

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Governors and school community recognise that children have a fundamental right to learn in a safe environment, and be protected from harm and to be kept healthy and safe. Children with autism face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.

At Springhallow School we are committed to safeguarding children and young people from maltreatment and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment to high vigilance. Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them, so that children and young people have the best chance of having the best outcomes.

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

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

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

We will always act in the best interest of the child.

To this end, Governors and school staff are committed to ensuring that all members of the school community are aware of school responsibilities and procedures in this area. This includes communicating policies and procedures effectively with parents/carers, ensuring all staff and relevant Governors attend appropriate training (within school, through Ealing CPD or other providers) and work effectively with other professionals on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse.

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

- Positive Behaviour policy
- Health and safety policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- e Safety policy
- Code of conduct for staff
- Sex and relationships policy
- Attendance policy
- Equality policy
- Whistleblowing policy

The school has also adopted the following Ealing Council guidance and procedures:

- Procedures for schools responding to allegations of abuse against teachers and other school staff
- Harassment and bullying guidelines
- Code of conduct for school employees
- Full recruitment and selection guidance
- Corporate Health and Safety policy
- Guidelines on the Use of Control and Physical Restraint by Staff
- Guidance and Procedures for School Visits

This policy has been drawn up with reference to **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023)**.

## **2. Aims of the policy**

- To raise awareness of all school staff and Governors of the importance of safeguarding and child protection (SCP), and in particular to make clear responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse.
- To ensure pupils, parents and carers are aware that the school takes SCP seriously and will follow the appropriate procedures for identifying and reporting abuse and for dealing with allegations against staff.
- To promote effective liaison with other agencies in order to work together for the welfare and protection of all pupils, with particular consideration to contextual safeguarding where wider environmental factors in a child's life may threaten their safety or welfare.
- To support pupils' development in a way that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To ensure that pupils are taught about looking out for their own and each other's safety and what to do if they feel they are not safe.
- To make appropriate links and reference to policies in related areas such as discipline and bullying.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, The Data Protection Act and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.' & 'This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent...'

## **3. Guiding principles for intervention to protect children and young people**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The Governors will ensure that the principles identified below are followed by all staff:

- All children have a right to be kept safe and protected from abuse.
- Child abuse can occur in all cultures, religions and social classes.

- Staff must be sensitive to the families' cultural and social background.
- Children must have the opportunity to express their views and be heard.
- If there is a conflict of interest between the child and parent or carer, the interests of the child must be paramount.
- The responsibility to initiate agreed procedures rests with the individual who identifies the concern. All staff may raise concerns directly with Children's Social Services.
- All staff must endeavour to work in partnership with those who hold parental responsibility for the child.
- The school assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when consider the well-being and safety of its pupils.
- Information in the context of a child protection enquiry must be treated as confidential and only shared with those who need to know.
- All staff should have access to appropriate and regular training.
- School management must allow staff sufficient time to carry out their duties in relation to child protection and safeguarding.

#### **4. Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Leads**

Governors ensure that the school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs. At Springhallow School, this is the Deputy Headteacher (Cathal Owens). The Head Teacher (Matthew Sartin), Assistant Headteachers (Maria Hayns, Zuza Nowak, Katie Morley & Dawn Clegg) and Family Support Workers (Ana de Blas Pin & Nisha Jan) can deputise in this role when the DSL is not on site. The responsibilities of the DSL are:

- to ensure that all staff are familiar with school and borough procedures and guidelines for identifying and reporting abuse, including allegations of abuse against staff;
- to ensure that all staff receive training in the above, including staff who are temporary or arrive mid-year, who will be trained during their staff induction;
- to be responsible for co-ordinating action and liaising with school staff and support services over child protection issues;
- to be aware of all children in the school who have a CP Plan or who are Looked After Children and ensure the child's social worker is informed if the child is excluded from the school;
- be aware of pupils who have a social worker
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school and college leadership staff.
- to ensure that the school is represented at CP case conferences and that written reports are provided as required;
- to follow recommendations made by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board;
- to be aware of new legislation, guidance, policy and procedures in the areas of SCP;
- to support and advise staff on CP issues generally;
- to disseminate relevant information between agencies to the appropriate staff;
- to maintain accurate and secure CP records and send them on to new schools where relevant.

## 5. Responsibilities of all school staff

All school staff have a responsibility to identify and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils in the school. In doing so they should seek advice and support as necessary from the DSLs. There are many aspects to child abuse, but four key definitions have been identified. These are:

- **Neglect:** persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from any kind of exposure, including cold or starvation.
- **Physical injury:** actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent injury or suffering to a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** persistent and severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.
- **Sexual abuse:** actual or likely abuse of a child or adolescent.

All staff are expected to provide a safe and caring environment in which children can develop the confidence to voice ideas, show and share feelings and opinions; and the knowledge to recognise abuse and bullying. Children should be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour. All staff are reminded to remain vigilant in their duty of care to the pupils in their care and are expected to:

- be able to identify signs and symptoms of abuse;
- report concerns, including concerns about other staff or adults, to a DSL. Alternatively, all staff may raise concerns directly with Children's Social services;
- be aware of the relevant local procedures and guidelines;
- monitor and report as required on the welfare, attendance and progress of all pupils;
- submit dated, factual and confidential records of CP concerns to the DSLs, using the agreed format;
- respond appropriately to disclosures from children and young people, (stay calm, reassure without making unrealistic promises, listen, avoid leading questions, avoid being judgemental and keep records).

The site team and senior leadership team work closely together to ensure that the site is kept as secure as possible at all times. However, all staff have responsibility for ensuring that the site is as safe and secure as is reasonably possible, for the benefit of pupils and colleagues. The school operates card contact security to all external doors. All visitors, including Governors, other professionals and contractors are required to identify themselves on arrival and to sign the visitors' log. Visitors are also required to wear a visitor's badge throughout the duration of their stay. Any unknown person on site, who is not wearing a visitor's badge, will be challenged.

Where there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in the school, staff should refer to the Whistle-blowing Policy.

A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- an legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above has been concealed.

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government, the number is 0800 800 5000.

## 6. Responsibilities of Governors

Governors have a statutory responsibility, together with the Headteacher, for ensuring that policies, strategies and procedures are in place to ensure the welfare of all pupils. The school will ensure that all Governors receive regular safeguarding training and key designated Governors will undertake further training in safer recruitment and vetting procedures. Governors will regularly review school's practice to ensure that this meets required standards underpinned by robust governance and clear lines of responsibility. This is achieved by:

- regular review of all statutory policies through Governor committees according to an agreed timetable;
- appointing a designated Child Protection Governor, who meets with the DSL regularly to review strategies and procedures;
- monitoring the Single Central Record termly and reporting to full Governing Body meetings;
- ensuring that the designated staff and Governors attend training and that regular training is provided for all other staff and Governors.

## 7. Allegations against staff

Governors recognise that because of their daily contact with children in a variety of situations, including a caring role, teachers and other school staff are vulnerable to accusations of abuse.

Governors recognise that, regrettably in some cases, allegations against staff may be true. Governors therefore expect all staff to follow the Ealing agreed procedures for responding to allegations against staff.

The guidance in KCSIE should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the school or college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers and volunteers has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
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This will initially mean a discussion with the Designated Teacher who will be guided by the school's policy on Managing Allegations Against School Staff. In the case where the allegation is against the Headteacher,

this should be reported to the Chair of Governors. Staff may also raise concerns directly with Children's Social Care to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) promptly.

The LADO for Ealing is:

Natalie Cernuda, contactable via [asv@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:asv@ealing.gov.uk) or 07890940241.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Staff, parents and Governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

### **8. Staff contact with children and young people**

In order to minimise the risk of accusations being made against staff as a result of their daily contact with pupils, all school staff should familiarise themselves with the school and borough Guidelines on the Use of Control and Physical Restraint by Staff and Guidance and Procedures for School Visits. Particular consideration should be given to how an intervention, action or activity might be interpreted by a casual observer.

### **9. Staff training and support**

The DSLs will undergo training in SCP every two years. Policies and procedures according to any changes in SCP legislation or guidance will be made regularly. The DSL will update all staff annually in the light of this. All staff will receive formal training every two years from accredited trainers. Other updates will be provided throughout the year at weekly behaviour and safety briefings when appropriate.

### **10. Child protection**

Springhallow School staff and Governors fully recognise their responsibilities for Safeguarding and Child Protection. This responsibility applies to all staff, Governors, transport passenger assistants and volunteers working in the school. All concerns relating to child protection should be reported to a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In order to ensure the safeguarding of pupils in the school, the Headteacher and Governors will ensure the following key procedures are in place:

- using safe recruitment practices in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with our children;
- raising awareness of CP and helping our pupils to learn the skills to keep themselves safe;
- developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse;
- supporting pupils who have been abused, in accordance with their agreed child protection plan; and

- establishing a safe environment where all can learn and develop.

Springhallow School staff know their pupils very well, and can gauge when things are difficult for the child, or when something might be going wrong for them. Staff can then talk to their direct line manager or one of the DSLs.

All staff, through all aspects of the curriculum and all pastoral aspects of the school day, help to make children aware of how they can keep themselves safe, what is private and what public, who is safe to trust is.

The school undertakes the following procedures in child protection:

- Cathal Owens is the DSL for CP and receives training in this.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for safeguarding and child protection at Springhallow. The key role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to:
  - manage referrals from school staff or any others from outside the school;
  - work with external agencies and professionals on matter of safety and safeguarding;
  - undertake training;
  - raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst the staff and parents; and
  - ensure that child protection information is transferred to the pupil's new school
- Other members of the Senior Leadership Team are the deputy DSLs for CP and also receive training. Any DSL will be able to take over the responsibility for the lead role and will get in touch with the Cathal Owens or borough.
- The DSL will be named as the designated teacher for any event involving pupils outside of school time. They will be available by telephone to advise and take action.
- The Governing Body has nominated a Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding (Mary Geddes)
- All staff, including supply staff, volunteers and Governors know who the designated people are and what their role is.
- All of the above understand their responsibility to be aware of CP issues, and if they have any concerns to relay them either to their line manager, who will talk to the responsible person, or direct to the responsible person.
- The school's responsibilities in relation to CP are made clear to parents and carers so that they understand the school's obligations.
- All staff receive training at least annually. New staff and volunteers receive training at induction.
- In the event that an urgent referral has to be made, for children whose family live in Ealing, the DSL will contact Ealing Social Services Contact Centre on 020 8825 8000. The Out of Hours Emergency Team takes referrals from 5 p.m. and can be contacted on 020 8825 5000. For pupils who live in other Local Authorities, the relevant Social Services will be contacted.
- The school would alert the relevant social care services team if there was an unexplained absence of more than two days of a child who has a CP plan or who is a designated as a Looked After Child.
- Relevant school staff attend social services case conferences and reviews in all boroughs that have pupils at the school.
- All CP records are in a locked cabinet in the Deputy Headteacher's office or Post 16 office – From November 2020 the school has automated the process for reporting and managing concerns and



now uses 'MyConcern'. All new concerns will be logged onto this system, with a reference made to archived concerns where these exist. All archived concerns will be kept within the DHTs filing cabinet for the duration of the retention period.

- The DSLs follow agreed CP procedures when a member of staff has raised a concern about a child, using the agreed reporting systems. The designated person will follow these procedures in deciding whether to make a CP or Child in Need referral.
- The Headteacher follows agreed Ealing procedures of investigation if an allegation is made against an adult in the school. If this allegation should be against the Headteacher then the Deputy Headteacher will advise the Chair of Governors and report to the Local Authority's Safeguarding Lead, who will advise on the appropriate procedure to be followed. These procedures are described in the school's "Managing Allegations against School Staff" policy.
- Safeguarding allegations made against another pupil will be treated in the same way as all other allegations. Parents of all pupils involved in the incident will be informed and communicated with.
- The Headteacher, supported by the rest of the senior leadership team, the school administrative team, Governors and the Human Resources Division of the borough ensures that safe recruitment practices are always followed, including DBS checks on all staff.

All Governors undergo an enhanced DBS check. New volunteers, or those taking on new duties that lead to unsupervised contact with children will undergo an enhanced DBS disclosure where the volunteering is regular and involves unsupervised contact with children. In some cases, for a very short-term placement and when the volunteer will never be unsupervised, no check will be carried out after a risk assessment.

## **11. Possible Sources of Abuse**

The Governments' document, Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020, Part 1) refers to the following possible sources of abuse. School staff are trained to be mindful of these when being vigilant in safeguarding:

- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Children missing education
- Child missing from home or care
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- County Lines
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate

- 'Honour-based' Abuse
- Mental health
- Missing children and adults
- Peer on peer abuse
- Private fostering
- Preventing radicalisation
- Relationship abuse
- Sexting
- Trafficking

## **12. Child Sexual Exploitation**

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

The definition is:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

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

Potential vulnerabilities include:

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

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;

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

More information can be found in:

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

### **13. Child Criminal Exploitation**

The definition of Child Criminal Exploitation, which can be found on KCSIE (2020) page 83, is:

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

### **14. Looked After Children**

The Governing Body has appointed a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after and ensures that this person has appropriate training. This is the same person as the one appointed for all Safeguarding and Child Protection in the school.

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. The Governing Body ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keeping looked after children safe. In particular, the appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or

those with parental responsibility. They also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The designated safeguarding lead, through the designated teacher for looked after children, has details of the child's social worker (if any) who looks after the child.

### **15. Female Genital Mutilation**

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

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

Risk factors for FGM include:

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

#### **Symptoms of FGM**

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

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

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

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. In schools, this will usually come from a disclosure (unlike in the medical profession where an observation may have been made).

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out; and discuss any such cases with the safeguarding lead and children's social care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

## **16. Safeguarding Pupils Who Are Vulnerable To Extremism (PREVENT)**

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

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

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

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

Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

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

### **Recognising Extremism**

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

## **17. County Lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.’

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

## **18. Domestic Abuse**

The definition of Domestic Abuse is:

any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

## **19. ‘Honour-based’ Abuse**

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

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

## **20. Mental Health**

All staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

School staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues, but may notice behaviours that may be of concern.

Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that may also be a safeguarding concern, they should raise the issue by informing the DSL lead or a deputy DSL.

## **21. Children Missing from Education (CME)**

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

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

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

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

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
  - leave school to be home educated
  - move away from the school's location
  - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
  - are permanently excluded

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

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date. Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register in line with their attendance policy. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

## **22. Peer on Peer abuse**

Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- gender-based violence
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation-type violence and rituals.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up". Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse. This could for example include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence.

At Springhallow School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

In cases of 'sexting' we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) published in 2017: 'Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents, and safeguarding young people'.

### **23. Private Fostering**

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

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

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

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

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



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

## **24. The curriculum**

All of our pupils have special educational needs. Some of them are non-verbal communicators. As such, we recognise that they are highly vulnerable, and that their parents and carers may be highly anxious on their behalf. It is the duty of staff at Springhallow School to take extra care to try to correctly interpret apparent signs of abuse or neglect. Indications of abuse will be reported as for other pupils.

The school is aware that any child who is being abused in any way may have feelings such as guilt, anger or lack of self-worth. Everything we do in SPRINGHALLOW SCHOOL aims to help all children to have confidence, motivation and independence, and to feel safe, happy and as free from anxiety as we can possibly manage.

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

We do this through:

- the positive ethos of the school;
- developing pupils' sense of themselves and their self-esteem through specifically designed sessions as well as PSHE and whole school rewards;
- developing their communication skills, including updating pupils communication aids with appropriate and necessary language;
- developing strategies for danger-awareness and self-protection where possible, including access to and the use of the internet and modern communication tools (see eSafety Policy);
- When children use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems.
- developing a sense of boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, both their own and those of others;(see Sex & Relationship Education policy and Intimate Care policy);
- developing tolerant, caring and non-abusive behaviour between pupils within the classroom and at non curriculum times such as lunch and playtime;
- classroom strategies (see Teaching and Learning Policy);
- the curriculum, including PSHE and online behaviours;
- consistency of approach from well-trained staff;
- encouragement of acceptable behaviours within a whole school positive behaviour approach and individual approaches through Individual Education Plans(see Positive Behaviour Policy);
- close liaison with other agencies such as social services, CAMHS, EPS;
- close liaison with the SAFE workers (pastoral team) at ARA
- access via request (pupil, parent or staff) to a trained counsellor at the school
- close communication systems with parents and carers;

- ensuring that all CP register records follow a child when that child moves to another school.
- close liaison with health partners to ensure care plans are communicated effectively to school staff.

## **25. Appointment of staff**

When appointing staff, Governors and staff will take account of the guidance issued nationally and by the borough, with particular reference to safer recruitment. The members of the Senior Leadership Team and key Governors have also undertaken safer recruitment training to ensure that all safeguarding procedures are adhered to. In carrying out the recruitments and appointment of staff, the school will undertake to observe the following safeguards:

- That documentation sent out to potential candidates will make it clear that CP is a high priority of the school and those rigorous checks will be made of any candidate before appointments are confirmed.
- That all references will be taken up and verified
- That a reference will always be obtained from the last employer
- That at interview, candidates will be asked to account for any gaps in their career/employment history
- That candidates will be made aware that all staff are subject to a full Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check
- That evidence of relevant checks will be recorded in a single, central location that is secure but easily accessible when appropriate and necessary.

## **26. Confidentiality**

Governors accept that CP raises issues of confidentiality, which should be clearly understood by all staff and Governors.

## **27. Record keeping and reports**

Staff are expected to report concerns, which separate fact, allegations, hearsay and opinions as soon as possible using 'MyConcern'. The DSLs will clearly indicate decisions and actions taken. These records may in some cases be required in court proceedings. The school provides written information for CP conferences as required.

## **28. Monitoring children and young people with a CP plan**

The DSL, supported by nominated staff, ensures that the welfare, progress and attendance of all pupils are closely monitored. Relevant information in relation to a CP Plan or a Child in Need Plan will be provided to Children's Services staff.

## **29. Communicating the policy to parents and carers**

Parents and carers are informed of the Safeguarding Policy, and a copy is available of the school's website. This also includes information on the DSL's responsibility to make a CP referral to the Children's Services Department if there are concerns over a child or young person.

Through this policy, parents and carers should be aware how the CP system works in the school and that they can discuss any concerns with their child's teacher or with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Effective communication with parents and carers also includes prompt reporting of injuries and accidents to children. Regular communication is maintained via home-school contact books/planners where appropriate for a pupil. Minor injuries are reported via home/school books, incident notes or letters. Wherever possible, a telephone call should be made to report the injury and to explain the circumstances.

### **30. Monitoring this policy**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher, supported by the other members of SLT and Governors to monitor and evaluate this policy. The Deputy Headteacher reports on SCP issues to the link Governor for SCP and the full Governing Body on at least an annual basis.

## **Appendix 1: Springhallow School Risk Assessment in relation to Enhanced DBS**

All staff working on the school site, Governors and all transport staff undergo an Enhanced DBS check.

For those employed by Springhallow School, the school will apply for an enhanced DBS check before staff will receive their letter of confirmation of employment. That letter will state that their permanent employment will be subject to a clear Enhanced DBS check and good references. If the Enhanced DBS check hasn't cleared before the start date of employment, the school will complete a disclosure risk assessment form and request a List 99 check from the LA.

All other staff will have an Enhanced DBS applied for either by their employer (for example transport staff and kitchen staff) or by Springhallow (for example volunteers and students).

When DBS checks have been applied for and are pending, these staff will have a reference number that will be added to the single central record (SCR). These staff will be identified by a red lanyard and will not be left alone with children for any activity. During this time these staff will still have undergone a disclosure risk assessment and List 99 check. All staff are aware of this procedure.

Once an Enhanced DBS check has been completed and cleared there may be times when staff employed by Springhallow School will be alone with pupils. However, the school aims to ensure, within the constraints of available staffing, that all staff rotate with all children ensuring that one staff member is not always working with the same child.

Staff receive safeguarding and child protection update training regularly and they are informed at this training that any incident involving a Police report, Police caution or conviction between DBS checks must be reported to the Headteacher immediately.

## Appendix 2: Child Protection Procedures

### Principles

Schools have a vital role to play in child protection and the detection of child abuse. School staff are often the main contact for pupils, outside the family. They have close and trusting contact with pupils and are thus well placed to observe physical/behavioural indicators of abuse or to be entrusted with disclosures or allegations of ill treatment.

Springhallow School fully subscribes to the LA policy on child protection.

### Practice

At Springhallow School Cathal Owens is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). In their absence the Headteacher and/or member of the Senior Leadership Team will act on their behalf.

It is essential that **all** staff follow reporting procedures outlined below. **Disclosures cannot be negotiable.** If abuse, be it neglect/emotional, physical or sexual, is reported or suspected the **action must be taken immediately**. All staff members have a responsibility to discuss any child protection issues with the Deputy Headteacher who will then act appropriately. Social services will make the final decision on anything that is reported to them.

### Child abuse reporting procedures

If any member of staff suspects, or has evidence of a disclosure of abuse, then within the same day, whilst the pupil is still at school, the following steps should be taken.

1. The staff member with the concern will report the incident using 'MyConcern'
2. The DSL will consult all staff members who have knowledge of the child's welfare
3. The DSL will decide if a referral to Social Services is required. Where the concern is shared by other agencies e.g. school nurse, then each agency must report it independently to Social Services. It is essential that all agencies work together in order to protect children from abuse.
4. All actions will be logged on 'MyConcern'

If there is uncertainty about whether to refer, then the teacher can consult one or all of the following:

- the appendix to these guidelines that give details of signs, symptoms and indicators of abuse;
- the social services office for the child's home address
- the Local Authority's designated officer for child protection.

For Ealing pupils, referrals should be made by phone to the Contact Centre on 020 8825 8000. For pupils resident in other Local Authorities, the relevant Social Services should be contacted. Give the cause for concern, the facts of the case, information about siblings, past worries, contact with the parents, any explanation offered, and any opinion, hearsay and judgement you want to make on those facts. Ask to be kept informed of developments. The contact centre will then refer the case on to the appropriate Social Services department.

Confirm your referral, and the details of it, in writing to the Social Services team to which the referral has been passed.

The DSL, in liaison with the Social Services Department will decide who will tell the child's parents about the referral, and when this will happen. These decisions depend on the nature of the case.

**In cases of sexual abuse the concerns must not be discussed with parents.** Social services will do this only after an inter-agency strategy meeting. School staff will be invited to attend this meeting. Advance warning may allow an abuser to bribe or intimidate the child. The same may apply in cases of physical abuse. Advising parents of the referral should only happen after discussion with Social Services.

### **Staff Training**

Child Protection procedures will be discussed as part of a staff member's induction programme. Child protection training will be provided for all staff at least annually.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Signs and Symptoms of Abuse and Neglect**

(Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020) Paragraphs 19 – 26)

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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

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