication needs;
- are disabled;
- are living in kinship care arrangements;
- are looked after or previously looked after;
- are young carers;
- are experiencing mental health difficulties;
- are missing education;
- are privately fostered;
- identify as LGBTQ+ (recognising that this does not, in itself, constitute a safeguarding concern but may increase vulnerability where prejudice, discrimination or rejection is experienced);
- have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences; or
- are affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse or parental mental ill health.

Staff should avoid making assumptions about a child's circumstances and should always assess concerns on an individual basis, exercising professional curiosity and seeking advice from the DSL where appropriate.

11. Specific Safeguarding Issues

The school recognises that children may experience multiple forms of harm simultaneously, including:

- online harms
- exploitation within peer groups or communities
- group-based exploitation

Safeguarding responses will consider the full context of risk, including online environments, peer relationships and wider community factors.

Orange Tree School recognises that safeguarding extends beyond the four categories of abuse and neglect. Staff should be aware of a wide range of safeguarding issues that may place children at risk of harm.

These issues may occur individually or alongside other forms of abuse and neglect. Staff should always consider the child's individual circumstances and recognise that children may experience multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously.

The school is committed to ensuring that staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates, so they remain alert to both established and emerging safeguarding risks.

The following sections summarise the safeguarding issues that staff should be aware of in accordance with statutory guidance.

Child-on-Child Abuse

The school recognises that children can abuse other children. Child-on-child abuse is never acceptable and will not be dismissed as banter, horseplay or an inevitable part of growing up. The school's prevention, reporting, risk-assessment and support arrangements are set out in Section 12 – Child-on-Child Abuse.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity.

Children may be exploited even where the activity appears consensual.

Indicators may include:

- unexplained money or possessions;
- repeated missing episodes;
- changes in behaviour;
- association with older individuals or gangs;
- carrying weapons;
- unexplained injuries;
- increased secrecy; or
- involvement in drug-related activity.

Staff should report concerns immediately to the DSL.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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 into sexual activity.

Children may receive something they need or want, such as:

- affection;
- money;
- gifts;
- drugs;
- alcohol;
- status; or
- accommodation.

Children may also be exploited entirely online.

Staff should be alert to patterns of behaviour that may indicate exploitation and report concerns immediately.

Staff should be aware that child sexual abuse may be complex and difficult to identify. Children may not recognise that they are being abused, may be unable or unwilling to disclose what is happening, or may communicate concerns indirectly. Staff should exercise professional curiosity and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

County Lines

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation involving organised criminal networks using children and vulnerable people to transport drugs, money or weapons.

Children involved may:

- frequently go missing;
- travel unexpectedly;
- possess multiple mobile phones;
- appear fearful or withdrawn;
- carry unexplained money; or
- become involved in violence.

Any concerns will be reported immediately to the DSL.

Serious Violence

Staff should recognise indicators that may suggest children are at risk from serious violence.

These may include:

- increased absence from school;
- unexplained injuries;
- changes in friendships;
- carrying weapons;
- involvement in criminal activity;
- repeated police contact; or
- concerning changes in behaviour.

The school will work with safeguarding partners and the Police where concerns arise.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse may have a significant impact upon children, whether they experience it directly or witness its effects within the home.

Exposure to domestic abuse can affect children's:

- emotional wellbeing;
- physical health;
- behaviour;
- relationships;
- attendance; and
- educational progress.

The school recognises that domestic abuse is a safeguarding issue in its own right and will provide appropriate support for affected children.

Operation Encompass

The school will receive and respond appropriately to Operation Encompass notifications concerning children who may be affected by domestic abuse. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that information received is handled securely and confidentially, considered alongside existing safeguarding information and used to identify any immediate support or safeguarding action required.

Operation Encompass notifications do not replace the school's normal safeguarding procedures or the need to make a referral to Children's Social Care where the relevant threshold is met.

Homelessness

The school recognises that homelessness may place children at increased risk of harm.

Staff should be alert to housing instability and work with the DSL to ensure appropriate support is provided through Early Help, Family Help or Children's Social Care where necessary.

Mental Health

The school recognises that mental health concerns may, in some cases, become safeguarding concerns.

All staff should be aware that persistent changes in behaviour, mood or emotional wellbeing may indicate that a child requires additional support.

Mental health concerns do not automatically indicate abuse or neglect; however, they may:

- be a response to abuse;
- increase vulnerability to harm; or
- indicate that further safeguarding assessment is required.

Where concerns arise, staff should discuss them promptly with the DSL.

The school will work with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure children receive appropriate support.

Children with Medical Conditions

Orange Tree School recognises that children with medical conditions, including complex physical health needs, eating disorders, neurodevelopmental conditions and mental health conditions, may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation and may face additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting safeguarding concerns.

Staff will remain professionally curious where a child's presentation, attendance, medical needs or treatment raises safeguarding concerns and will consider whether these may indicate abuse, neglect or wider welfare concerns.

Safeguarding concerns relating to a child's medical condition must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will work collaboratively with parents or carers, health professionals and other agencies where appropriate to ensure safeguarding and healthcare arrangements are coordinated effectively.

The school recognises that safeguarding and healthcare needs are often closely linked and that effective information sharing between professionals is essential to keeping children safe.

Working in Partnership with Health Professionals

Orange Tree School works closely with health professionals, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), inpatient services, community paediatricians and other healthcare providers where appropriate.

Effective safeguarding relies upon timely communication, lawful information sharing and coordinated multi-agency working. The school will work collaboratively with health professionals to promote the safety and welfare of pupils whilst recognising that safeguarding decisions remain the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the School.

Where pupils receive care from multiple agencies, the school will contribute appropriately to safeguarding assessments, planning meetings and reviews to ensure that educational, medical and safeguarding needs are considered together.

Use of School Premises by External Organisations

Where external organisations hire or use the school's premises to provide activities for children, Orange Tree School will seek appropriate assurance that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Where activities are delivered under the direct supervision and management of Orange Tree School staff, this policy will apply.

Where activities are delivered independently by another organisation, the school will seek assurance that appropriate safeguarding policies, safer recruitment procedures, staff training and child protection arrangements are in place before permitting use of the premises.

The school will take reasonable steps to satisfy itself that safeguarding arrangements remain appropriate throughout the period of use.

Alternative Provision

Orange Tree does not currently use alternative provisions. However, where a pupil attends alternative provision, Orange Tree School will retain overall responsibility for the pupil's safeguarding and welfare.

Before a placement begins, the school will seek written assurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements, safer recruitment checks and child protection procedures are in place.

The school will maintain appropriate oversight of the placement, communicate regularly with the provider where necessary and satisfy itself that the placement continues to meet the pupil's educational, welfare and safeguarding needs.

Any safeguarding concerns arising during an alternative provision placement will be managed in accordance with this policy.

Work Experience

Orange Tree School recognises that safeguarding responsibilities continue throughout work experience placements.

Before a placement begins, the school will undertake a suitable assessment of the placement provider to ensure that appropriate safeguarding and health and safety arrangements are in place. This will include consideration of the nature of the placement, the level of supervision, whether the placement involves regulated activity and any identified safeguarding risks.

The school will ensure that pupils, parents or carers and placement providers understand safeguarding expectations, including how safeguarding concerns should be reported.

During the placement, the school will maintain appropriate contact with the pupil and placement provider and will respond promptly to any safeguarding concerns that arise.

Online Abuse and Technology-Facilitated Abuse

The school recognises that technology presents significant opportunities for learning, communication and development. However, it also creates safeguarding risks which may occur both within and beyond the school environment.

Abuse may occur wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate abuse that also occurs offline.

Technology-facilitated abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- online grooming;
- cyberbullying;
- coercive or controlling behaviour through digital platforms;
- online sexual abuse;
- image-based abuse;
- the creation or sharing of indecent images;
- sextortion;
- doxing;
- impersonation;
- harassment through social media or messaging applications; and
- abuse involving artificial intelligence or manipulated digital content.

Staff should recognise that online abuse can have significant emotional, psychological and physical consequences and should be responded to in the same way as abuse occurring offline.

Where technology is used to support learning, the school will ensure that pupils and parents understand expectations for safe online learning and the platforms used by the school.

Any concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emerging Technology

The school recognises that rapidly developing technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), present new safeguarding opportunities and risks.

Emerging technologies may be used positively to support education and learning; however, they may also be misused to facilitate abuse, exploitation, bullying, harassment or criminal activity.

Potential safeguarding concerns include:

- AI-generated indecent or sexually explicit images;
- deepfake images, audio and video;
- identity impersonation;
- AI-assisted grooming;
- technology-facilitated coercion;
- misinformation and manipulated content;
- exploitation through automated online communication; and
- the use of AI to generate abusive, threatening or discriminatory material.

Staff should remain alert to emerging technological risks and seek advice from the DSL where concerns arise.

The school will regularly review safeguarding procedures, filtering and monitoring arrangements, staff training and curriculum provision to ensure that safeguarding practice reflects developments in technology.

Radicalisation and Extremism (Prevent Duty)

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty.

Protecting children from radicalisation forms part of the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including:

- democracy;
- the rule of law;
- individual liberty; and
- mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Staff should be alert to indicators that a child may be vulnerable to radicalisation, recognising that there is no single profile of a child at risk.

Concerns should be reported immediately to the DSL, who will consider appropriate safeguarding action, including referral through Prevent processes where necessary.

So-Called Honour-Based Abuse

So-called honour-based abuse encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family or community.

It may include:

- forced marriage;
- female genital mutilation (FGM);
- assault;
- threats;
- coercive control;
- emotional abuse; or
- murder.

The school recognises that so-called honour-based abuse is a serious safeguarding issue and will respond immediately to concerns.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation is illegal and constitutes child abuse.

Staff should be alert to indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM or may already have undergone the procedure.

Teachers have a statutory duty to report known cases of FGM in girls under the age of 18 directly to the Police, in accordance with current legislation.

All safeguarding concerns relating to FGM should also be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage.

In a forced marriage, one or both individuals do not consent, and pressure or abuse is used to secure the marriage.

Pressure may include:

- physical violence;
- emotional abuse;
- threats;
- coercion;
- financial control; or
- sexual violence.

Forced marriage is a safeguarding issue and should always be referred to the DSL immediately.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery and human trafficking involve the recruitment, movement or exploitation of individuals through coercion, deception or abuse of vulnerability.

Children may be exploited for:

- criminal activity;
- sexual exploitation;
- domestic servitude;
- forced labour;
- financial exploitation; or
- other forms of abuse.

Staff should report any concerns immediately.

Children Missing Education (CME), Attendance and Safeguarding

The school recognises that children missing education are at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, forced marriage, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.

Children who are absent from education

Orange Tree School recognises that children who are absent from education, particularly those with repeated, prolonged or unexplained absence, may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines involvement, domestic abuse, forced marriage, radicalisation or other safeguarding concerns. Attendance concerns will therefore always be considered within the context of safeguarding as well as education.

Staff must remain professionally curious where patterns of absence emerge or attendance changes unexpectedly, considering whether these may indicate an underlying safeguarding concern rather than viewing attendance solely as a behavioural or educational issue. Any safeguarding concerns identified through attendance monitoring will be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL will consider attendance information alongside any existing safeguarding records, known vulnerabilities and information from partner agencies when assessing risk. Where attendance concerns indicate that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where safeguarding concerns persist despite interventions to improve attendance, the School will consider whether a referral to Family Help, Children's Social Care or other appropriate agencies is required, in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

Where a pupil's absence is unexplained and staff have been unable to establish that the child is safe, the school will take timely and proportionate action to establish the child's welfare. This may include telephone contact, contact with parents or carers, liaison with other professionals, a welfare visit where appropriate, or referral to Children's Social Care or the Police if there are immediate safeguarding concerns.

Attendance concerns should always be considered as potential safeguarding concerns.

The school will:

- monitor attendance carefully;
- investigate unexplained absences promptly;
- work with parents and carers wherever appropriate;
- notify the Local Authority where required by legislation; and
- follow statutory guidance relating to children missing education.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement occurs when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not a parent, close relative or person with parental responsibility for a period of 28 days or more.

The school has a statutory duty to notify the Local Authority where it becomes aware of, or suspects, that a child is being privately fostered.

Concerns should be referred immediately to the DSL.

Contextual Safeguarding

The school recognises that safeguarding risks may arise outside the family home.

Children may experience abuse within:

- peer groups;
- neighbourhoods;
- public spaces;
- transport;
- online environments; or
- community settings.

Safeguarding assessments will therefore consider the wider contexts in which children live, learn and socialise.

The school will work collaboratively with safeguarding partners to reduce contextual risks and improve outcomes for children.

Children with Additional Vulnerabilities

The school recognises that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect or exploitation and may face additional barriers to recognising abuse or seeking help.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- children with SEND;
- disabled children;
- looked after and previously looked after children;
- children living in kinship care arrangements;
- young carers;
- children experiencing mental health difficulties;
- children living with domestic abuse;
- children affected by parental substance misuse;
- children experiencing family breakdown;
- children from military families;
- children with speech, language and communication needs; and
- children who are persistently absent from education.

Staff should avoid assumptions and ensure safeguarding responses are tailored to the individual needs and circumstances of each child.

Professional Curiosity

All staff are expected to exercise professional curiosity when safeguarding concerns arise.

Professional curiosity means:

- asking appropriate questions;
- exploring inconsistencies;
- considering the child's lived experience;
- seeking clarification where information is incomplete;
- respectfully challenging where necessary; and
- maintaining a child-centred approach at all times.

Professional curiosity is an essential component of effective safeguarding practice and supports the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Online Safety

Orange Tree School recognises that technology is an integral part of children's everyday lives and learning. While digital technologies provide significant educational and social benefits, they also present safeguarding risks that require effective management.

Online safety is a safeguarding issue and should be approached as part of the school's wider child protection responsibilities. Children may experience abuse online, offline or through a combination of both.

The school is committed to creating a culture in which children are supported to use technology safely, responsibly and respectfully, while ensuring that robust systems are in place to reduce risk and respond effectively to safeguarding concerns.

Where technology is used to support learning, the school will ensure that pupils and parents understand expectations for safe online learning and the platforms used by the school.

The school operates a mobile-phone-free environment in accordance with the Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Devices Policy.

Whole-School Approach

The school adopts a whole-school approach to online safety which includes:

- clear leadership and governance;
- age-appropriate education for pupils;
- effective staff training;
- engagement with parents and carers;
- appropriate policies and procedures;
- effective filtering and monitoring systems;
- secure IT infrastructure; and

- regular review of emerging online risks.

Online safety will be considered within all safeguarding arrangements and will not be treated as a separate issue.

Curriculum

Children will be taught how to stay safe online through an age-appropriate curriculum.

This will include education about:

- safe and respectful online behaviour;
- protecting personal information;
- privacy settings and digital footprints;
- recognising online risks;
- healthy online relationships;
- cyberbullying;
- online grooming;
- misinformation and disinformation;
- scams and fraud;
- image-based abuse;
- the responsible use of artificial intelligence;
- consent in online environments; and
- how and where to seek help if they are worried about something they experience online.

The curriculum will be regularly reviewed to reflect technological developments and emerging safeguarding risks.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote online safety and to remain vigilant to indicators that a child may be at risk online.

Staff will:

- model safe and professional use of technology;
- report online safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL;
- reinforce online safety messages through teaching and daily interactions;
- understand the risks associated with social media and emerging technologies;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries online;
- complete regular online safety training; and
- understand the School's acceptable use expectations.

Staff should recognise that safeguarding concerns occurring online should be responded to with the same seriousness as concerns occurring offline.

Children Requiring Additional Safeguarding Consideration / Equality

Safeguarding and Sport

The School recognises that safeguarding, safety, dignity, inclusion and fairness must be considered when organising physical education, sport and competitive activities. Where activities are organised by sex for reasons of safety or fairness, arrangements will be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and current Department for Education guidance.

Where a pupil requests an individual adjustment to participation, the School will consider the pupil's needs, wishes and wellbeing alongside safeguarding, safety, fairness and the impact on other pupils. Decisions will be made on an individual basis and recorded where appropriate

12. Filtering and Monitoring

The school recognises that filtering and monitoring systems are an important component of safeguarding arrangements.

Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems will be implemented to reduce children's exposure to harmful content while supporting effective teaching and learning. The school currently uses the Securus filtering and monitoring system.

The school will ensure that:

- filtering systems are appropriate to the age and needs of pupils;
- monitoring arrangements are proportionate and risk-based;
- safeguarding concerns identified through monitoring are reviewed promptly;
- leaders understand the effectiveness and limitations of filtering and monitoring systems;
- governors receive appropriate assurance regarding online safeguarding arrangements; and
- filtering and monitoring systems are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective.

The school recognises that filtering and monitoring systems reduce, but do not eliminate, safeguarding risks and must be supported by effective education, supervision and staff vigilance. Filtering and monitoring systems support safeguarding but do not replace effective staff supervision, professional curiosity or appropriate safeguarding judgement.

An annual review of filtering and monitoring arrangements will be undertaken by the DSL, Business Manager and IT support provider. The review will include checks on internet-connected devices used across the school, and a written record of the review and checks undertaken will be retained.

Mobile and Smart Technology

The use of mobile phones, tablets, wearable technology and other internet-enabled devices presents both opportunities and safeguarding risks.

The school will implement appropriate procedures regarding the use of personal devices by pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors.

Any misuse of technology that places a child at risk of harm will be managed as a safeguarding concern.

Social Media

The school recognises that social media platforms are widely used by children and may present safeguarding risks.

Staff should remain alert to concerns including:

- cyberbullying;
- online grooming;
- exploitation;
- harassment;
- coercive control;
- sharing of indecent images;
- exposure to harmful or illegal content;
- radicalisation; and
- contact with unknown individuals.

Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and should not communicate with pupils through personal social media accounts.

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

Artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly accessible to children and young people.

The school recognises that AI may:

- support learning and creativity;
- generate inaccurate or misleading information;
- facilitate plagiarism;
- create manipulated images, audio or video;
- increase opportunities for online exploitation;
- support identity impersonation; or
- be used to facilitate bullying, harassment or abuse.

Children will be supported to understand both the opportunities and risks associated with AI and other emerging technologies.

Staff will receive appropriate guidance to ensure safeguarding practice keeps pace with technological developments.

Working with Parents and Carers

The school recognises that parents and carers play a vital role in promoting online safety.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- provide information and guidance to families;
- signpost reputable online safety resources;
- communicate emerging online risks;
- encourage positive home-school partnerships; and
- support parents in helping children develop safe online behaviours.

Responding to Online Safety Concerns

Online safety concerns should always be treated as safeguarding concerns where there is a risk of harm to a child.

Staff must:

- listen carefully to the child;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- preserve evidence where appropriate;
- avoid conducting their own investigations;
- report concerns immediately to the DSL; and
- follow this policy and any associated procedures.

The DSL will determine the most appropriate safeguarding response, including referrals to external agencies where necessary.

Filtering and monitoring systems support safeguarding but do not replace effective staff supervision, professional curiosity or appropriate safeguarding judgement.

Devices Containing Nude, Semi-Nude or Indecent Images

Where a member of staff believes that a pupil's electronic device contains nude, semi-nude or indecent images or videos, they must not search, copy, print, forward, share or delete the content unless specifically directed to do so by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Police.

Where possible, the device should be secured to prevent further access to, or sharing of, the content and the matter reported immediately to the DSL.

If a member of staff inadvertently views an image, they must report this immediately to the DSL so that appropriate safeguarding advice and support can be provided. A record of the circumstances will be made, and the member of staff will be supported in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The school will respond to incidents involving nude, semi-nude or indecent images in accordance with current statutory guidance and UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance. Where appropriate, the school will work with Children's Social Care, the Police and other relevant agencies to safeguard the children involved.

Review and Continuous Improvement

The school will regularly review online safety arrangements to ensure they remain effective and reflect:

- statutory guidance;
- technological developments;
- emerging safeguarding risks;
- local safeguarding priorities;
- lessons learned from safeguarding incidents; and
- feedback from pupils, parents, carers and staff.

The school is committed to maintaining an online safety culture that promotes resilience, responsible digital citizenship and the safeguarding of all children.

The school will review its online safety arrangements, filtering and monitoring systems and associated risk assessments at least annually, or sooner where emerging risks, technological developments or safeguarding incidents require an earlier review.

13. Child-on-Child Abuse

Orange Tree School recognises that children are capable of abusing other children and that such abuse can have serious and lasting consequences for everyone involved. The absence of reported incidents should never be interpreted as evidence that child-on-child abuse is not occurring. Staff should remain professionally curious and alert to indicators of abuse at all times.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. It will never be dismissed as:

- banter;
- part of growing up;
- harmless fun;
- horseplay;
- boys being boys; or
- an inevitable part of childhood.

All concerns, allegations and disclosures will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and managed promptly in accordance with statutory guidance and this policy.

The school will adopt a child-centred approach, ensuring that the welfare of all children involved remains paramount.

Definition

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional or online abuse that occurs between children.

It can occur both inside and outside school, including online, and may involve a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Children of any age or gender may be affected.

Child-on-child abuse may occur where there is an imbalance of power between children arising from age, size, strength, social status, vulnerability, disability, special educational needs or other factors. Staff should remain alert to these dynamics when assessing risk and responding to concerns.

Forms of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying;
- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual violence;
- sexual harassment;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos;
- upskirting;
- initiation or hazing-type violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children;
- coercive and controlling behaviour;
- stalking;
- image-based abuse;
- gender-based harm, including misogyny, misandry and harmful gender-based attitudes or behaviours;
- technology-facilitated abuse; and
- behaviour motivated by discrimination or prejudice.

The school recognises that child-on-child abuse can occur between pupils of the same age or different ages and may involve children of any sex or gender.

Preventing Child-on-Child Abuse

The school is committed to preventing child-on-child abuse through:

- promoting a culture of respect, kindness and inclusion;
- maintaining high expectations of behaviour;
- providing age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education (RSHE);
- teaching online safety;
- effective staff supervision;
- clear behaviour expectations;
- staff training;
- pupil education;

- encouraging children to report concerns; and
- responding promptly to inappropriate behaviour before it escalates.

Children will be encouraged to understand:

- consent;
- healthy relationships;
- respectful communication;
- personal boundaries;
- equality;
- diversity;
- online safety; and
- how to seek help.

Responding to Concerns

Any member of staff who becomes aware of child-on-child abuse must:

- listen carefully to the child;
- take all concerns seriously;
- avoid making assumptions;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- make an accurate record of the concern;
- report the concern immediately to the DSL; and
- avoid investigating the matter themselves.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess each concern individually, taking account of:

- the age and developmental stage of the children involved;
- the nature of the behaviour;
- any power imbalance;
- whether the behaviour was planned or repeated;
- the wishes and feelings of those involved;
- previous concerns;
- the level of risk; and
- whether external agencies should be involved.

Supporting the Victim

The school recognises that the needs of the child who has experienced abuse must remain central to safeguarding decision-making.

Support may include:

- providing a trusted adult;
- emotional support;
- counselling or therapeutic intervention where appropriate;

- safety planning;
- adjustments within school;
- ongoing welfare monitoring;
- support for attendance and learning; and
- liaison with parents or carers where appropriate.

Children will never be made to feel responsible for the abuse they have experienced.

Responding to the Child Displaying Harmful Behaviour

The school recognises that children who display harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced abuse, neglect, trauma or exploitation.

A safeguarding response will therefore consider:

- the child's welfare;
- any underlying safeguarding concerns;
- educational needs;
- behavioural support;
- risk to others; and
- whether specialist assessment or intervention is required.

Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken where necessary; however, disciplinary procedures do not replace safeguarding procedures.

Risk Assessment

Where appropriate, the DSL will coordinate a risk assessment.

The risk assessment may consider:

- immediate safety;
- supervision arrangements;
- timetabling;
- transport;
- social times;
- online contact;
- classroom arrangements;
- extracurricular activities;
- ongoing risk; and
- review arrangements.

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and amended where circumstances change.

Recording and Information Sharing

All child-on-child abuse concerns will be:

- recorded accurately;
- managed confidentially;
- reviewed by the DSL;
- shared appropriately with relevant professionals; and
- retained in accordance with safeguarding record-keeping procedures.

Information will be shared only with those who need to know in order to safeguard children.

Multi-Agency Working

Where appropriate, the school will work with:

- Children's Social Care;
- the Police;
- health professionals;
- local safeguarding partners;
- specialist services; and
- other education providers.

The school recognises that effective multi-agency working is essential in protecting children and reducing future risk.

Monitoring and Review

Following any incident of child-on-child abuse, the school will review:

- the effectiveness of the safeguarding response;
- support provided to all children involved;
- whether additional interventions are required;
- any lessons learned; and
- whether safeguarding policies, curriculum or procedures require amendment.

The school is committed to learning from safeguarding incidents in order to strengthen safeguarding practice and promote a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

14. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Orange Tree School expects all staff to act immediately if they have any concern about the welfare of a child.

No member of staff should assume that another person has taken action or delay reporting concerns whilst seeking further information.

Safeguarding concerns should always be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible on the same working day.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child, staff must take action without delay, including contacting Children's Social Care or the Police if necessary.

The welfare of the child is always paramount.

How will OTS manage allegations of Child-on-Child abuse?

If the incident/allegation involves harmful sexual behaviours the safeguarding team will:

- Reassure the victim, ensuring that they feel safe in school
- Offer the student support through, onsite counselling, SEMH support or a referral to Early help/BICS or other relevant agencies
- Assess whether a MASH or Police referral is required
- Complete or update a risk assessment
- Where appropriate, sanction the perpetrator in line with the behaviour, relationship and anti-bullying policy
- Refer the perpetrator for support through early help, safer schools' team or MASH

Staff will follow these procedures, as well as the procedures outlined in the school's Anti-bullying Policy and the behaviour and relationship policy where relevant.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled. This includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. Pupils will also be reassured that they will be taken seriously, be supported, and kept safe. Pupils can speak with their form tutor, key teacher (Ridgeway) another trusted adult or a DSL.

Communication with Parents and Carers

The school aims to work openly and constructively with parents and carers wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

However, staff must not independently inform a parent or carer about a safeguarding concern, disclosure, referral or planned safeguarding action unless they have been specifically directed to do so by the DSL, DDSL or Headteacher.

Before parents or carers are contacted, the DSL will consider:

- the nature and seriousness of the concern;
- the wishes and feelings of the child;
- whether informing the parent or carer could increase risk;
- whether a parent or carer may be implicated in the concern;
- whether contact could compromise a referral, assessment or investigation;

- advice received from Children's Social Care, the police or another agency; and
- the most appropriate person, timing and method for communication.

This is particularly important where concerns involve abuse, self-harm, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, exploitation, domestic abuse or other circumstances in which unplanned communication may increase risk.

Where a member of staff is asked to communicate with a parent or carer, they must follow the DSL's direction regarding what information may be shared.

If a Child Makes a Disclosure

Children may choose to disclose abuse or neglect in a variety of ways. A disclosure may be direct, indirect, verbal, non-verbal or through changes in behaviour.

Staff should always remain calm, supportive and reassuring.

When responding to a disclosure, staff should:

- listen carefully and attentively;
- remain calm;
- take what the child says seriously;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking to someone;
- explain that the information cannot be kept secret and will need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe;
- allow the child to speak freely without interruption;
- use open prompts only where clarification is required;
- avoid asking leading or investigative questions;
- avoid expressing shock, disbelief or anger;
- make no promises that cannot be kept;
- explain what will happen next in an age-appropriate way; and
- report the concern immediately to the DSL.

Staff must never attempt to investigate allegations themselves.

Recording a Concern

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded as soon as possible after the concern arises. These are recorded on iSAMS and you must also speak to a DSL. For any concerns where marks or bruises are being recorded, a diagram of where on the body must also be filled in. This can be via a yellow form or on iSAMS.

Records should:

- be factual, accurate and contemporaneous;
- include the date, time and location;
- record the names of those present;

- clearly distinguish between fact, observation, opinion and the child's own words;
- include the exact words used by the child wherever possible;
- avoid assumptions or personal interpretation;
- For any bruises, they must be clearly described, size, location, shade.
- be signed (or submitted electronically where appropriate); and
- be passed immediately to the DSL.

Records should be completed even where the concern appears minor.

A pattern of low-level concerns may indicate that a child is at greater risk of harm.

Immediate Reporting

Safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL immediately and, wherever reasonably practicable, before the member of staff leaves the school site. A staff member should not leave the school without passing on their concerns to a DSL the same day.

Completing a written or electronic record does not replace the requirement to speak directly to a member of the safeguarding team where there is an immediate or significant concern.

Staff must not delay reporting until the following working day, assume that another person will report the concern or leave the school without ensuring that the information has been received by an appropriate safeguarding lead.

Where a concern arises during an off-site activity, outside normal School hours or when the DSL is not immediately available, staff must follow the school's escalation and emergency safeguarding procedures.

Where a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, staff must contact the emergency services without delay and inform the DSL as soon as possible.

Reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL should be informed immediately of:

- any disclosure of abuse;
- concerns about neglect;
- indicators of exploitation;
- concerns regarding online abuse;
- child-on-child abuse;
- concerns relating to mental health where safeguarding risks are identified;
- allegations involving adults;
- concerns regarding radicalisation;
- concerns relating to female genital mutilation (FGM);
- forced marriage;
- children missing education where safeguarding concerns exist; and
- any concern that causes a member of staff to believe that a child may be at risk of harm.

If the DSL is unavailable, concerns must be reported to a Deputy DSL or the headteacher.

If neither is available and a child is at immediate risk, staff must contact Children's Social Care or the Police directly and inform the DSL as soon as possible afterwards.

Staff should never delay action because the DSL cannot immediately be located.

Immediate Risk

Where a child is believed to be at immediate risk of significant harm, staff must take immediate protective action.

This may include contacting:

- Children's Social Care;
- the Police;
- emergency medical services; or
- any other appropriate emergency service.

Staff should then inform the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

The Role of the DSL Following a Concern

Following receipt of a safeguarding concern, the DSL will consider:

- the nature of the concern;
- the level of risk;
- previous safeguarding history;
- the child's wishes and feelings;
- protective factors;
- whether immediate action is required;
- whether Early Help or Family Help is appropriate;
- whether statutory intervention is required; and
- whether consultation with external agencies is necessary.

The DSL will record all decisions and the reasons for those decisions.

Referral to Children's Social Care

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL (or another appropriate member of staff where necessary) will make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care.

The school will:

- cooperate fully with statutory agencies;
- contribute to safeguarding assessments;

- attend strategy meetings where required;
- participate in child protection conferences;
- contribute to Child in Need meetings;
- support Early Help and Family Help arrangements; and
- continue to support the child throughout safeguarding processes.

If, following a referral, the school believes that a child remains at risk or their circumstances are not improving, the DSL will continue to advocate for the child, seek further advice where appropriate and follow local safeguarding partnership escalation procedures to ensure that the child's welfare remains protected.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is confidential.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to safeguard the child.

Staff should not discuss safeguarding concerns with colleagues unless there is a legitimate safeguarding reason for doing so.

Parents will normally be informed of safeguarding concerns unless doing so would:

- place the child at greater risk;
- compromise a police investigation;
- increase the likelihood of evidence being destroyed; or
- otherwise place a child or another person at risk of harm.

The decision regarding parental involvement will normally be made by the DSL in consultation with Children's Social Care where appropriate.

Supporting the Child

The school recognises that safeguarding does not end once a referral has been made.

Children will be supported throughout safeguarding processes.

Support may include:

- regular welfare checks;
- pastoral support;
- therapeutic intervention where appropriate;
- reasonable adjustments within school;
- attendance support;
- emotional wellbeing support; and
- liaison with external professionals.

Children's wishes and feelings will continue to be considered throughout safeguarding interventions.

Professional Challenge and Escalation

The school recognises that there may be occasions when staff or safeguarding professionals have differing views regarding the level of risk to a child.

Where appropriate, staff should respectfully challenge decisions where they believe a child remains at risk.

The school will follow local safeguarding partnership escalation procedures where professional disagreement cannot be resolved.

Professional challenge should always be undertaken respectfully, constructively and in the best interests of the child.

Learning from Safeguarding Practice

The school is committed to continually improving safeguarding practice.

Following significant safeguarding incidents, leaders will consider:

- whether procedures were followed appropriately;
- whether additional support should have been provided;
- whether training needs have been identified;
- whether policy amendments are required; and
- any lessons learned that could strengthen safeguarding practice.

Learning from safeguarding practice forms an essential part of the School's commitment to continuous improvement.

15. Allegations Against Adults Working with Children

Orange Tree School recognises its duty to safeguard children and to ensure that all concerns or allegations relating to adults working with children are managed promptly, fairly, consistently and in accordance with statutory guidance.

This section applies to all adults working in or on behalf of the School, including:

- employees;
- supply staff;
- volunteers;
- governors and Advisory Board members;
- contractors;
- agency staff;
- peripatetic staff;

- trainees; and
- any other individual working with or on behalf of the School.

The welfare of the child will always remain the paramount consideration.

Scope

This procedure applies where it is alleged that an adult working with children has:

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

Allegations may relate to behaviour inside or outside the workplace, including conduct occurring online.

Immediate Action

Any allegation or safeguarding concern about an adult working with children must be reported immediately.

Staff should not:

- investigate the allegation;
- interview witnesses;
- discuss the matter widely with colleagues; or
- attempt to determine whether the allegation is true.

Concerns must be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

Where the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the concern must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Advisory Board. If the Chair is unavailable, or if there would be an unreasonable delay, the concern should be referred directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the Proprietor informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

If there is an immediate risk of harm, appropriate emergency action should be taken, including contacting the Police or Children's Social Care where necessary.

Initial Consideration

The Headteacher (or Chair of the Advisory Board where appropriate) will:

- ensure that the child is safe;
- consider the information available;

- preserve evidence where appropriate;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or equivalent service, where required; and
- determine the appropriate next steps in accordance with statutory guidance.

No internal investigation will commence before consultation with the LADO where this is required.

The Role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The school will consult the LADO in all cases where the allegation meets the statutory threshold or where advice is required.

The LADO provides advice and guidance regarding:

- threshold decisions;
- safeguarding processes;
- multi-agency working;
- information sharing;
- strategy meetings;
- liaison with the Police and Children's Social Care; and
- the management of allegations.

The school will cooperate fully with the LADO throughout any investigation.

Supporting Those Involved

The school recognises that allegations may be distressing for everyone involved.

Appropriate support will be provided to:

- *The Child*

The child will receive appropriate safeguarding and pastoral support throughout the process.

The child's wishes and feelings will be considered when determining appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

- *The Adult Subject to the Allegation*

The adult will be treated fairly and with respect throughout the process.

Appropriate welfare support will be offered, recognising that allegations may have significant personal and professional consequences.

Support will not compromise safeguarding investigations or statutory processes.

Confidentiality

The school will maintain confidentiality throughout the management of allegations.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to safeguard children or fulfil statutory responsibilities.

The school will comply with legal restrictions regarding the publication of information relating to allegations against teachers and other staff.

Suspension and Alternative Arrangements

Suspension is a neutral act and will not be an automatic response to an allegation.

The school will consider all available options, taking account of:

- the safety of children;
- the seriousness of the allegation;
- the integrity of any investigation;
- the wellbeing of those involved; and
- the availability of suitable alternative arrangements.

Alternative duties, redeployment or increased supervision may be appropriate in some circumstances.

Outcome of Allegations

Following completion of safeguarding, police and disciplinary processes, allegations will be categorised in accordance with statutory guidance.

Outcomes may include:

- substantiated;
- unsubstantiated;
- unfounded;
- false; or
- malicious.

The school will maintain appropriate records of allegations and outcomes in accordance with statutory guidance and data protection legislation.

Where required by statutory guidance or legislation, the school will make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) or any other relevant regulatory or professional body. Such referrals will be made promptly where the legal threshold is met.

Learning Lessons

Where appropriate, the school will review allegations to identify:

- lessons learned;
- improvements to safeguarding practice;
- training requirements;
- procedural changes; and
- opportunities to strengthen safeguarding culture.

The school is committed to continual improvement in safeguarding practice.

Duty of Care

Orange Tree School recognises its duty of care to both children and adults involved in safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding decisions will be:

- child-centred;
- proportionate;
- evidence-informed;
- fair;
- timely; and
- consistent with statutory guidance.

The school will ensure that all allegations are managed with professionalism, sensitivity and respect, while maintaining the paramount importance of safeguarding children.

16. Low-Level Concerns

Orange Tree School is committed to promoting an open, transparent and respectful safeguarding culture in which concerns about the behaviour of adults working with children are identified, shared and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

The school recognises that creating a culture in which all concerns can be discussed openly helps to safeguard children, supports staff and promotes professional accountability.

Low-level concerns will be managed separately from allegations that meet the statutory harm threshold.

Definition of a Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct;
- does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO); but

- may indicate that professional boundaries have not been maintained.

Low-level concerns may arise from a single incident or a pattern of behaviour over time.

The purpose of reporting low-level concerns is to enable early identification of behaviour that may require advice, support, supervision or further action before it escalates.

Examples of Low-Level Concerns

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- being over-familiar with a pupil;
- using inappropriate or unprofessional language;
- failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- giving personal contact details to a pupil without authorisation;
- communicating with pupils through unauthorised platforms;
- favouritism towards an individual pupil;
- unnecessary physical contact that is inconsistent with school guidance;
- taking photographs of pupils other than in accordance with school procedures;
- failing to follow safeguarding procedures; or
- any conduct that causes another member of staff to feel uncomfortable or question whether professional standards have been maintained.

A low-level concern does not mean that an individual has behaved inappropriately towards a child in a way that meets the allegations threshold. However, all concerns will be considered carefully.

Reporting a Low-Level Concern

All staff are encouraged to report low-level concerns promptly.

Concerns should normally be reported to the Headteacher.

Where a low-level concern relates to the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of the Advisory Board. The Chair will consider the concern in accordance with the School's Low-Level Concerns Policy and determine any appropriate action.

If the Chair of the Advisory Board is unavailable, or if there would be an unreasonable delay in responding to the concern, the concern should be reported to the Proprietor. Where information comes to light indicating that the concern may meet the harm threshold set out in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the matter must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay.

Staff should not ignore concerns because they appear minor or because they are uncertain whether the behaviour is significant.

Professional curiosity and early reporting support a positive safeguarding culture.

Self-Reporting

The school encourages adults working with children to report concerns about their own conduct where they believe they may have acted in a way that could be misunderstood or may have fallen below expected professional standards.

Examples may include:

- accidental physical contact;
- an unintentional breach of professional boundaries;
- an error of judgement;
- inappropriate language used unintentionally; or
- any situation that could later be misinterpreted.

Self-reporting enables concerns to be considered openly, promotes transparency and protects both children and staff.

Managing Low-Level Concerns

The Headteacher (or Chair of the Advisory Board where appropriate) will:

- consider the information available;
- establish the facts;
- determine whether the concern remains a low-level concern or meets the allegations threshold;
- seek advice where necessary;
- identify any patterns of behaviour;
- determine whether additional support, supervision or training is required; and
- decide whether any further action is necessary.

Where information suggests that the concern meets the statutory threshold for managing allegations against adults, the matter will immediately be managed in accordance with the School's Allegations Against Adults Working with Children procedure and Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher, agency worker, contractor or other individual employed by another organisation, the School will notify the individual's employer, where appropriate, so that any wider safeguarding concerns or patterns of behaviour can be identified and managed.

Recording Low-Level Concerns

All low-level concerns will be recorded securely on the secure HR drive.

Records will:

- include sufficient detail to understand the nature of the concern;
- record actions taken and decisions made;
- be retained securely;
- be reviewed periodically to identify emerging patterns; and

- be managed in accordance with data protection legislation and statutory guidance.

The school recognises that a series of seemingly minor concerns, when considered together, may indicate a need for further safeguarding action.

Confidentiality

Information relating to low-level concerns will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know in order to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities.

The school will balance confidentiality with its overriding duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Learning and Professional Development

Low-level concerns provide valuable opportunities to:

- reinforce professional expectations;
- improve safeguarding practice;
- identify training needs;
- strengthen supervision;
- promote reflective practice; and
- maintain high standards of professional conduct.

The school will use learning from low-level concerns to strengthen its safeguarding culture and support continuous professional development.

Creating a Positive Safeguarding Culture

Orange Tree School is committed to creating a culture in which:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- concerns can be raised without fear of ridicule or reprisal;
- professional challenge is welcomed;
- adults support one another in maintaining high professional standards;
- learning from concerns is encouraged; and
- children's welfare remains the paramount consideration.

The school recognises that effective safeguarding depends upon openness, transparency and a shared commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct.

17. Staff Conduct and Professional Boundaries

Orange Tree School recognises that all adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and to act in a manner that safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils.

Professional conduct is fundamental to creating a safe, respectful and supportive learning environment. All adults working in or on behalf of the school are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.

Failure to maintain appropriate professional standards may place children at risk of harm, undermine professional relationships and damage public confidence in the school.

Professional Responsibilities

All adults working with children will:

- place the welfare of children at the centre of all decision-making;
- act with honesty, integrity and professionalism;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- treat all pupils with dignity, respect and fairness;
- promote equality, diversity and inclusion;
- model respectful behaviour at all times;
- comply with safeguarding policies and procedures;
- challenge inappropriate behaviour where necessary; and
- report safeguarding concerns promptly.

Staff should recognise that they are in positions of trust and that their conduct, both inside and outside the workplace, may have an impact upon pupils and public confidence in the School.

Professional Boundaries

Staff must maintain clear professional boundaries with pupils.

This includes:

- maintaining appropriate relationships;
- avoiding favouritism;
- ensuring interactions remain professional at all times;
- avoiding behaviour that could be misinterpreted;
- maintaining appropriate physical boundaries;
- ensuring transparency in all professional interactions; and
- following the School's Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff should always consider how their behaviour may be perceived by pupils, parents, colleagues and the wider community.

Professional Relationships, Attachment and Dependency

Orange Tree School recognises that positive, trusting relationships with adults are central to the education, care and support of pupils with complex mental health and emotional needs.

The school also recognises that some pupils may form strong or rapid attachments to individual members of staff. These attachments may arise from trauma, disrupted relationships, anxiety, emotional vulnerability or the pupil's individual needs.

Responsibility for maintaining safe professional boundaries always rests with the adult.

Staff must:

- remain alert to signs of over-dependency, exclusivity or blurred professional boundaries;
- avoid encouraging a pupil to regard them as their sole or primary source of support;
- ensure that important information is shared with the wider professional team;
- avoid making promises of exclusive availability or confidentiality;
- support pupils to develop safe relationships with a range of appropriate adults; and
- report any concern about attachment, dependency or professional boundaries to the DSL.

The school may change staffing arrangements, timetables, key-worker responsibilities, supervision or levels of contact where this is considered necessary to:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- reduce unhealthy dependency;
- support the pupil's long-term emotional development;
- protect the pupil or member of staff;
- support staff wellbeing; or
- manage an identified safeguarding risk.

Such decisions are supportive and preventative safeguarding measures. They should not automatically be interpreted as criticism, punishment or disciplinary action.

Staff are expected to cooperate fully with these arrangements and must not make private agreements with pupils that conflict with the safeguarding plan.

Communication with Pupils

Communication with pupils should be professional, appropriate and related to legitimate educational or safeguarding purposes.

Staff must not:

- communicate with pupils using personal social media accounts;
- share personal telephone numbers or personal email addresses unless authorised by the school;
- engage in secretive communication;

- communicate in ways that could be misunderstood; or
- use inappropriate language, humour or comments.

Electronic communication should always be transparent, professional and capable of scrutiny.

Physical Contact

The school recognises that there are occasions when appropriate physical contact with pupils is necessary.

Physical contact should:

- always be in the child's best interests;
- be appropriate to the child's age and needs;
- be proportionate;
- respect the child's dignity;
- never be secretive; and
- never be used to cause fear, humiliation or punishment.

Staff should remain mindful that physical contact may be misunderstood and should exercise professional judgement at all times.

Any use of reasonable force must comply with statutory guidance and the School's Behaviour Policy.

One-to-One Working

The school recognises that one-to-one working is sometimes necessary.

Where possible, staff should:

- ensure that others are aware of one-to-one sessions;
- use rooms with visibility panels or open doors where appropriate;
- avoid unnecessary isolation;
- maintain professional boundaries throughout; and
- record any concerns arising from one-to-one interactions.

Where confidential conversations are required, staff should ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements remain in place.

Personal Devices and Photography

Staff must comply with the school's policies regarding:

- personal mobile phones;
- photography;
- video recording;
- electronic communications; and

- the use of personal devices.

Photographs or recordings of pupils must only be taken using authorised equipment and for legitimate educational or safeguarding purposes in accordance with School procedures.

Social Media

Staff should ensure that their use of social media maintains public confidence in their professional role.

Staff must not:

- establish inappropriate online relationships with pupils;
- communicate with pupils through personal social media accounts;
- post material that could undermine professional standards;
- disclose confidential information; or
- engage in online behaviour that could bring the School into disrepute.

Privacy settings reduce, but do not eliminate, safeguarding risks.

Gifts and Favouritism

Staff must avoid behaviour that could reasonably be perceived as favouritism, preferential treatment or the development of overly personal or exclusive relationships with individual pupils.

Professional relationships with pupils must remain appropriate, transparent and capable of withstanding scrutiny. Staff should not give individual pupils special attention, spend disproportionate amounts of time with particular pupils outside the normal requirements of their role, or create situations where a pupil may become emotionally dependent upon, or seek out, a particular member of staff in preference to others.

While providing pastoral support and encouragement is an important part of many roles, this should be delivered within appropriate professional boundaries and, wherever possible, through established school systems rather than through exclusive one-to-one relationships.

Staff should be mindful that seemingly well-intentioned behaviour, such as giving personal gifts, handwritten notes, private communications, spending regular breaks or lunchtimes with individual pupils, or making themselves routinely available to particular pupils beyond what is professionally required, may be perceived as favouritism or grooming behaviour and may undermine professional boundaries.

Any gifts given to or received from pupils must comply with the school's policies and be appropriately declared where required.

Decisions affecting pupils must always be fair, transparent, consistent and capable of objective justification.

Confidentiality

Staff must respect the confidentiality of information obtained through their work.

Confidential information must only be shared:

- where there is a lawful basis;
- where safeguarding requires it; or
- where authorised by School procedures.

Confidentiality must never prevent appropriate action being taken to safeguard a child.

Whistleblowing

Orange Tree School encourages a culture in which staff feel confident to raise concerns regarding safeguarding practice, professional conduct or wrongdoing.

Staff who have concerns regarding:

- safeguarding arrangements;
- unsafe practice;
- professional misconduct;
- failures to follow safeguarding procedures; or
- behaviour that places children at risk,

should report those concerns promptly through the School's Whistleblowing Policy.

Concerns raised in good faith will be taken seriously and managed appropriately.

No member of staff will suffer detriment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in accordance with School procedures.

Monitoring Professional Standards

The school will promote high professional standards through:

- induction;
- supervision;
- safeguarding training;
- regular policy updates;
- reflective practice;
- low-level concern procedures;
- professional challenge; and
- leadership oversight.

Maintaining high professional standards is an essential component of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

Compliance with Safeguarding Procedures and Professional Expectations

All adults working in or on behalf of Orange Tree School are expected to comply fully with safeguarding policies, procedures and reasonable professional instructions issued by the Headteacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSLs.

Safeguarding procedures are designed to protect both children and adults working within the School. Failure to follow safeguarding procedures or professional guidance may place children, colleagues and the individual concerned at increased risk.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- failing to follow safeguarding procedures;
- failing to implement agreed risk management measures;
- disregarding reasonable safeguarding instructions;
- repeatedly failing to maintain professional boundaries;
- failing to record or report safeguarding concerns appropriately; or
- engaging in conduct that undermines the School's safeguarding culture.

Where concerns arise regarding professional conduct, the School will consider whether:

- additional advice, supervision or training is required;
- the matter should be managed as a low-level concern;
- formal management action is appropriate; or
- the concern meets the threshold for safeguarding procedures relating to allegations against adults.

The school expects all staff to engage positively with safeguarding advice, professional supervision and reasonable management direction in order to maintain a safe environment for children and colleagues.

Compliance with Safeguarding Direction

All adults working in or on behalf of Orange Tree School are expected to comply with safeguarding policies, agreed risk-management measures and reasonable instructions issued by the Headteacher, DSL or Deputy DSL.

Safeguarding instructions are intended to protect pupils, staff and the wider School community. They may include directions concerning:

- supervision and staffing arrangements;
- contact with individual pupils;
- professional boundaries;
- communication with parents or carers;
- the sharing of information;
- recording and reporting requirements;
- management of specific risks; and

- implementation of individual safeguarding or safety plans.

Staff must not disregard, alter or independently depart from an agreed safeguarding instruction without first discussing the matter with the DSL or Headteacher.

Where a member of staff has a professional concern or disagrees with a safeguarding decision, they should raise this promptly and respectfully through the appropriate management or escalation process. Pending review, the agreed safeguarding arrangements must continue to be followed unless doing so would place a child in immediate danger.

Failure to follow safeguarding procedures or reasonable safeguarding direction may place pupils and staff at risk. Depending on the circumstances, the school may respond through:

- advice and professional guidance;
- additional training or supervision;
- the low-level concerns procedure;
- capability, probation or disciplinary procedures; or
- the allegations-management process where the harm threshold may be met.

Compliance with safeguarding direction is an essential professional responsibility and a condition of safe practice within the school.

18. Safer Working Practice

Orange Tree School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and professional environment in which children can learn and thrive. Safe working practices protect pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors by reducing the risk of harm, misunderstanding and inappropriate conduct.

All adults working in or on behalf of the school are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes safeguarding, maintains public confidence and reflects the highest professional standards.

Safer working practice is an essential element of effective safeguarding and should be embedded in all aspects of school life.

Professional Judgement

Professional Judgement and Safeguarding Leadership

Orange Tree School recognises that staff build positive and trusting relationships with pupils as an essential part of therapeutic education.

However, safeguarding decisions must remain objective, consistent and coordinated.

For this reason, safeguarding decisions including risk management arrangements, communication with parents and carers, staffing arrangements and responses to safeguarding concerns will be led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.

Staff are expected to exercise professional judgement by recognising the limits of their role, reporting concerns promptly and implementing safeguarding decisions made by those with designated safeguarding responsibility.

Professional disagreement may be raised respectfully through appropriate management channels. However, staff must not independently depart from agreed safeguarding plans or instructions that have been implemented to protect children or adults.

Staff are expected to exercise sound professional judgement in all interactions with pupils.

Professional judgement includes:

- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries;
- recognising the limits of individual responsibility;
- following School policies and procedures;
- seeking advice where uncertainty exists;
- acting in the best interests of the child; and
- recognising when safeguarding decisions must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Staff have a professional responsibility to act if they become concerned that another adult's practice may place a child or colleague at risk, or is inconsistent with this policy or the Staff Code of Conduct. Concerns must be reported promptly in accordance with the School's safeguarding, low-level concerns or whistleblowing procedures, as appropriate.

Where staff are unsure how to respond to a situation, advice should be sought promptly from the DSL or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Professional judgement also includes recognising when a situation exceeds an individual's role or level of responsibility and requires direction from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another senior leader.

One-to-One Working

The School recognises that one-to-one working forms an important part of education, therapeutic intervention and pastoral support.

Wherever reasonably practicable, staff should:

- ensure that one-to-one work is planned and transparent;
- use rooms with appropriate visibility or access where possible;
- inform colleagues of the session where appropriate;
- maintain professional boundaries throughout;
- avoid unnecessary isolation; and
- report any safeguarding concerns immediately.

One-to-one working should always be conducted in a manner that safeguards both the pupil and the member of staff.

Lone Working

Some staff may occasionally work alone with pupils as part of their professional duties.

Where lone working cannot reasonably be avoided, staff should:

- ensure appropriate risk assessments have been considered where necessary;
- maintain communication with colleagues;
- avoid unnecessary situations that increase safeguarding risk;
- ensure that others are aware of their location where appropriate; and
- follow agreed safeguarding procedures.

Staff should never place themselves or pupils in situations that unnecessarily increase vulnerability.

Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention

Positive relationships, de-escalation and restorative approaches form the basis of behaviour management at Orange Tree School.

Where physical intervention is necessary, staff will only use reasonable, proportionate and lawful force in accordance with statutory guidance and the School's Behaviour Policy.

Any physical intervention must:

- be used only where necessary;
- be proportionate to the circumstances;
- be the least restrictive option available;
- cease as soon as the risk has reduced;
- preserve the dignity of the pupil; and
- be recorded and reported in accordance with School procedures.

Where appropriate, incidents will be reviewed to identify any learning or changes required to support the pupil and staff involved.

Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

Safeguarding responsibilities apply equally during educational visits, community activities and off-site provision.

Appropriate planning will include consideration of:

- safeguarding risks;
- supervision arrangements;
- communication procedures;

- emergency contacts;
- medical needs;
- risk assessments; and
- individual pupil vulnerabilities.

Staff must follow all educational visits procedures and immediately report any safeguarding concerns arising during off-site activities.

Dynamic Safeguarding Decisions

Safeguarding arrangements for trips, visits and off-site activities may change at any time in response to new information, emerging risks, changes in a pupil's needs or behaviour, staffing arrangements, or dynamic risk assessments.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Headteacher or other authorised senior leader may amend supervision arrangements, staffing, destinations or activities where this is necessary to safeguard pupils and staff.

Staff must follow all safeguarding instructions and must not make independent decisions to depart from agreed safeguarding arrangements or rely on previous practice, previous permissions or assumptions that arrangements remain unchanged.

Permission given for a previous activity, supervision arrangement or off-site visit must not be assumed to apply to future occasions. Each activity will be considered on its own merits, and staff must follow the safeguarding arrangements in place at the time.

If staff are uncertain about any aspect of an activity or believe circumstances have changed, they must seek advice from the DSL or the member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible before proceeding.

Personal Care and Intimate Care

Where pupils require personal or intimate care, this will be provided sensitively, respectfully and in accordance with the School's Intimate Care Policy and individual care plans where applicable.

Staff providing personal care will:

- respect the dignity and privacy of the child;
- encourage independence wherever possible;
- explain procedures appropriate to the child's understanding;
- maintain professional boundaries; and
- record and report any safeguarding concerns.

Where practicable, arrangements should minimise the risk of misunderstanding whilst maintaining the child's dignity.

Transporting Pupils

Staff should not transport pupils in private vehicles unless this has been authorised in accordance with School procedures and appropriate risk assessments have been completed.

Where transport is authorised, staff must follow agreed safeguarding arrangements and ensure that journeys are appropriately recorded where required.

Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors

All visitors, volunteers and contractors are expected to contribute to maintaining a safe environment for children.

The school will ensure that:

- appropriate safeguarding checks are completed where required;
- visitors receive safeguarding information relevant to their role;
- visitors understand procedures for reporting concerns;
- visitors are appropriately supervised where necessary; and
- all adults comply with safeguarding expectations whilst on site.

Any safeguarding concerns involving visitors or contractors must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Maintaining a Culture of Vigilance

Safeguarding requires ongoing professional curiosity, vigilance and shared responsibility.

All staff should:

- remain alert to changes in a pupil's presentation or behaviour;
- challenge unsafe practice where appropriate;
- report concerns promptly;
- participate in safeguarding training and supervision;
- reflect upon their own professional practice; and
- contribute positively to the School's safeguarding culture.

Creating a safe environment depends upon every adult understanding that safeguarding is an active and continuous responsibility.

Learning from Practice

Orange Tree School is committed to continuous improvement in safeguarding practice.

The School will review safeguarding practice through:

- supervision;
- safeguarding audits;
- incident reviews;
- learning from complaints and concerns;

- feedback from staff, pupils and families where appropriate;
- external reviews; and
- updates to statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements.

Learning from experience enables the School to strengthen safeguarding systems, improve professional practice and enhance outcomes for children.

19. Confidentiality, Record Keeping and Data Protection

Orange Tree School recognises that accurate, timely and secure record keeping is fundamental to effective safeguarding. Safeguarding records enable concerns to be identified, patterns to be recognised, decisions to be evidenced and appropriate support to be provided for children.

All safeguarding information will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the School's Data Protection Policy.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is confidential and will only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to know.

Staff should never promise a child that information disclosed to them will be kept secret.

Where a safeguarding concern is identified, information will be shared appropriately to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

The school recognises that effective safeguarding depends upon appropriate information sharing between professionals and agencies where lawful and necessary.

Recording Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded as soon as possible after the concern arises.

Records should:

- be factual, accurate and objective;
- distinguish between fact, observation and professional opinion;
- include the date, time and location where relevant;
- record the exact words used by the child wherever possible;
- identify actions taken;
- record who has been informed; and
- be signed or electronically attributed to the person making the record.

Records should be completed promptly while information remains fresh and before the member of staff leaves the school site wherever reasonably practicable.

Where safeguarding decisions are made, records should include the rationale for those decisions, including the reasons for making or not making referrals and any professional advice received.

Safeguarding Records

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding records are:

- maintained securely;
- accurate and up to date;
- kept separately from the main pupil file where appropriate;
- accessible only to authorised persons;
- reviewed regularly to identify emerging concerns or patterns; and
- transferred securely when pupils move to another education provider.

Where safeguarding files are transferred, the DSL will ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to confirm receipt.

Safeguarding records should not include speculation, assumptions or personal conclusions. Where professional judgement is required, this should be clearly identified as such and recorded by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or other appropriate safeguarding professional where applicable.

Transfer of Child Protection Records

Where a pupil transfers to another school or education setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that the child protection file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file as soon as possible and:

- **within five days for an in-year transfer; or**
- **within the first five days of the start of a new term where the transfer takes place at the beginning of a term.**

The transferred information will include, where appropriate, a clear summary of current safeguarding concerns, relevant context and any ongoing support needs. Historic information will be clearly distinguished from current safeguarding concerns.

Where there are ongoing or significant concerns, the DSL will liaise directly with the receiving setting's DSL so that relevant risks, needs and safeguarding arrangements are understood and acted upon.

The school will obtain confirmation that the receiving setting has received the child protection file and will retain a record of the transfer and confirmation of receipt in accordance with its record-retention procedures.

Information Sharing

The school recognises that timely and proportionate information sharing is essential to safeguarding children.

Information will be shared:

- where there is a lawful basis;
- where it is necessary to safeguard a child;
- in accordance with statutory guidance;
- with relevant professionals and agencies; and
- in a manner that respects confidentiality whilst prioritising the welfare of the child.

Concerns about sharing information must never delay action where a child may be at risk of harm.

Record Retention

Safeguarding records will be retained in accordance with statutory guidance and the School's records management procedures.

Records will be stored securely and disposed of confidentially when retention periods have expired.

Where records form part of ongoing safeguarding arrangements, they will continue to be retained until disposal is appropriate in accordance with legal requirements.

Access to Records

Access to safeguarding records will be restricted to those with authorised safeguarding responsibilities.

Requests for access to safeguarding information will be managed in accordance with:

- data protection legislation;
- safeguarding guidance;
- statutory requirements; and
- the School's Data Protection Policy.

The school will carefully balance an individual's right to access information with its overriding duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Monitoring Record Quality

The DSL will undertake regular reviews of safeguarding records to ensure that they are:

- complete;
- accurate;
- timely;
- appropriately evidenced;
- consistent with safeguarding procedures; and

- supportive of effective safeguarding decision-making.

Learning identified through record reviews will be used to improve safeguarding practice and inform staff training where appropriate.

Digital Safeguarding Records

Where electronic safeguarding recording systems are used, the School will ensure that:

- access is restricted to authorised users;
- records are password protected and securely stored;
- appropriate audit trails are maintained where available;
- information is backed up in accordance with School procedures; and
- systems are used in accordance with data protection legislation.

Staff must ensure that safeguarding information is not stored on personal devices or shared using unauthorised communication methods.

Multi-Agency Record Keeping

Where safeguarding concerns involve multiple agencies, the School will maintain clear records of:

- referrals;
- strategy discussions;
- meetings;
- professional advice received;
- actions taken;
- outcomes; and
- ongoing safeguarding plans.

Accurate documentation supports effective multi-agency working and ensures continuity of safeguarding arrangements for children.

Accountability

Maintaining high-quality safeguarding records is a professional responsibility.

All staff are expected to contribute to accurate record keeping by:

- reporting concerns promptly;
- recording information objectively;
- following School procedures;
- respecting confidentiality; and
- supporting the School's safeguarding arrangements.

Good record keeping protects children, supports professional decision-making and provides an accurate record of safeguarding actions taken.

20. Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

Orange Tree School is committed to maintaining a culture of continuous improvement in safeguarding. The School recognises that effective safeguarding requires regular monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance to ensure that policies, procedures and practice remain effective, compliant with statutory guidance and responsive to the needs of pupils.

Safeguarding arrangements will be subject to ongoing review to ensure that they continue to promote the welfare of children and reflect current legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements. The annual review will also take account of learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, other relevant safeguarding practice reviews, serious safeguarding incidents, inspection findings and other relevant safeguarding developments to support continuous improvement.

Leadership Oversight

The Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Advisory Board share responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Leadership oversight will include:

- monitoring compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures;
- reviewing safeguarding incidents and trends;
- evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding practice;
- ensuring statutory responsibilities are fulfilled;
- identifying areas for improvement; and
- promoting a culture in which safeguarding remains a priority across the School.

Safeguarding Audits

The school will undertake regular safeguarding audits to evaluate the effectiveness of its safeguarding arrangements.

Audits may include consideration of:

- statutory compliance;
- safeguarding records;
- staff training;
- safer recruitment practices;
- safeguarding culture;
- pupil voice;
- implementation of safeguarding procedures;
- online safety arrangements; and
- compliance with statutory guidance.

Findings from audits will inform action planning and continuous improvement.

Monitoring Safeguarding Practice

The DSL will regularly monitor safeguarding practice to ensure that:

- safeguarding concerns are reported promptly;
- records are completed accurately and in a timely manner;
- safeguarding decisions are appropriately documented;
- referrals are made where required;
- risk assessments are reviewed;
- safeguarding plans remain effective; and
- professional standards are consistently maintained.

Where monitoring identifies concerns or inconsistencies, appropriate support, supervision, training or management action will be implemented.

Monitoring will also include reviewing compliance with safeguarding advice, agreed risk management plans and safeguarding instructions issued by the DSL to ensure that safeguarding measures are implemented consistently across the school.

Staff Training and Development

The effectiveness of safeguarding training will be reviewed regularly.

The school will monitor whether staff:

- understand safeguarding responsibilities;
- recognise signs of abuse and neglect;
- know how to report concerns;
- understand the role of the DSL;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- follow safeguarding procedures consistently; and
- apply safeguarding learning effectively in practice.

Additional training or supervision will be provided where development needs are identified.

Learning from Safeguarding Practice

Orange Tree School is committed to learning from safeguarding practice.

The school will review:

- safeguarding incidents;
- low-level concerns;
- allegations against adults;
- complaints;

- serious incidents;
- safeguarding audits;
- external reviews;
- local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, safeguarding practice reviews and other relevant safeguarding learning;
- changes to statutory guidance.

Learning identified through reviews will be used to strengthen policies, improve practice and enhance safeguarding arrangements.

Pupil Voice

The school recognises the importance of listening to children as part of safeguarding quality assurance.

Where appropriate, opportunities will be provided for pupils to:

- express their views about feeling safe;
- contribute to safeguarding practice;
- identify concerns;
- participate in age-appropriate consultation; and
- influence improvements to the school's safeguarding arrangements.

The school acknowledges that the views of children are an important source of safeguarding information and continuous improvement.

Governance and Advisory Board Oversight

The Advisory Board will receive appropriate safeguarding information to enable it to fulfil its governance responsibilities.

This may include:

- safeguarding reports from the DSL;
- anonymised safeguarding data and trends;
- monitoring of safeguarding training;
- outcomes of safeguarding audits;
- policy reviews;
- safer recruitment compliance;
- monitoring of statutory responsibilities; and
- updates on significant safeguarding developments.

The Advisory Board will provide appropriate challenge and support to ensure that safeguarding remains effective and compliant.

Continuous Improvement

Safeguarding is an evolving area of practice.

Orange Tree School is committed to continually improving safeguarding arrangements through:

- regular policy review;
- staff feedback;
- pupil feedback where appropriate;
- reflective practice;
- professional supervision;
- safeguarding training;
- partnership working;
- quality assurance activities; and
- implementation of learning identified through monitoring and review.

Continuous improvement supports the School's commitment to providing a safe environment in which all children can learn, develop and thrive. The School will implement and monitor actions arising from inspections, safeguarding audits, external reviews and other quality assurance activities to strengthen safeguarding practice.

Accountability

All staff contribute to safeguarding quality assurance through their daily practice.

Every member of staff is expected to:

- comply with safeguarding policies and procedures;
- participate in safeguarding training;
- engage positively with supervision and professional guidance;
- contribute to safeguarding audits where required;
- report concerns promptly; and
- support a culture of openness, reflection and continuous improvement.

Maintaining effective safeguarding is a shared responsibility requiring commitment from every member of the school community.

21. Related Policies and Procedures

Safeguarding is embedded across all aspects of the School's work and is supported by a range of complementary policies and procedures.

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy should be read alongside the following School policies, procedures and guidance, which collectively promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of pupils:

- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Trips and Educational Visits Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Physical Intervention and Positive Behaviour Support Policy (where applicable)
- SEND Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Staff Induction Programme
- Staff Procedures
- Allegations Against Staff Procedure
- Low-Level Concerns Procedure
- Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures
- Lockdown and Critical Incident Procedures

The school also has regard to relevant statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The Education Act 2002
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- The Prevent Duty Guidance
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017

Where policies overlap, they should be read together to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with those policies relevant to their role and to comply with the procedures contained within them.

The school recognises that safeguarding is closely linked to the provision of therapeutic, pastoral and educational support. Staff are therefore expected to apply this policy alongside other relevant policies to ensure that safeguarding decisions are consistent, coordinated and centred on the individual needs of each pupil.

Resolving Conflicts Between Policies

Where there appears to be any inconsistency between this policy and another School policy or procedure, staff must seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher before taking action.

Where safeguarding considerations arise, the welfare of the child will remain the School's paramount consideration.

Availability of Policies

Safeguarding policies and procedures will be:

- available to staff through the staff shared drive or on bright HR;
- provided as part of staff induction where appropriate;
- reviewed during safeguarding training and updates;
- made available to the Advisory Board as required; and
- published or otherwise made available to parents and carers where required by legislation or School policy.

The school is committed to ensuring that safeguarding documentation remains accessible, current and understood by all members of the School community.

22. Policy Review

Orange Tree School is committed to ensuring that this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy remain effective, compliant with statutory guidance and reflective of best safeguarding practice.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that safeguarding arrangements continue to meet the needs of pupils and comply with current legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding is an evolving area of practice and the School recognises the importance of maintaining policies that reflect current requirements and emerging safeguarding risks.

Review Frequency

This policy will be reviewed:

- at least annually;
- following the publication of revised statutory guidance;
- following significant changes to legislation or local safeguarding arrangements;
- following serious safeguarding incidents where learning is identified;
- where monitoring or audit identifies a need for revision; and
- whenever the Headteacher or Advisory Board considers an earlier review necessary.

Minor amendments may be made throughout the year to ensure ongoing compliance with statutory requirements.

Responsibility for Review

Overall responsibility for reviewing this policy rests with the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The review process will take account of:

- statutory guidance;
- local safeguarding partnership arrangements;
- safeguarding audits;
- feedback from staff where appropriate;
- findings from safeguarding reviews;
- inspection outcomes;
- national safeguarding developments; and
- lessons learned from safeguarding practice.

The Advisory Board will receive the revised policy for scrutiny and approval.

Monitoring Implementation

The school will monitor the implementation of this policy through:

- safeguarding audits;
- monitoring of safeguarding records;
- supervision and professional discussions;
- staff safeguarding training;
- policy compliance reviews;
- monitoring of safeguarding incidents and trends;
- quality assurance activities; and
- Advisory Board oversight.

Where monitoring identifies areas for improvement, appropriate action will be taken to strengthen safeguarding arrangements.

Communication and Publication

Following approval, this policy will:

- be made available to all staff;
- form part of staff induction;
- be referenced during safeguarding training and updates;
- be published on the School website where required; and
- be made available to parents, carers and other stakeholders upon request.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its requirements.

Equality Impact

The school has considered the potential impact of this policy on pupils, staff and the wider School community.

Implementation of this policy will be undertaken fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding arrangements will always take account of the individual needs, circumstances, protected characteristics and vulnerabilities of each child.

Policy Approval

This policy has been approved by the Advisory Board and will remain in force until it is formally reviewed or replaced.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to implement this policy effectively across the school.

Main Contacts

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (OTS)	Hayley Hunter	dsl@orangetreeschool.org
Deputy DSL (OTS)	Lucy Price	dsl@orangetreeschool.org
Deputy DSL (OTS)	Evie Waldren	dsl@orangetreeschool.org
Deputy DSL (OTS)	Jake Beeson	dsl@orangetreeschool.org
Designated Safeguarding Lead Ridgeway	Barbara Makeli	Barbara.maleki@ellernmede.org
Deputy DSL Ridgeway	Sanchia Simon	Sanchia.simon@ellernmede.org
Headteacher	Zoe Ramshaw	dsl@orangetreeschool.org
Chair of Advisory Board	Peter Curtis	Peter.curtis@orangetreeschool.org
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Rob Wratten	lado@barnet.gov.uk
Barnet MASH / Children's Social Care Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub		020 8359 4066 Out-of-Hours Emergency Duty Team 020 8359 2000
Police (Emergency)		999
Police (Non-Emergency)		101
NSPCC Helpline		0808 800 5000 (10am to 4pm) help@nspcc.org.uk
Prevent Contact	ACT Early Support Line	0800 011 3764
Childline		0800 1111

Appendix A - Safeguarding training criteria

Purpose

This appendix outlines the safeguarding training requirements for all staff members, governors, and volunteers to ensure compliance with statutory guidance and best practices in safeguarding children.

Core training requirements

The DSL and deputy DSLs will:

- Complete advanced safeguarding training every two years, which covers:
 - Their specific roles and responsibilities.
 - Multi-agency working.
 - Identifying, understanding and responding to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of pupils.
 - Specific harms that can put pupils at risk.

- Undertake training that enables them to develop expertise so that they can support (and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare and safeguarding matters, particularly in relation to:
 - Ensuring that staff are supported during the referrals process.
 - Supporting staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.
 - Receive regular updates throughout the year to remain informed of any changes in legislation and best practices.
 - Undertake Prevent awareness training.
 - Undertake refresher training every 12 months.

All staff will:

- Complete safeguarding and child protection training at induction.
- Undertake refresher training annually, including updates on recognising signs of abuse, reporting procedures, and understanding the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Safeguarding response to pupils who are absent from education.
- Read at least part one of KCSIE and ensure that they are aware of:
 - The local early help process and their role in it.
 - The process for making referrals to LA children's social care and for statutory assessments.
 - The indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
 - Safeguarding issues that can put pupils at risk of harm.
 - Child-on-child abuse, including how it can happen, the schools' procedures for dealing with it and how to prevent and respond to it.
 - What to do if a pupil tells them they are being abused, exploited or neglected and how to manage confidentiality.
 - How to support victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Receive ongoing updates throughout the academic year via email, briefings, staff meetings and CPD days, including updates to safeguarding guidance and legislation and changes to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Members of the advisory board will:

- Complete appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.
- Undertake updated safeguarding training relevant to their strategic role, including awareness of their responsibilities under KCSIE.

- Be trained on their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Receive enhanced training to effectively oversee the school's safeguarding arrangements if their role on the board has a specific safeguarding responsibility.

Specialist training

All staff members will receive awareness training on specific safeguarding issues and the school's procedures for dealing with them as outlined in Appendix A. Specialist training will be undertaken as outlined below:

- Safer recruitment training:
 - Will be required for all staff members involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with pupils, the substance of which covers part three of KCSIE at a minimum.
- Online safety training:
 - It is mandatory for all staff and governors to understand the risks associated with online activity and how to educate pupils about online safety.
 - Online safety training will include, amongst other aspects, understanding the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Prevent duty training:
 - All staff will be trained to understand their role in preventing radicalisation and extremism and how to maintain due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorists.
- Child-on-child abuse awareness:
 - Staff will receive specialist training on recognising and addressing child-on-child abuse, including bullying, sexual violence, and harassment.

Training Delivery

- All staff members will receive safeguarding training during their induction and the inset days in September and will be supported to understand the school's policies and procedures in relation to dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- Training will be delivered with due regard to the Teachers' Standards.
- Training will be delivered through a combination of face-to-face sessions, online modules, and external courses accredited by recognised safeguarding bodies.
- Records of all training, including dates, content, and attendees, will be maintained securely.

Reviewing training

- The DSL will be responsible for ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training and that records are up-to-date.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding training will be reviewed annually as part of the school's safeguarding audit.

Additional safeguarding resources include:

- Operation Encompass
- Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) guidance
- Child knife possession offences guidance
- CSA Centre guidance on communicating with children
- Prisoners' Families Helpline

Compliance

All staff will be required to confirm that they have read and understood Part One of KCSIE and any other safeguarding guidance relevant to their role. Failure to complete mandatory training may result in disciplinary action.

This appendix will be reviewed annually to ensure that it aligns with current legislation and best practices in safeguarding children.

Appendix B - Reporting concerns at Orange Tree School Oakleigh Park

Designated Safeguarding Team:

DSL: Hayley Hunter

DDSL: Lucy Price

DDSL: Jake Beeson

DDSL: Evie Waldren

Other trained DSLs: Zoe Ramshaw and Helen Carmel

Concerns relating to staff go directly to the Headteacher (Zoe Ramshaw).

The Local Authority Designated Officer for concerns about adults and children is:

Rob Wratten

Email: rob.wratten@barnet.gov.uk Or

lado@barnet.gov.uk

The Deputy Local Authority Designated Officer and Lead Child Protection Schools

Adviser is:

Rebecca Alexander

Email: lado@barnet.gov.uk

Staff have concerns about the child and take immediate action. Staff follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and speak to the DSL or DDSL and immediately add their concerns to iSAMS wellbeing manager the same day the concern is raised or as soon as possible. If iSAMS is unavailable, or a body map is required, complete a Yellow Form.

School Action

Other Agency Action

Referral not required, school takes relevant action, possibly including pastoral support and/or early help and monitors locally -

DSL or DDSL update iSAMS wellbeing

Referral made if concerns escalate

DSL or DDSL update iSAMS wellbeing manager

Designated Safeguarding Lead or staff make referral to children's social care (and call police if appropriate)

DSL or DDSL update iSAMS wellbeing manager

Within 1 working day, social worker makes decision about the type of response that is required

Child in need of immediate protection: referrer informed

Section 47 enquiries appropriate: referrer informed

Section 17 enquiries appropriate: referrer informed

No formal assessment required: referrer informed

Appropriate emergency action taken by social worker, police or NSPCC

Identify child at risk of significant harm: possible child protection plan

Identify child in need and identify appropriate support

School considers pastoral support and/or early assessment accessing universal services and other support

Staff should do everything they can to support social workers.

At all stages, staff should keep the child's circumstances under review (involving the designated safeguarding lead as required), and re-refer if appropriate, to ensure the child's circumstances improve - the child's best interests must always come first

Immediate Action to be Taken:

Allocated to: _____ **Date:** _____

Once complete, please sign and date:

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Follow up Action if Required:

Allocated to: _____ **Date:** _____

Once complete, please sign and date:

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Were parents/carers informed? _____

If yes: By who? _____ **Time/Date:** _____

Final Signature to confirm above is complete:

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Final/Additional Comments:

Appendix D - Reporting concerns at Orange Tree School Ellern Mede Ridgeway

Designated EM School Safeguarding Team: Barbara Maleki -DSL <i>Designated DDSL -Sanchia Simon - Ridgeway</i> Nancy Maicoo (EM Group, Operations Director / Advisory board Safeguarding Rep) <u>Concerns relating to staff, go directly to the Headteacher</u> (who will decide who should be informed on a need-to- know basis, as well as protecting confidentiality). Concerns relating to the Headteacher or DSL go to the Local Authority (see below)	Concern put in writing on a yellow Child Protection Record/Referral Form Hand concern form to DSL: Barbara Maleki barbara.maleki@ellernmede.org	EM Hospital Safeguarding Team (for any historical, family, clinically related, or concerns raised about inpatient care / treatment): Contact individual site (<i>Ridgeway, Barnet</i>) Hospital Manager, and email safeguarding team: EMR-safeguarding@ellernmede.org Hospital GROUP DSLs are: - Fiza Raza (Social Work Department Lead & Safeguarding Lead) - Janice Coleman (Clinical Services Manager) - Nancy Maicoo (Operations Director)
DSL/Safeguarding team review concern: - Consider any need for emergency action or or Police threshold - Consider if meets threshold for external referral (LA / Ofsted). - Consider if isolated School, Hospital or Shared	Keep young person informed and supported. Consider and respect their views, choices and confidentiality throughout the process (factoring in their age, capacity / competency, any other children at risk or any over-riding public	
Follow school safeguarding policy / system. Check if external referral required (Ofsted, LADO, Police, CP) Staff will be asked to monitor child and feedback to the DSL within agreed timescale. Document interactions. (if required); Investigation lead will be assigned, consider who needs to be kept informed during and on investigation closure.	Shared / Joint (Sch & Hosp) Strategy Meeting: Decide re external referral (CQC, Ofsted, Police, NHSE, LADO, CP), Internal/external investigation or Monitoring Copy information over to SG1. Document internal strategy meeting & actions i.e. SG2 (all need to know professionals across school and hospital site) Monitor case or (if required) assign lead investigator. Continue joint liaison until closed and document on both systems. Feedback to all parties inc updates to external organisations	Hospital Safeguarding Team, Duplicate information from school form onto SG1. Hospital continues to follow own internal safeguarding policy / system, consider need for external referral (Police, CQC, NHSE, LADO, CP)
School Only Concern: Decide if warrants external referral, Internal/external investigation or Monitoring and record	Shared / Joint (Sch & Hosp) Concern: Share with Hospital safeguarding team and record (see above box)	Hospital Only Concern: Share with Hospital safeguarding team and record (see above box)

LADO@Barnet.gov.uk

Ofsted: 0300 123 4666 / CIE@ofsted.gov.uk | **CQC:** 0300 061 6161 / HSCA_notifications@cqc.org.uk

Appendix E - London Borough of Barnet (LADO) referral form

The LADO must be notified **within one working day** (and prior to any further investigation taking place), when an allegation is made against **any person who works with children** in a paid or voluntary capacity has:

1. behaved in a way that has *harmed* or may have harmed a child;
2. possibly committed a *criminal offence* against or related to a child;
3. behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicated s/he would pose a risk of harm if they worked regularly or closely with children. Sec. 7 London Child Protection Procedures.

The LADO can be contacted for advice where it is unclear if the allegation meets the threshold for referral and/or where there are concerns about a staff member's behaviour towards children, or any other issues that indicate they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The LADO referral form **MUST** be completed and sent to the LADO (LADO@Barnet.gov.uk) where the threshold is met and/or after having a discussion and receiving advice from the LADO.

The LADO manages and responds to concerns and allegations against professionals, volunteers or anyone in a position of trust. These can be safeguarding concerns within the work environment, or where activities or offences are committed outside work. This includes a criminal offence; 'involvement by association', where a worker provides childcare on domestic premises and their partner, family or household member may pose a risk to children; and a parent or carer is subject to Child Protection Procedures.

The LADO evaluates the information provided on this referral form to decide whether it meets the following criteria:

1. **An allegation of a crime – to be investigated by the police.**
2. **A child protection concern – to be investigated by the Council's Children's Services Social Care Teams.**
3. **A disciplinary issue – to be investigated by the employer of the staff member under disciplinary/regulatory procedures/ standard of care.**
4. **A complaint – to be handled under the employer's complaints process.**

The LADO takes a lead role from the initial allegation referral through to the conclusion of the cases, providing advice and guidance, and liaising with the police and other relevant agencies. The LADO is also responsible for ensuring an appropriate outcome is reached in a timely manner. The LADO does not investigate. Responsibility for investigations remains with the police and or the employer (or whoever is commissioned by the employer to investigate).

Information provided as part of this referral will be shared with the appropriate agencies, which include council social care and education teams, the police, or the person's employer. More

information on what information is collected and shared, and who it may be shared with, can be found in the [council's privacy notice](#).

The LADO will send a referral form if they require one to be filled out.