



Including local arrangements in annexes for:

HORIZONS ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

The relevant **Local Children's Safeguarding Children Partnership** for this school is:

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership
Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board

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POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Scope

This policy details the arrangements the Maiden Erlegh Trust has in place to ensure that it meets its statutory requirements in terms of child protection and safeguarding and does all that it can to keep children in all schools within the Trust safe.

Principles

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 gives maintained schools a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and have due regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#) provides clear advice and statutory guidance on appropriate behaviours for all adults working with children.

We believe that every child regardless of age always has and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in them being physically or psychologically damaged.

We agree that we have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils/students in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities, pastoral care and extended school activities. In order to achieve this, all members of staff (including volunteers and governors) in this school, in whatever capacity, will always act proactively in child welfare matters especially where there is a possibility that a child may be at risk of significant harm.

Maiden Erlegh Trust seeks to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of their responsibility for pastoral care. The Trust hopes that parents and children will feel free to talk about any concerns and will see school as a safe place if there are any difficulties at home.

Children's worries and fears will be taken seriously if they seek help from a member of staff. Staff cannot promise secrecy if concerns are such that referral must be made to the appropriate agencies to safeguard the child's welfare.

If we have suspicions that a child's physical, sexual or emotional well-being is being, or is likely to be, harmed, or that they are being neglected, we will take appropriate action in accordance with the procedures issued by the respective local authority Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) or the appropriate authority for the child involved.

We aim to create a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict.

Consequently, we

- assert that teachers and other members of staff (including volunteers) in each school are an integral part of the child safeguarding process;

- accept totally that safeguarding children is an appropriate function for all members of staff within the Trust, and wholly compatible with their primary pedagogic responsibilities.
- recognise that safeguarding children in this school is a responsibility for all staff, including volunteers, School Advisory Boards and the Trustees;
- will ensure through training and supervision that all staff and volunteers in each school are alert to the possibility that a child is at risk of suffering harm, and know how to report concerns or suspicions;
- will designate a senior member of staff in each school with knowledge and skills in recognising and acting on child protection concerns. He or she will act as a source of expertise and advice, and is responsible for co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies;
- will ensure (through the designated member of staff) that staff with designated responsibility for child protection will receive appropriate training.
- will share our concerns with others who need to know, and assist in any referral process;
- will ensure that all members of staff and volunteers who have suspicion that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, refer such concerns to the designated member of staff, who will refer on to Children's Services in accordance with the procedures issued by the relevant LSCB (or the relevant authority for the child involved).
- safeguard the welfare of children whilst in each school, through positive measures to address bullying, especially where this is in relation to any incidents which involve *race, culture, country of origin, sexism, disability, giftedness, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia*, or circumstance (e.g., Young Carer, Adopted, CLA).
- will ensure that all staff are aware of the child protection procedures established by the relevant LSCB and act on any guidance or advice given by them;
- will ensure through our recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees that all people who work in our Trust are suitable to work with children,
- will act swiftly and make appropriate referrals where an allegation is made that a member of staff has committed an offence against a child, harmed a child, or acted in a way that calls into question their suitability for working with children.
- Will be professionally curious
- will aim to create a culture of vigilance "and it could happen here"
- we are prepared to think the unthinkable

Related policies

As well as ensuring that we address child protection concerns, we will also ensure that children who attend the school are kept safe from harm whilst they are in our charge. To this end, this policy must be seen in light of the following documents:

- Acceptable use of Artificial Intelligence Policy
- Acceptable use of digital technology
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Exclusions Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Prevent Duty Risk Assessment
- Procedures for dealing with allegations against employees and adults working or volunteering in schools
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Definitions of safeguarding and child protection

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the 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
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is **proactive**. It applies to all children and young people. It is everyone's responsibility, every day. Everyone has a duty to recognise, respond and report incidents.

Child Protection is **reactive**. It refers to the procedures and support given to those children and young people who have experienced abuse in their lives.

Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and are risks posed to children outside their home, such as exploitation, youth violence and county lines.

Wider environmental factors in a child's life may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare. This is known as **Contextual Safeguarding**.

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each school has one Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a senior member of the school's leadership team. The DSL should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Additionally, there should be at least one Deputy. This role of DSL and Deputy DSL is set out in the post holder's job description. If the DSL is not available, then a Deputy DSL will take the lead on any incident.

The Trust designated safeguarding lead is the School Improvement Director: Culture & Safeguarding (SID:CS) who is responsible for oversight of policy and practice. Their role is to support, advise, and ensure that schools discharge their responsibilities effectively.

See Annex 1 for the names of designated staff.

The DSL is key to ensuring that proper procedures and policies are in place and are followed with regard to child safeguarding issues. They will also act as a dedicated resource available for other staff, volunteers and School Advisory Board members and Trustees to draw upon.

Within Maiden Erlegh Trust:

- The DSL and their deputies have the status and authority within the school management structure to carry out the duties of the post and are senior member of staff.
- They possess skills in recognising and dealing with child welfare concerns and have access to appropriate and regular training.
- All members of staff, including volunteers and regular visitors are made aware of who these people are, what their roles are and how they can be contacted and how they can access readily, this policy.
- The DSL and their deputies will act as a source of advice and coordinate action within the school over child protection cases. They will also cascade safeguarding guidance issued by the LSCB.
- The DSL will need to liaise with other agencies and build good working relationships with colleagues from these agencies.
- The DSL is the first person to whom members of staff report concerns about pupils/students.
- The DSL is responsible for considering whether a referral should be made and for referring cases of suspected abuse to the relevant investigating agencies according to the procedures established by the relevant LSCB.
- The DSL is not responsible for dealing with allegations made against members of staff – this person is the Headteacher. Allegations made against the Headteacher will be dealt with by the Chair of the School Advisory Board.
- Where the DSL has concerns that a referral has not been dealt with in accordance with the child protection procedures, they will ask the Head of Safeguarding at the relevant authority to investigate further.
- The DSL liaises with the Headteacher to inform him/her/them of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for the role
- The Chief Executive Officer and relevant Trustees are made aware of serious issues and ongoing investigations (respecting the need for confidentiality wherever possible).
- The Trust works with the individual Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure that this policy is reviewed and updated annually
- The DSL and their deputies keep detailed accurate secure written records of referrals/concerns and ensure that these are held in a secure place.
- The DSL ensures that parents are aware of this policy and the fact that a school may need to make referrals (the policy is available to all parents on the website).
- Where children leave a school roll, we ensure any child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, separately from the main file, either electronically by CPOMS or addressed to the DSL at the new school.
- Where a child leaves and the new school is not known, we alert the local authority so that the child's name can be included on the database for missing pupil/students.
- We will be alert to the possibility of Honour Based Abuse (HBA) including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage; the Attendance Officer or

equivalent will monitor holidays and leaves of absence and alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the event of a concern.

- All staff understand their mandatory duty to report to the police any acts of FGM on a girl under 18.
- Where a pupil/student is educated, either fully or partially, in another establishment, we ensure that it is compliant with safeguarding legislation and has appropriate policies in place. As the pupil/student's home school, each school will take responsibility for leading on child protection issues, even if initially disclosed elsewhere (unless it is not in the pupil/student's best interests).
- When organising off-site and alternative provision, schools will comply with the expectations outlined in the DfE guidance: [Arranging Alternative Provision](#)
- Work Experience placements are organised by external organisations who comply with guidelines and legislation. In some cases, long term work placements may be incorporated into a student's timetable.
- The DSL and their deputies also have an important role in ensuring all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training. They:
 - Attend training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case
 - Have a working knowledge of how the relevant LSCB operates and the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these when required.
 - Attend any relevant or refresher training courses and then ensure that any new or key messages are passed to other staff, volunteers, and governors.

Designated governance

The designated Trustee for safeguarding is **Mike Bellamy**

In addition, each School Advisory Board (SAB) has a designated safeguarding link. The Trust will ensure that the SAB link is equipped 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.

Child protection is important. The SAB (School Advisory Board) and the Trust will ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under inter-agency procedures.

The Trust will ensure that the DSL and any deputies are given sufficient time to carry out their duties, including accessing training.

The Trust and the SAB will review safeguarding practices in the school on a regular basis, and no less than annually, to ensure that:

- Each school is carrying out its duties to safeguard the welfare of children at the school
- Members of staff and volunteers are aware of current practices in this matter, and that staff receive training where appropriate
- Child protection is integrated with induction procedures for all new members of staff and volunteers
- Each school follows the procedures agreed by their respective LSCB, and any supplementary guidance issued by the Local Authority (or any other relevant Authority)
- Only persons suitable to work with children shall be employed in each school, or work there in a voluntary capacity
- Where safeguarding concerns about a member of staff are substantiated, take appropriate disciplinary action

Monitoring of safeguarding

Safeguarding Reports

The DSL of each school will provide regular updates to the SAB (School Advisory Board) on matters of safeguarding and child protection.

At the end of each academic year, each school's DSL will complete a safeguarding (Section 175) audit and submit the results to the SAB and SID:CS

- The SID:CS/CEO will submit a summary of the audits' findings to the Trust as part of their report in the summer term.
- Where issues raised from the audit are minimal, they will either be rectified immediately, or actions included in the School Improvement Plan.
- Where issues are more significant, an urgent recovery plan will be agreed with the SID:CS and EDE and submitted separately to the SAB. The Trust Board will also be informed.

Single Central Record (SCR)

Each school and Central Services will hold and manage its own SCR. This is a register of all staff, self-employed, contractors and volunteers working in the school and details the safeguarding checks that have been made. The format and contents of the SCR will comply with the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and other relevant guidance.

Each SCR is checked half-termly alternating between the School Improvement Director: Culture and Safeguarding and the Headteacher or DSL, to ensure that all information is accurate and up to date.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Safer recruitment

In order to ensure that children are protected whilst at any school within the Trust, we will ensure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

We accept that it is our responsibility to follow the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)

- A member on every recruitment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment and selection training.
- All of our staff are appropriately qualified and have the relevant employment history with any gaps accounted for.
- Relevant checks are made to ensure they are safe to work with children in compliance with Safer Recruitment requirements, including the relevant check under the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and a prohibition check for qualified teachers, plus taking up of references.
- The names of all teaching staff are checked to ensure that they are not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State
- As part of the shortlisting process, we carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. Any issues or incidents that are identified may be explored with the applicant at interview.

Induction and training

All new members of staff will complete an online safeguarding training course ahead of starting as well as a Prevent awareness course. As part of their induction new staff will also receive face to face induction training, which will give an overview of the organisation and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure, as well as how to identify and report abuse. They also learn about confidentiality and data protection issues.

All staff must have read:

Staff Code of Conduct

School Behaviour Policy (includes the use of reasonable force and seclusion)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) Part One

Equality Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Deputies will attend accredited training every two years. All staff will attend annual update training (usually delivered in school by the DSL). The DSL and general staff training and pupil/student awareness actions take place throughout the year. Articles and information on matters relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding are included in staff bulletins and staff meetings.

Staff are all made aware that anyone can make a Child Protection referral and how to

do that including signposting to the relevant page on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

School Advisory Board members and Trustees also have a programme of induction and training which includes:

- Mandatory reading as above
- On-line and face-to-face sessions at induction and/or during the year
- Regular update emails and notices through the School Improvement Director: Culture and Safeguarding and Chief Executive Officer.
- Safeguarding representatives undertake relevant training

Volunteers

We understand that some people otherwise unsuitable for working with children may use volunteering to gain access to children; for this reason, any volunteers in the school, in whatever capacity, will be given the same consideration as paid staff.

Where a parent or other volunteer helps on a one-off basis, he/she will only work under the direct supervision of a member of staff, and at no time have one to one contact with children. However, if a parent or other volunteer is to be in a school regularly (more than 3 days in any 30) or over a longer period then they undergo relevant checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. All Governors will undertake an enhanced DBS check.

We have a separate Visiting Speakers Procedure which can be viewed on the school website.

SCHOOL APPROACHES

Safeguarding education

Child protection issues will be addressed through the Personal Development curriculum.

All children will receive guidance on child protection issues and what to do if they have a concern. This will be delivered in an age-appropriate way, by class teachers, Personal Development lessons and/or via assemblies delivered by safeguarding staff. Through preventative education we aim to create a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict. As a result, children will be taught to recognise when they or someone they know are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

All children will receive advice on who they can speak to about concerns they may have. This includes specific advice for LGBT children needing a safe space. We ask parents to ensure that we have at least two emergency contacts for their child.

Unless instructed not to by parents, we will take a photograph of every child and every member of staff which will be stored on our database. This is to aid with the fast and efficient physical identification of all members of the school community.

Responding to concerns

Members of staff and volunteers must not investigate suspicions; if anyone believes that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, they must always refer such concerns to the DSL, who will consider whether to refer the matter to the relevant Children's Services. In the event of a disclosure, staff can assure the child of confidentiality whilst explaining that it will be shared and must never promise to keep it secret.

To this end, volunteers and staff must record what they have seen, heard, or know accurately at the time the event occurs, and share their concerns with the DSL (or Headteacher if it is a concern about a member of staff). This applies:

- Upon the receipt of any information from a child, or if any person has suspicions that a child may be at risk of harm, or
- If anyone observes injuries that appear to be non-accidental, or
- Where a child or young person makes a direct allegation or implies that they have been abused,
- Where a child or young person makes an allegation against a member of staff

All concerns raised about a child (including verbally) will be recorded electronically using CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) and relevant notes and

documents uploaded. CPOMS will automatically alert the DSL and Deputies via email that a concern has been logged.

Information relating to Child Protection is exempt from GDPR regulations and will not necessarily be shared in the event of a Subject Access Request.

If any member of staff fails to report their concerns, this may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

Children, parents and carers can raise concerns to any member of staff. Their concerns will be treated seriously and will be recorded as outlined above.

Early Help

Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. The school will work with families, supporting and advising them to help prevent situations deteriorating. We will encourage parents to make use of outside organisations and agencies and will assist with referrals and requests. In some cases, a formal referral requesting support will need to be made by the school to children's social care in consultation with parents and submitted with parental consent.

Police interviews

Police interviews taking place in school are governed by specific guidance [PACE](#) (2019). Children will only be interviewed at school in exceptional circumstances and only when the headteacher or their nominee agrees and only in the presence of an appropriate adult. Every effort will be made to notify the parent/carer in order that they can act as the appropriate adult. If awaiting the appropriate adult would cause unreasonable delay the headteacher or their nominee can act as the appropriate adult for the purposes of the interview.

A member of staff acting as an appropriate adult is **not** expected to act simply as an observer. The purpose of their presence is to advise the person being interviewed, to observe whether the interview is being conducted properly and fairly and to facilitate communication with the person being interviewed. They must stop the interview at any time should they feel it is not being properly conducted.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership designed to support children who have experienced domestic abuse. It involves the police notifying a school's designated safeguarding lead before the start of the next school day after attending a domestic abuse incident where children are involved. This enables the school to provide immediate and appropriate support to the child. We are committed partners to the Operation Encompass strategy.

Confidentiality

The Trust, and all members of staff, will ensure that all data about pupil/students is handled in accordance with the requirements of the law, and any national and local guidance.

Any member of staff who has access to sensitive information about a child or the child's family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only disclosed to those people who need to know.

Regardless of the duty of confidentiality, if any member of staff has reason to believe that a child may be suffering harm, or be at risk of harm, their duty is to forward this information without delay to the designated member of staff for child protection.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information will not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent.

SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS

Children with SEND

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, including:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Mental health

Maiden Erlegh Trust recognises that good mental health is as important as good physical health and that poor mental health constitutes a safeguarding risk. We aim to promote good mental health in schools by:

- Developing a whole school approach to support mental wellbeing
- Teaching about mental health and wellbeing through a programme of Personal Development.
- Helping and training staff to recognise signs and symptoms of mental health needs in pupils/students and know what to do should they have a concern
- Having a clear process to follow where a concern is raised about a pupil/student's mental wellbeing
- Developing links with specialist mental health services
- Knowing what local and national help and support is available in order that these can be signposted to pupils/students and their families to access help and support
- Ensuring key staff are equipped with the skills to support and manage pupils/students with mental health needs in their learning
- Where appropriate, sharing information about pupils/students who are experiencing any mental health issues with those who work with them in school so that they can be supported in the school environment

Each school has a Designated Mental Health Lead. See Annex 1 for designated staff

Attendance

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. We have a duty of care to safeguard children absent from school and will therefore undertake sighting visits to satisfy ourselves that children are safe. We aim to see or visit children at least every five days.

Child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour

Staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers, physically, emotionally or sexually. There are different forms that child-on-child abuse can take, but abuse is abuse and downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, child-on-child sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment, which might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos including self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes; inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence;
- Upskirting and downblousing.

Any such incidents will be dealt with on a case-by case basis with the DSL taking a leading role and using their professional judgment, supported by other agencies, such as children’s social care and the police as required.

Some situations are statutorily clear:

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape;
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law;
- creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal. This includes children making and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves.

Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration,

sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis. In all cases the needs and wishes of the victim will be at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required).

Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- whether there may have been other victims,
- the alleged perpetrator(s);
- siblings of both victims and perpetrators;
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms.
- actions to make the location of the incident safer (if the incident took place on school grounds).

Nudes and indecent imagery

If we become aware of an incident of making, sending or receiving explicit images (consensual and non-consensual) we will follow government advice: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings](#).

We will not intentionally view any nudes or semi-nudes unless there is good and clear reason to do so (as outlined in the guidance). We will not copy, print, share, store or save images.

Incidents will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and this may include a referral to police/social care. In some cases, school sanctions will be applied but in all cases school responses will prioritise support and education.

An immediate referral to police/social care will be made if:

- the incident involves an adult
- there is evidence to suggest the child has been coerced, pressured or exploited
- we have reason to believe the child is at immediate risk of harm
- it has been determined that the imagery involves content that depicts sexual acts that are not in line with the child's developmental age
- the children involved are 12 or under
- the imagery involves sexual acts and any child in the image is 12 or under

This will apply in all cases, including those where AI has been used to create or modify images.

Extremism and radicalisation

The Prevent Duty 2023 is advice from the Department for Education to help schools understand their duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015.

We build children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. Schools will create an environment in which children can debate controversial issues and help them understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

Staff are trained to be alert to pupil/students expressing extremist views. When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil/student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DSL at the relevant school or to their deputies.

Gender questioning children

The school will not initiate actions relating to a pupil's social transition. Any request for support will be considered only if raised by the pupil/student and/or their parent/carer. Decisions will be made in consultation with parents/carers, taking into account the best interests of the pupil and other students, which may not align with the pupil's wishes.

The school will not permit pupils to access toilets, changing rooms, sports, or residential accommodation designated for the opposite biological sex, and will not allow overnight accommodation with pupils of the opposite biological sex. No exceptions will be made.

In discussions, the school will sensitively explain these boundaries while continuing to challenge bullying and harassment. The school will also respect the rights of all pupils/students and staff, including those relating to religion or belief. Reasonable adjustments (e.g., use of names rather than pronouns) may be considered where appropriate.

The school will be mindful of the additional vulnerabilities of pupils/students living in stealth. Living in stealth refers to pupils/students who have transitioned, and other pupils/students and/or staff are unaware of their biological sex.

Private fostering

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

Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or great aunt. A grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt or stepparent is **not** considered to be a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child.

There is a mandatory duty on schools to inform the local authority of children in such an arrangement.

TECHNOLOGY

Use of technology

All staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using Artificial Intelligence (AI) e.g. deepfakes, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content. All incidents will be recorded and reported to the DSL.

Artificial intelligence (AI) can present safeguarding risks, as it may generate realistic but misleading content, including fake images, videos, or text. Pupils may misuse AI for bullying, impersonation, or accessing inappropriate material.

A deepfake is a type of artificially created media - usually video, audio, or images - that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to realistically alter or generate content, so it appears that someone said or did something they didn't actually do.

IT filtering and monitoring

Online safety and effective monitoring are integral to our safeguarding strategy.

IT filtering software is in place in all schools to:

block inappropriate, unsafe, or distracting online content for students and staff.

track and review online activity and to ensure safety, appropriate behaviour, and compliance with school policies.

Our software constantly monitors activity on all school owned devices as well as all internet traffic on school networks and Wi-Fi. All activity is cross referenced against a bank of URLs and a glossary of words and phrases that could be a cause for concern.

- When an alert is triggered by a pupil/student, an email is sent to the DSL of the school.
- When an alert is triggered by a member of staff, an email is sent to the Headteacher.

All alerts are assessed for risk and any that are judged to be safeguarding concerns will be followed up.

For online activity that contravenes the Acceptable Use of Digital Technology Policy and/or the Staff Code of Conduct, the relevant Trust policies will be followed. This could lead to sanctions up to and including Permanent Exclusion (for a child) and

Dismissal (for a member of staff). If necessary, the police and local authorities will be informed.

We will have due regard to the DfE guidance: [Generative AI: product safety expectations](#) to ensure that we use generative artificial intelligence safely.

Management of mobile phones and other devices

Our schools are mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only. When used at a time or in a way which is restricted, the mobile telephone or other electronic device will be a 'prohibited item' banned by the school rules, and subject to the normal rules on seizure, retention or destruction.

A pupil/student's device may also be confiscated by the school as a disciplinary sanction for misconduct by the pupil/student. In such cases, the device will be retained until it can be collected by the pupil/student and/or parent after a period of time agreed by School, this may be up to the end of the current term.

Any use of any electronic device must comply with the school's Acceptable Use Agreement for ICT. Any unauthorised use of any electronic device will be considered to be in breach of the Acceptable Use Agreement for ICT.

Staff are expected to lead by example. Mobiles phones should not be used in any pupil/student areas.

Photographing children

We understand that parents like to take photos of or video record their children in the school play, or at sports day, or school presentations. This is a normal part of family life, and we will not discourage parents from celebrating their child's successes.

However, if there are Health and Safety issues associated with this - i.e., the use of a flash when taking photos could distract or dazzle the child, and cause them to have an accident, we will encourage parents to use film or settings on their camera that do not require flash.

We will not allow others to photograph or film pupil/students during a school activity without parental permission.

We will not allow images of pupil/students to be used on the school or Trust website, on any virtual learning environment, social media platforms, publicity, or press releases, without permission from the parent via the admissions consent form.

The Trust cannot be held accountable for photographs or video footage taken by parents or members of the public at school functions.

STAFF

Conduct of staff

The Trust has a duty to ensure that professional behaviour applies to relationships between staff and children, and that all members of staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries. This is covered in the Staff Code of Conduct and in Annex 2.

At all times, members of staff are required to work in a professional way with children. All staff should be aware of the dangers inherent in:

- working alone with a child
- physical interventions
- cultural and gender stereotyping
- dealing with sensitive information
- giving to and receiving gifts from children and parents
- contacting children through private telephones (including texting), e-mail, or social networking websites.
- disclosing personal details inappropriately
- meeting pupil/students outside school hours or school duties

If any member of staff has reasonable suspicion that a child is suffering harm, and fails to act in accordance with this policy and the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board procedures, the Trust will view this as misconduct, and take appropriate action.

Allegations against adults

All school staff have a duty to report any concerns they have about any member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, contractor or governor either about a safeguarding issue or other unlawful activity. This is referred to as Whistleblowing and applies to incidents both in school and out of school.

You have a duty to report if you believe that a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, contractor or governor 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.

Allegations will be dealt with in accordance with national guidance and agreements, which are implemented by the local authority.

The Headteacher of the school, rather than the designated member of staff will handle such allegations, unless the allegation is against the Headteacher, when the Chief Executive Officer and the Chair of the School Advisory Board will handle the allegation.

The person dealing with the allegation will gather information about the allegation, and report these without delay to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if he/she considers they meet the threshold.

The Trust has a separate document '*Procedures for dealing with allegations against employees and adults working or volunteering in schools*' which covers this area in more depth.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – and the line is available from 08:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday, and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is help@nspcc.org.uk

Low level concerns

All employees have a duty to report to the Headteacher any low-level concerns about the conduct of staff or volunteers in the school. The reporting member of staff/volunteer is not required to make a judgement on the seriousness, or not, of the matter being referred. Low-level concerns:

- relate to behaviours, words or deeds which do not involve serious harm
- they may also include behaviour, words or deeds which may be construed as a low-level concern
- wouldn't apparently merit referral to the LADO or meet the allegation threshold
- might be behaviour inconsistent with the Trust's Code of Conduct
- causes a sense of unease or a nagging doubt, including conduct outside work

If your concern is about the Headteacher, it should be referred to the Chair of the School Advisory Board.

Relationships and associations

Whilst Disqualification by Association only applies to those working in domestic settings, all staff should be aware that relationships and associations that they have in school and outside (including online) may have an implication for the safeguarding of children. Where this is the case, the member of staff must speak to the DSL or Headteacher.

Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (Primary settings only)

Schools that work with children under 8 years old will have due regard to the Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2006 which applies to staff who work in a

childcare capacity, whether paid, volunteer or are on work placements. Relevant staff are:

- Those working with early years (birth till 1st September following 5th birthday) at any time.
- Those working before or after school with those in later years (5 to 8 years old)

For those schools in the Trust where this is applicable, DBS checks will show relevant offences and whether staff are on the Children's Barred List.

Before and after school activities

Where any out of school hours activities are provided by other bodies or organisations (such as sports clubs) each school will ensure that these bodies have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school on such matters. Each school will also ensure that they are aware of the local safeguarding arrangements.

CONTRACTS

Hiring of school premises

Where any school in the Trust hires out its premises to an organisation, it will seek reassurance that, where the activities involve Under 18's, they have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll. If an allegation is received to an external hirer, we will follow our usual procedures, including informing the LADO.

Contracted services

Where a school or the Trust contracts with outside providers for specific services, the school or the Trust will ensure that these providers have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school or Trust on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the provider.

ANNEX 1: HORIZONS ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for this school is:

NAME **Charlotte Baggley (Head of School)**

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) for this school is:

NAME **Sharon Quittenton (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)**

A member of our safeguarding team is available from 9:00 to 16:00 on 0118 937 6847.

In their absence, these matters will be dealt with by the Safeguarding Team by contacting CC-safeguarding@maidenerlegthrust.org.

Outside those hours, Reading residents can seek advice from The Children's Single Point of Access run by Brighter Futures for Children on 0118 9373641. From Bracknell residents, advice can be sought by calling 01344 352005. In an emergency and where a child is at risk of harm, the police should also be notified.

The name of the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board for Reading is Sue Darby. The name of the LADO for Bracknell Forest Council is Alison Small.

DESIGNATED GOVERNOR

The designated member of the School Advisory Board is Helen Gasson.

DESIGNATED MENTAL HEALTH LEAD

The designated Mental Health Lead is: Charlotte Baggley

TRUST LEAD

The Trust safeguarding lead is Alison Walker, School Improvement Director: Culture and Safeguarding (SID:CS).

ANNEX 2: INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

This following is an extract from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. More comprehensive information can be found in the full document: [KCSiE 2026](#)

There are four kinds of abuse and neglect: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Abuse.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by 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 verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as 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 from 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 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 penetration with an object) 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.

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. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

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, for example, 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional need.