



## King's Academy Binfield

### Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

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# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.
- 1.2 Our students' welfare is our paramount concern. The local governing body will ensure that our academy will safeguard and promote the welfare of students and work together with other agencies to ensure that our academy has adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.
- 1.3 Our academy is a community and all those directly connected, staff members, governors, parents, families and students, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure.

## 2 OUR ETHOS

- 2.1 We believe that our academy should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
- 2.2 We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our academy that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to.
- 2.3 We recognise that all adults within the academy, including permanent and temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our students from harm.
- 2.4 We will work with parents to build an understanding of the academy's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

## 3 SCOPE

- 3.1 In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all members of staff in our academy, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers.

## 4 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools and academies and further education institutions (including sixth-form academies) to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the academy are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the academy. Section 157 of the same Act places a similar duty on non-maintained and independent academies, including free schools and academies.

- 4.2 Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools, further education academies and independent academies, including free schools and academies, are required to cooperate with the local authority to improve the well-being of children in the local authority area.
- 4.3 Under section 14B of the Children Act 2004, the Local Safeguarding Children Board can require an academy or further education institution to supply information in order to perform its functions. This must be complied with.
- 4.4 This policy and the accompanying procedure have been developed in accordance with the following statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures:
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, March 2015*
  - *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools, September 2016*
  - *Bracknell Forest Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures*

## 5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The academy's lead person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the **DSL**. We have 3 deputy DSL's to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times. The DSL's responsibilities are described in Appendix A.

The DSL will be on our academy leadership team and their role of DSL will be explicit in their job description. This person will have the appropriate authority and be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children. The DSL's lead responsibility will not be delegated.

The academy has a **Designated Teacher** who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children who are looked after and who will work with the Virtual Academy Head to discuss how available funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan.

- 5.2 The academy has a **nominated governor** responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice, to liaise with the principal and to provide information and reports to the local governing body.
- 5.3 The **case manager for dealing with allegations** of abuse made against academy staff members is the principal. The case manager for dealing with allegations against the principal is the chair of governors. The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in Appendix B.
- 5.4 The **principal** will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the local governing body are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

5.5 The **local governing body** is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the academy's ethos and reflected in the academy's day-to-day practice.

5.6 **All staff members, governors, volunteers and external providers** know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to students who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child.

## **6 SUPPORTING CHILDREN**

6.1 We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. Our academy may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.

6.2 We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

6.3 Our academy will support all students by:

- ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning;
- ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to online safety, enabling children and parents to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly;
- ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to;
- providing students with a number of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties;
- supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
- encouraging development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness while not condoning aggression or bullying;
- ensuring repeated hate incidents, e.g. racist, homophobic or gender- or disability-based bullying, are considered under child protection procedures;
- liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children; and
- monitoring children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns and providing appropriate support.
- ensuring that all staff are aware of the early help process, and understand their role in it, including acting as the lead professional where appropriate.
- ensuring that all staff understand the additional safeguarding issues of children with special educational needs and disabilities and how to address them
- monitoring attendance patterns and reviewing and responding to them as part of welfare and protection procedures

## **7 CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE**

- 7.1 We have developed a structured procedure in line with *Bracknell Forest Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures* - <http://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/> which will be followed by all members of the academy community in cases of suspected abuse. This is detailed in Appendix B.
- 7.2 In line with the procedures, the Bracknell Forest Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team will be notified as soon as there is a significant concern.
- 7.3 The name of the DSL will be clearly advertised in the academy, with a statement explaining the academy's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- 7.4 We will ensure all parents and carers are aware of the responsibilities of staff members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and act in the best interests of children by publishing the policy and procedures on our website and by referring to them in our introductory academy materials.

## **8 RECORD KEEPING**

- 8.1 All child protection and welfare concerns, discussions and decisions made will be recorded in writing and kept in line with the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance *Keeping Records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns Guidance*.
- 8.2 The academy will use MyConcern to log all concerns of a child protection nature.
- 8.3 We will continue to support any student leaving the academy about whom there have been concerns by ensuring that all appropriate information, including child protection and welfare concerns, is forwarded under confidential cover to the student's new academy as a matter of priority.

## **9 SAFER WORKFORCE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

- 9.1 We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our academy by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our academy have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Academics and Academies, September 2016*.
- 9.2 We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our academy. We will also ensure that any agency worker presenting for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.
- 9.3 Every job description and person specification will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder.

- 9.4 We will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.
- 9.5 We have a procedure in place to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Academics and Academies, September 2016*. This procedure is detailed in Appendix B.

## **10 STAFF INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 10.1 All new members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers and teaching assistants, will be given induction that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, online safety and familiarisation with the safeguarding and child protection policy, staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, Part One*, and Annex A Further Information September 2016, and other related policies. We will ensure that staff understand the difference between a safeguarding concern and a child in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm.
- 10.2 The induction will be proportionate to staff members' roles and responsibilities and will include as a minimum, a full induction by the DSL and the online child protection training provided by the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 10.3 The DSL will undergo updated child protection training every two years. In addition to this, their knowledge and skills should be updated regularly, and at least annually, to keep up with developments relevant to the role.
- 10.4 All staff members of the academy will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (whole-academy training) which is regularly updated. The DSL will provide briefings to the academy on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews as required, but at least annually. All governors must undergo specific online awareness training about governors' safeguarding responsibilities at least every two years.
- 10.5 Staff members who miss whole-academy training will be required to undertake other relevant training to make up for it, e.g. by joining another academy's whole-academy training.
- 10.6 The nominated governor for safeguarding and child protection will attend Governor Services training prior to or soon after appointment to the role; this training will be updated every three years.
- 10.7 We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers and contractors, have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-academy training if it takes place during their period of work for the academy.
- 10.8 The academy will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

## **11 CONFIDENTIALITY, CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHARING**

- 11.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- 11.2 The Principal or the DSL will disclose any information about a student to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis, and in the best interests of the child.
- 11.3 All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.
- 11.4 All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 11.5 All our staff members who come into contact with children will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- 11.6 We will ensure that staff members are confident about what they can and should do under the law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent. This is covered in greater detail in Appendix B.

## **12 INTER-AGENCY WORKING**

- 12.1 We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children, the police and Children's Social Care.
- 12.2 We will ensure that relevant staff members participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children.
- 12.3 We will participate in serious case reviews, other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board. We will ensure that we have a clear process for gathering the evidence required for reviews and audits, embedding recommendations into practice and completing required actions within agreed timescales.

## **13 CONTRACTORS, SERVICE AND ACTIVITY PROVIDERS AND WORK PLACEMENT PROVIDERS**

- 13.1 We will ensure that contractors and providers are aware of our academy's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures. We will require that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations use our procedure to report concerns.
- 13.2 We will seek assurance that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations and working with our children have been subjected to the appropriate level of safeguarding check in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016*. If assurance is not obtained, permission to work with our children or use our academy premises may be refused.
- 13.3 When we commission services from other organisations, we will ensure that compliance with our policy and procedures is a contractual requirement.

## **14 WHISTLE-BLOWING AND COMPLAINTS**

- 14.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so.
- 14.2 We will ensure that all staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they will speak with the principal, the Chair of the local governing body or with the Local Authority Designated Officer. Should staff not feel able to raise concerns they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285.
- 14.3 We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice.
- 14.4 We will actively seek the views of children, parents and carers and staff members on our child protection arrangements through surveys, questionnaires and other means.

## **15 SITE SECURITY**

- 15.1 All staff members have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.
- 15.2 We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into academy. Visitors are expected to sign in and out in the office visitors' log and to display a visitor's badge while on the academy site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance.
- 15.3 The academy will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent or anyone else, that threatens academy security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the academy site.

## **16 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- 16.1 We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures. This will include periodic audits of child protection files and records by the DSL
- 16.2 We will complete an audit of the academy's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board and using the audit tool provided by them for this purpose.
- 16.3 The academy's senior leadership and the local governing body will ensure that action is taken to remedy without delay any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

## **17 POLICY REVIEW**

- 17.1 This policy and the procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle.

17.2 The DSL will ensure that staff members are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures.

## **18 LINKED POLICES AND PROCEDURES**

18.1 The following policies and procedures are relevant for the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure.

- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy and Procedures
- Complaints procedure
- Drug and Alcohol Education Policy
- Online safety Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Keeping Records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns: Guidance for Early Years Settings, Schools and Academies
- Health and Safety Policy and other linked policies and risk assessments
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Offsite Activities and Educational Visits Policy and risk assessments
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Physical Education and Sports Guidance
- Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy and Guidance
- Premises Inspection Checklist
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy
- PSHEe Policy
- Student Images Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and procedures
- Teachers' Standards, Department for Education guidance available on [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk)
- Sex and Relationship Education Policy
- Social Media Policy

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy
- Staff code of conduct/behaviour policy
- Work Experience Handbook

## APPENDIX A

# The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

## 1 MANAGING REFERRALS

- 1.1 Refer all cases of suspected abuse to Bracknell Forest MASH team and to the Police if a crime may have been committed.
- 1.2 Liaise with the principal about safeguarding issues relating to individual children, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 1.3 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding.
4. Liaise with agencies providing early help services and coordinate referrals from the academy to targeted early help services for children in need of support. Monitor any cases referred to early help and consider referral to children's services where the situation does not improve.
5. Refer cases to the Channel programme (see page 29) where there is a radicalisation concern as required.

## 2 RECORD KEEPING

- 2.1 Keep electronic written records of child protection and welfare concerns in line with Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Board guidance.
- 2.2 Ensure a stand-alone file is created in MyConcern as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns.
- 2.3 Maintain a chronology in MyConcern of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns.
- 2.4 Ensure such records are kept confidentially and securely and separate from the child's educational record. We use the electronic system, MyConcern.
- 2.5 When a child leaves our academy, the DSL will make contact with the DSL at the new school and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded to the receiving academy in an appropriately agreed manner. We will retain evidence to demonstrate how the file has been transferred; this may be in the form of a written confirmation of receipt from the receiving academy and/or evidence of recorded delivery. Where a parent elects to remove their child from the academy roll to home educate, the academy will make arrangements to pass any safeguarding concerns to ISEND – Teaching and Learning Provision.

## 3 INTER-AGENCY WORKING AND INFORMATION SHARING

- 3.1 Cooperate with Children's Social Care for enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 3.2 Attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.

3.3 Liaise with other agencies working with the child, share information as appropriate and contribute to assessments.

#### **4 TRAINING**

1. Undertake appropriate training, **updated every two years**, and update knowledge and skills at least annually in order to

- be able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to them, including special circumstances such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, fabricated or induced illness
- be aware of responsibilities under the Prevent duty
- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, e.g. the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Children threshold guidance and tools and the early help planning processes;
- have a working knowledge of how the local authority conducts initial and review child protection case conferences and contribute effectively to these; and
- be alert to the specific needs of children in need (as specified in section 17 of the Children Act 1989), those with special educational needs, pregnant teenagers and young carers.

4.2 Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the academy's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new staff members.

4.3 Organise whole-academy child protection training for all staff members regularly, and provide updates at least annually. Ensure staff members who miss the training receive it by other means, e.g. by joining another academy's training or undertake relevant on-line training through the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Children Board website: <http://www.bflscb.org.uk/training>

4.4 Link with Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board to identify appropriate training opportunities for relevant staff members.

4.5 Ensure the academy allocates time and resources every year for relevant staff members to attend training.

4.6 Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the academy takes to protect them.

4.7 Maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

#### **5 AWARENESS RAISING**

5.1 Review the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures annually and liaise with the academy's local governing body to update and implement them.

5.2 Make the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures available publicly and raise awareness of parents that referrals about suspected abuse may be made and the role of the academy in any investigations that ensue.

- 5.3 Provide updates to the academy on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews, at least annually.

## **6 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- 6.1 Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of child protection and welfare concerns files (at a minimum once a year).
- 6.2 Complete an audit of the academy's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 6.3 Provide regular reports, to the local governing body detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff members and the number of children with child protection plans and other relevant data.
- 6.4 Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

## APPENDIX B

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedure

## 1 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **Abuse**, including neglect, is a form of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.
- 1.2 **Children** are any people who have not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; a 16-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger.
- 1.3 **Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 1.4 **Early help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.
- 1.5 **Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- 1.6 **Safeguarding children** is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children \(March 2015\)](#) as:
- protecting children from maltreatment;
  - preventing impairment of children's health and 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.
- 1.7 **Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'
- 1.8 For more definitions, see Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board Website: [http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat\\_key/index.htm](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/index.htm)

## 2 CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

2.1 **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate
- only there to meet another's needs
- inappropriate age or developmental expectations
- overprotection and limitation of exploration, learning and social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, e.g. domestic abuse
- making the child feel worthless and unloved - high criticism and low warmth
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying)
- exploitation or corruption

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

2.2 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care givers
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

2.3 **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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.

2.4 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetration of any part of the body, or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, including on the internet, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation is also sexual abuse; it involves children and young people receiving something, for example accommodation, drugs, gifts or affection, as a result of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It could take the form of grooming of children, e.g. to take part in sexual activities or to post sexual images of themselves on the internet.

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

### **3 SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

3.1 Academy staff members need to be aware of specific safeguarding issues and be alert to any risks. The Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board Website: <http://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/contents.html#guides> has detailed information about specific issues such as child sexual exploitation, fabricated or induced illness, female genital mutilation, children who harm other children, private fostering, etc, and the local procedures to respond to risks.

3.2 The government website, [GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk), has broad government guidance on a variety of issues. The following is not a comprehensive list and staff members should search the GOV.UK website and the *Pan-Sussex Procedures* for advice on other issues.

- child missing from education
- child missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic violence
- drugs
- online safety
- 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)
- “honour-based” violence
- mental health
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation and the Prevent duty
- self-harm and suicidal behaviour

- sexting
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking

### 3.3 Further Information on Children Missing from Education

A child going missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect, particularly on repeat occasions.

King's Academy Binfield will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect and to help prevent the risks of their going missing again.

King's Academy Binfield will inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend academy regularly, or has been absent without the academy's permission for a continuous period of 10 academy days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the academy and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

Refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016 Annex A for further guidance

### 3.4 Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation

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." 2017 statutory definition from DfE.

Teachers and academy staff are more likely to see victims on a regular basis than almost any other professional. They will notice recurrent or prolonged absences and significant changes in behaviour. The use of the 'chronology' in the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidance will enable these patterns to be identified. They are key to identifying children at risk and raise concerns at an early stage, to potentially halt the grooming process before sexual exploitation has begun. Teachers will highlight concerns about missing children as they may be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- 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
- Children who are regularly absent from school

Due to the nature of the grooming methods used by their abusers, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused. Practitioners should be aware that young people particularly aged 17 and 18 may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and will need practitioners to work with them so they can recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

As much as possible it is important that the young person is involved in decisions that are made about them.

Link to LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation procedures;

Bracknell Forest Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures -  
<http://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/contents.html#guides>

Link to DfE 'What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually abused': This should be read in conjunction with statutory guidance -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-you-suspect-a-child-is-being-sexually-exploited>

Link to DfE Statutory Guidance outlining how organisations and individuals should work together to protect young people from sexual exploitation -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance>

### 3.5 Further Information on Domestic Violence

The definition of “domestic violence and abuse” was updated by the Home Office in March 2013 to include the reality that many young people are experiencing domestic abuse and violence in relationships at a young age. They may therefore be Children in Need or likely to suffer significant harm. The latest definition from the Home Office is as follows:

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
- Emotional

Staff should be aware that any disclosures made by children may have a background in domestic abuse and that this abuse may be part of an overall pattern of abuse or violence towards women and girls in the family. That said domestic abuse can also be

experienced by males and assumptions should not be made based on the gender of perpetrators of domestic abuse.

### **3.6 Further Information on Online Safety (use of ICT, the internet, mobile technology and social media)**

The academy has an Online Safety policy which includes guidance for all students in relation to Online Safety and using the internet and social media. There are appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place. Staff are encouraged to report their concerns if they believe that children are using the internet, mobile technology or social media inappropriately (e.g. sexting). In these instances the DSL should contact the Single Point of Advice for advice on how to proceed with regards to talking to parents/carers about Online Safety. In some extreme cases the Police may become involved if a child is at risk of exploitation due to their use of the internet or social media. Consequently staff must report concerns in a timely way so that advice and support can be sought.

For further information see Keeping Children Safe in Education Annex C.

### **3.7 Further information on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There are a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 38-41 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines referred to below. E.learning for all professionals, developed by the Home Office, is available at [www.fgmelearning.co.uk](http://www.fgmelearning.co.uk)

Girls who are threatened with, or who have undergone FGM may withdraw from education, restricting their educational and personal development. They may feel unable to go against the wishes of their parents and consequently may suffer emotionally. Staff may become aware of a student because she appears anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn. They may be presented with a sudden decline in her performance, aspirations or motivation. There may be occasions when a student comes to academy or academy but then absents herself from lessons, possibly spending prolonged periods in the bathroom.

Students who fear they may be at risk of FGM can often come to the attention of, or turn to, a teacher, lecturer or other member of staff before seeking help from the police or social services. Sometimes the student's friends report it to staff. Teachers, lecturers and other members of staff are in an ideal position to identify and respond to a victim's needs at an early stage.

Link to DFE multi agency practice guidelines for female-genital-mutilation (April 2016)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>. Staff should be aware of new mandatory reporting requirements with regards to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) which require teachers to personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Further details can be found Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016

### 3.8 Further Information on Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is one in which at least one participant does not (or cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is recognised in the UK as a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats of violence, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (e.g. shame and coercion) Financial abuse can also be a factor.

Whilst it is unlikely that primary-age students will be the victims of forced marriage, they may disclose that older siblings or parents are at risk.

Further information on the role of schools and academies can be found on pages 32-36 of [Multi-agency guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage](#). Academy staff can [contact the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or email \[fm@fco.gov.uk\]\(mailto:fm@fco.gov.uk\) for advice or information](#).

### 3.9 Further information on Preventing Radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which received Royal Assent on 12 February 2015, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty"). This came into force on 1 July 2015. The Prevent duty directs inspectors to examine an academy's response to extremist behaviour when considering the behaviour and safety of students, as well as the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the academy in preventing extremism.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 also places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must include the local authority and chief officer of the local police. Panels will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, following a referral from the police and where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. The Act will require partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in undertaking the initial assessment as to whether a referral is appropriate.

Schools and colleges which are required to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education are listed in the Act as partners of the panel. The relevant provisions of the Act came into force on 12 April 2015 but many local authorities already have Channel panels set up in their area.

#### Channel Training

'Channel' is the name for the process of referring a person for early intervention and support, including:

- identifying people at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- assessing the nature and extent of that risk, and
- developing the most appropriate support plan for the people concerned.

The Channel process is about safeguarding children, young people and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from risk before a crime occurs.

You can complete a short general awareness course online here: [http://course.ncalt.com/Channel\\_General\\_Awareness/01/index.html](http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness/01/index.html)

**Prevent** is the strategy for preventing vulnerable people from being radicalised into violent extremism: Prevent describes partner's (including academies) role in the Prevent agenda:

Sharing with colleagues

- Promote awareness of the PREVENT strategy within your organisation and partners, including the local risks, roles and responsibilities involved in its delivery
- Ensure colleagues and partners are aware of how to report any potentially relevant information or concerns
- Promote an understanding amongst colleagues and partners of how to identify indicators of terrorism
- Promote an understanding amongst colleagues and partners of how to identify potential signs of individual vulnerability to radicalisation.
- Indicators of terrorist activity

Link to Bracknell Forest Violent extremism prevent guidance and training toolkit: <http://www.bflscb.org.uk/training/child-protection/preventing-radicalisation>

The Department for education has published The Prevent duty

Departmental advice for academies and childcare providers at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

### **3.10 Further Information on Self-harm and suicidal behaviour**

Definition - Self harm, self mutilation, eating disorders, suicide threats and gestures by a child must always be taken seriously and may be indicative of a serious mental or emotional disturbance.

### **3.11 Further Information on Sexting**

Sexting among children and young people can be a common occurrence, where they often describe these incidents as 'mundane'. Children involved in sexting incidents will be dealt with by the police as victims as opposed to perpetrators, unless there are mitigating circumstances. The DSL should record all incidents of sexting. This should

include both the actions taken and the actions not taken, together with justifications. In applying judgement to the sexting incident consider the following:

- Significant age difference between the sender/receiver involved
- If there is any external coercion involved or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver.
- If you recognise the child as more vulnerable than is usual.
- If the image is of a severe or extreme nature.
- If the situation is not isolated and the image has been more widely distributed.
- If this is not the first time children have been involved in a sexting act
- If other knowledge of either the sender or recipient may add cause for concern.

If these characteristics present cause for concern then escalate or refer the incident. If not, manage the situation accordingly, recording details of the incident, action and resolution. See CEOP website for further information.

### **3.12 Further information on Private Fostering**

Parents and carers often fail to notify schools about private fostering arrangements even though they are legally required to notify Children's Services. Often this is because they are unaware of the requirements. They believe that this is a private family arrangement which does not concern anybody else.

This lack of awareness means that many privately fostered children remain hidden and can be vulnerable, as in the case of Victoria Climbié who was a privately fostered child.

Private Fostering definition

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 (or 18 if the child is disabled) is cared for and lives with an adult who is **not** a relative for 28 days or more. This could be a step parent (by marriage or civil partnership), grandparent, step grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt.

Private fostering is a private arrangement made by the parent(s), (or those with parental responsibility) for someone to care for their child because they are unable to do so (permanently or temporarily). This may be due to a number of reasons such as parental ill health, a parent going abroad or in to prison, a child being brought to the UK to study English or the relationship between the child and parent has broken down.

Academy staff play an essential role in identifying privately fostered children. If you know a child is being privately fostered, you should advise the parent/carer that they have a legal obligation to report the arrangement to Children Social Care at least six weeks before it happens or within 48 hours if the arrangement is current having been made in an emergency.

Alert your Designated Safeguarding Lead who will ensure this is followed up with Children Social Care and the arrangement is assessed, approved and monitored

## **4 RECOGNITION – WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

- 4.1 Staff members should refer to the detailed information about the categories of abuse and risk indicators available at: <http://www.bflscb.org.uk/professionals> for further guidance.
- 4.2 In an abusive relationship, the child may:
- appear frightened of their parent(s)
  - act in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development, although full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups
- 4.3 In an abusive relationship, the parent or carer may:
- persistently avoid child health services and treatment of the child's illnesses
  - have unrealistic expectations of the child
  - frequently complain about or to the child and fail to provide attention or praise
  - be absent
  - be misusing substances
  - persistently refuse to allow access on home visits by professionals
  - be involved in domestic violence and abuse
  - be socially isolated
- 4.4 Serious case reviews have found that parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health problems, sometimes referred to as the 'toxic trio', if they coexist in a family could mean significant risks to children. Problems can be compounded by poverty, frequent house moves or eviction.
- 4.5 Staff should be aware that children with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges including:
- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability
  - children with special educational needs and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to bullying and often show no outward signs
  - communication issues can be a barrier to effective safeguarding

## **5 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST OTHER CHILDREN**

- 5.1 At our academy 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 academy 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 academy's Behaviour Policy.

## 5.2 Safeguarding allegations

It is important to remember that Peer-on-Peer Abuse does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs in a society where there are structures and norms that shape young people's views, experiences and behaviours, as well as responses to them. Consequently, there are different issues of gender that will need to be considered when responding to allegations made against students by others in the academy, 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 student, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

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

## 5.3 Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

Physical Abuse

- violence, particularly pre-planned
- forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- blackmail or extortion
- threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

Sexual Exploitation

- encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties
- photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older students may attempt to recruit younger students using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

#### **5.4 Minimising the risk of safeguarding concerns towards students from other students**

We will provide a developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus which develops students' understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe.

Have systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, believed and valued.

Deliver targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those students identified as being at risk.

On occasion, some students will present a safeguarding risk to other students. The academy should be informed that the young person raises safeguarding concerns, for example, they are coming back into academy following a period in custody or they have experienced serious abuse themselves.

These students will need an individual risk management plan to ensure that other students are kept safe and they themselves are not laid open to malicious allegations. There is a need to balance the tension between privacy and safeguarding.

#### **5.5 What to do**

When an allegation is made by a student against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the DSL should be informed.

A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.

The DSL should contact Single Point of Advice to discuss the case. It is possible that the MASH team are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a statement of referral where appropriate.

The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both students' files.

If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim).

Where neither Children's Social Care nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough academy investigation should take place into the matter using the academy's usual disciplinary procedures.

In situations where the academy considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.

The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

## **6 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN CONTINUUM OF NEED**

- 6.1 The Safeguarding Children Continuum of Need has been developed so that everyone working with children has a common language for understanding the needs and risks surrounding children and their families.
- 6.2 For example, if the academy has concerns about a child and needs advice or support from a social worker, they will use the Continuum of Need as a guide to understand the academy's concerns and provide advice about what to do or to decide whether the child and family need social care involvement. The Continuum of Need does not replace professional judgement, but it is intended to support decision-making and discussions between services and practitioners.
- 6.3 It is important that staff members are familiar with the Bracknell Forest Thresholds Guidance to Support Safeguarding and Permanency Planning which includes detail on their Continuum of Need tool. It comes in two parts – a pyramid diagram showing levels of and an indicator tool describing a range of examples about the child and family that the academy (and other practitioners the academy has discussions with) can use to identify their level of need.
- 6.4 The Continuum of Need shows that a child's or family's additional needs can be on a range from none to very high, and that needs can shift from early help to child protection and back to preventative early help. It covers children whose needs are increasing as well as children whose needs are decreasing after Children's Social Care involvement. The Continuum of Need will help practitioners to identify the right level of support for the child in the least intrusive way while keeping the child safe.
- 6.5 Bracknell Forest Continuum of Need identifies five levels of need.
1. Universal – these are children/young people with very little or no additional needs; all their health and developmental needs will be met by universal services. The majority of children and young people will have their needs met within the context of their family, community and the support of universal services.
  2. Targeted – children within this category may be showing early signs of poor outcomes as a result of their needs not being known, understood or not being met effectively by their caregivers. This is the threshold for the provision of coordinated early help informed by an interagency examination of need using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or a Family CAF. A CAF or Family CAF will help to assess additional needs and may lead to a Team around the Child (TAC) or Team around the Family (TAF) meeting, or a targeted single agency response.
  3. Targeted Complex - where a CAF or Family CAF has identified additional needs that are more complex and indicate a higher level of risk factors, a more coordinated multi-agency response may be required. This is the threshold for a referral to the multi-agency Early Intervention Hub.
  4. Children in Need – these are children and young people who are unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of safety, health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services; or children/young people who are disabled. They may require longer term intervention

from statutory and specialist services. This is the threshold for an assessment led by children's social care under s.17 Children Act 1989.

5. Child Protection - these children/young people are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm. They will require intensive support under s.47 Children Act 1989. This is the threshold for child protection and may lead to court proceedings/voluntary accommodation arrangements in order to implement timely permanency planning processes to promote positive outcomes for the child in this regard.

- 6.7 By referring to the Continuum of Need and indicators, the academy can identify when assessment and support for a child and family need 'stepping up' to a referral to the MASH team and when the needs of a child and their family have been reduced enough for them to be 'stepped down' to early help services.

## 7 WHAT ACTION TO TAKE IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

Staff member	What action to take if you have concerns
Any member of staff, governor, volunteer, contractor or activity provider	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss your concerns with the DSL Laura Phillips, or in their absence, with the Deputy DSL's Sarah Howells <b>as soon as possible, before the child leaves for the day</b>. It is important that the child is not sent home at the end of the day without taking the right protective action.</li> <li>2. Complete an electronic entry into <b>MyConcern</b> and verbally inform the DSL.</li> <li>3. If the DSL or their deputy is not available, you should contact the MASH team yourself for a consultation about the action you need to take. Inform the DSL about your consultation and what actions you have taken.</li> </ol>
Designated safeguarding lead	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>You are concerned that the child is at risk of significant harm (Level 4 of the Continuum of need)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Contact MASH team immediately.</li> <li>1.2 If you believe that the child is in immediate danger, or you suspect a crime has been committed, you must also contact the police immediately.</li> <li>1.3 If MASH accepts your contact as a referral, send them a completed <b>statement of referral</b> <a href="mailto:mash@bracknell-forest.gov.uk">mash@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</a> <b>within 24 hours</b>.</li> <li>1.4 MASH may decide, in discussion with you, that the child's needs are at Level 2 or 3 of the Continuum of Need and the educational establishment is better placed to provide support. See points 2.5 and 2.6 below for further action.</li> <li>1.5 Record all your discussions and decision-making <b>in MyConcern</b> adding an update to the concern sent by the staff member who contacted you originally. Add it and a copy of the statement of referral to the child's electronic <b>MyConcern</b> file. Continue to update the child's electronic <b>MyConcern</b> file and chronology as the investigation and the resulting work carry on.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p><b>2. You believe the child is not at risk of significant harm, but the child or their family may need support (Level 3 of the Continuum of Need)</b></p> <p>2.1 Use the Continuum of Need tool to identify the level of need.</p> <p>2.2 Discuss your concerns with senior colleagues in another agency, if necessary.</p> <p>2.3 Contact the MASH team for a consultation, without necessarily identifying the child in question, in order to develop an understanding of the child's needs and circumstances.</p> <p>2.4 If the MASH team accepts your contact as a referral for social care assessment, send them a completed <b>statement of referral within 24 hours</b>, as above.</p> <p>2.5 If your consultation results in the decision that the child and family are in need of help at Level 3 of the Continuum of Need, provide additional support in the academy and/or refer the child or their family to other agencies providing <b>early help services</b>.</p> <p>2.6 Record all your consultations and decision-making on the <b>electronic MyConcern system entry</b> sent by the staff member who contacted you originally. add referral letters and forms to the child's electronic <b>MyConcern</b> file; Continue to update the file, including the chronology, as work progresses.</p> <p><b>3. Children and Families in need of help/advice at Levels 1 and 2</b></p> <p>3.1 Where your consultation results in the decision that the child and family are in need of help/advice at level 1 or 2 you will be signposted to the Advice and Information for Families webpage or advised to consider pastoral support within the academy.</p> <p>3.2 Where you are clear that the child and family are in need of help/advice at level 1 or 2 you should access the Advice and Information for Families webpage or consider pastoral support within the academy.</p>
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## **8 DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE MADE BY A CHILD – ADVICE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF**

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff or volunteer should follow this guidance.

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Only ask questions when necessary to clarify.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely – do not put words in the child's mouth.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Do not make promises that you may not be able to keep.

- Do not promise confidentiality – it may be necessary to refer the child to the MASH team.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Inform the DSL without delay.
- Complete an electronic entry into MyConcern and verbally inform the DSL that you have done so. He will also receive an automatic email informing him of your newly raised concern.
- Dealing with a disclosure from a child and safeguarding issues can be stressful. Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the DSL.

## **9 DISCUSSING CONCERNS WITH THE FAMILY AND THE CHILD – ADVICE FOR THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

- 9.1 In general, you should always discuss any concerns the academy may have with the child's parents. They need to know that you are worried about their child. However, you should not discuss your concerns if you believe that this would place the child at greater risk or lead to loss of evidence for a police investigation.
- 9.2 **If you make a decision not to discuss your concerns with the child's parents or carers** this must be recorded in the child's child protection file on MyConcern with a full explanation for your decision.
- 9.3 **It is important to consider the child's wishes and feelings**, if age appropriate, as part of planning what action to take in relation to concerns about their welfare.
- 9.4 When talking to children, you should take account of their age, understanding and preferred language, which may not be English. It is also important to consider how a disabled child may need support in communicating.
- 9.5 How you talk to a child will also depend on the substance and seriousness of the concerns. You may need to seek advice from Children's Social Care or the police to ensure that neither the safety of the child nor any subsequent investigation is jeopardised.
- 9.6 If concerns have arisen as a result of information given by a child, it is important to reassure the child but not to promise confidentiality.
- 9.7 **It is expected that you discuss your concerns with the parents and seek their agreement to making a referral to MASH, unless you consider that this would place the child at increased risk of significant harm.**
- 9.8 **You do not need the parents' consent to make a referral if you consider the child is in need of protection**, although parents will ultimately be made aware of which organisation made the referral.
- 9.9 If parents refuse to give consent to a referral but you decide to continue, you need to make this clear to Children's Social Care.

9.10 **If you decide to refer the child without the parents' consent, make sure to record this with a full explanation of your decision.**

9.11 When you make your referral, you should agree with MASH what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when.

9.12 See section 11 below for guidance on information sharing and consent.

## **10 EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

10.1 Most parents can look after their children without the need of help other than from their family or friends. However, some parents may need additional help from our academy or other services such as the NHS. Providing help early is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.

10.2 Our academy will work together with other agencies to provide a coordinated offer of early help, in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* and local guidance, to any child who needs it.

10.3 We will pool our knowledge within the academy and with other agencies about which families or children need additional support in a range of ways so that we can work out how best to help them. We will use the Bracknell Forest Threshold Guidance and Safeguarding Continuum of Need tool to identify what level of need the child or their family has.

10.4 We will work closely with targeted early help services and the MASH team if we feel families need more support and input, or children are at risk of harm, and we will continue to provide support if other services are also needed.

10.5 Targeted early help services are aimed specifically at helping families with children and young people whose needs are at Level 3 on the Continuum of Need. The main service in Bracknell Forest is:

- **Health Visiting and Children's Centre Service (0-5 years).** This brings together Health Visiting, Children's Centre provision and Keywork offering support to families with children in the 0- age group. The service includes mandated health visiting checks, support with health issues, targeted group interventions and a Keywork home visiting service which offers a holistic family approach to families who are assessed as being at level 3 on the continuum of need.

10.6 Targeted support is also provided by family keyworkers in specialist services, for example Probation, Police, and by School Nurses and Family Support Health Practitioners. These services may lead a plan of support in a similar way to targeted early help services.

10.7 Our academy will refer any child with needs at Level 3 on the Continuum of Need to a targeted early help service and work with the service in any early help planning they may undertake to support the child.

10.8 We will talk to the family about referral to a targeted early help service and explain that there may be a need to involve other professionals, including talking to a social worker about our concerns. We will seek the family's consent for the referral.

10.9 If the family does not consent to an early help service, we will make a judgement about whether the needs of the child will escalate or the child will become unsafe without help. If our judgement is that the needs or concerns will escalate, then we will contact the Children's Social Care Single Point of Advice for a consultation with a qualified social worker in order to make a shared decision about whether the level of concerns calls for a referral to Children's Social Care.

## **11 MASH LED RESPONSES TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD**

11.1 Once MASH has accepted our referral as needing a social-care-led response (Level 4 of the Continuum of Need), a social work practitioner and their manager will evaluate the concerns to identify the sources and levels of risk and to agree what protective action may be necessary.

11.2 The evaluation of concerns and risks involve deciding whether:

- the child needs immediate protection and urgent action is necessary; or
- the child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and enquiries need to be made under section 47 of the Children Act 1989; or
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

11.3 We will cooperate with Children's Social Care and the police in any emergency action they take using their legal powers for immediate protection of the child. This may involve removing the child from their home.

11.4 We will participate in any multi-agency discussions (strategy discussions), if invited to do so, and share information about the child and their family to plan the response to concerns.

11.5 We will share information about the child and their family for section 47 enquiries and family assessments undertaken by Children's Social Care.

11.6 We will ensure that a relevant staff member participates in all initial and review child protection conferences, if we are invited to attend. The staff member will work together with other agencies to discuss the need for and agree to an outcome-focused child protection plan and will ensure that the child's wishes and views are considered in their own right in planning.

11.7 If we are members of the core group to implement a child protection plan, we will ensure a relevant staff member participates in all core group meetings.

11.8 We will ensure that we complete all actions allocated to us as part of the outcome-focused plan, whether a child protection plan or a family support plan, in a timely way.

11.9 We will continue to monitor children once their plans are ended to ensure that they are supported and kept safe.

## **12 INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSENT**

12.1 It is essential that people working with children can confidently share information as part of their day-to-day work. This is necessary not only to safeguard and protect

children from harm but also to work together to support families to improve outcomes for all.

- 12.2 The academy may have to share information about parents or carers, such as their medical history, disability or substance misuse issues, for investigations of child abuse carried out by Children's Social Care.
- 12.3 We will proactively seek out information as well as sharing it. This means checking with other professionals whether they have information that helps us to be as well informed as possible when working to support children.
- 12.4 The Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information. It is there to ensure that personal information is managed in a sensible way and that a balance is struck between a person's privacy and public protection.
- 12.5 We should be sharing any concerns we have with parents at an early stage, unless this would put a child at greater risk or compromise an investigation. Parents need to know what our responsibilities are for safeguarding and protecting children and that this involves sharing information about them with other professionals.
- 12.6 Be clear about the purpose of sharing confidential information and only share as much as you need to achieve your purpose.
- 12.7 Try to get consent from parents (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding<sup>1</sup>) to share information, if possible. However, **you do not need consent if you have serious concerns about a child's safety and well-being. If you decide to share information without consent, you should record this with a full explanation of your decision.**
- 12.8 **Consent should not be sought from parents or carers (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding), if:**
- it would place a child at increased risk of harm; or
  - it would place an adult at risk of serious harm; or
  - it would prejudice a criminal investigation; or
  - it would lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child; or
  - required by law or a court order to share information.
- 12.9 **Consent is not necessary** in cases where Children's Social Care are making child protection enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Information needs to be shared with Children's Social Care; staff members must make sure to record what information has been shared.

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<sup>1</sup> Children aged 12 or over may generally be expected to have sufficient understanding. Younger children may also have sufficient understanding. All people aged 16 and over are presumed, in law, to have the capacity to give or withhold their consent, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

#### 12.10 **Consent is necessary**, for:

- Children's Social Care investigations or assessments of concerns under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Children's Social Care will assume that we have obtained consent from the parents to share information unless we make them aware that there is a specific issue about consent. This must be discussed with a social worker in the Single Point of Advice.
- early help assessments. Assessments are undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers.

12.11 If you are in any doubt about the need for seeking consent, get advice from the DSL or from the MASH team.

12.12 Keep a record of your decision to share information, with or without consent, and the reasons for it. Remember also that it is just as important to keep a record of why you decided not to share information as why you did so.

### **13 RECORD KEEPING**

13.1 Good record keeping is an important part of the academy's accountability to children and their families and will help us in meeting our key responsibility to respond appropriately to welfare concerns about children.

13.2 Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk assessment and planning for children and enable informed and timely decisions about appropriate action to take.

13.3 All staff members, governors, volunteers, contractors and activity providers should ensure that they record and report safeguarding concerns in line with guidance from the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

13.4 The DSL will ensure that records are maintained appropriately for children with safeguarding concerns and that stand-alone files are created electronically on **MyConcern** and maintained in line with requirements of the above guidance.

### **14 PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE AND DISAGREEMENTS**

14.1 Working with children and families, and in particular child protection work, is stressful and complex, as well as involving uncertainty and strong feelings. To ensure that the best decisions are made for children, we need to be able to challenge one another's practice.

14.2 We will promote a culture within our academy that enables all staff members to raise, without fear of repercussions, any concerns they may have about the management of child protection in the academy. This may include raising concerns about decisions, action and inaction by colleagues about individual children. If necessary, staff members will speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the principal, the chair of governors or with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

14.3 Cooperation across agencies is crucial; professionals need to work together, using their skills and experience, to make a robust contribution to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare within the framework of discussions, meetings, conferences and case management.

14.4 If there are any professional disagreements with practitioners from other agencies, the DSL or the principal will raise concerns with the relevant agency's safeguarding lead in line with guidance in the Bracknell Forest Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures - <http://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/>

14.5 If the academy disagrees with the child protection conference chair's decision, the DSL or the principal will consider whether they wish to challenge it further and raise the matter with Children's Services Head of Safeguarding.

## **15 SAFER RECRUITMENT**

15.1 Our academy has robust recruitment and vetting procedures to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children.

15.2 Our job advertisements and application packs make explicit reference to the academy's commitment to safeguarding children, including compliance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process and clear statements in the job description and person specification about the staff member's safeguarding responsibilities.

15.3 All staff members who have contact with children, young people and families will have appropriate pre-employment checks in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016*.

15.4 At least one member on every short listing and interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training. The principal is responsible for ensuring that safer recruitment training is kept up to date.

15.5 The principal and the nominated governor for child protection are responsible for ensuring that our **single central record** is accurate and up to date.

## **16 PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST ACADEMY STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

16.1 Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well being and very best outcomes for the children at our academy. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

16.2 Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

16.3 We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our academy are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges September 2016* are adhered to and will follow the flow chart in Appendix C.

16.4 If an allegation is made or information is received about an adult who works in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Principal immediately. Should an allegation be made against the Principal, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors. In the event that neither the Principal nor Chair of Governors are not contactable on

that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Principal or the Vice Chair of Governors.

16.5 The Principal or Chair of Governors will follow the flow chart in Appendix C. No member of staff or the local governing body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from MASH or LADO.

16.6 Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Principal or Chair of Governors should follow the flow chart in Appendix C and make the appropriate contact direct.

16.7 Supporting people:

- The academy together with Children’s Social Care and the police, if they are involved, will consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate.
- The principal will ensure that the child and family are kept informed of the progress of the investigation.
- The HR Advisory Team will be contacted at the earliest opportunity for advice in relation to the investigation of any allegation in line with the Trust’s Disciplinary Policy, where appropriate.
- The staff member who is the subject of the allegation will be advised to contact their union, professional association or a colleague for support, (depending on the outcome of the safeguarding strategy meeting which is normally chaired by the LADO).
- The HR Advisory Team will ensure that the staff member is provided with appropriate support, if necessary, through occupational health or welfare arrangements.
- The principal will appoint a named representative to keep the staff member updated on the progress of the investigation; this will continue during any police or section 47 investigation or disciplinary investigation.
- The legislation imposing restrictions makes clear that “publication” of material that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation is prohibited. “Publication” includes “any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public”. This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site would be in breach of the reporting restrictions (if what was published could lead to the identification of the teacher by members of the public).

16.8 The academy has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our academy, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or the HR Advisory Team. In the case of

a member of teaching staff, a decision will be made about whether to refer the matter to the National Academy for Teachers and Lecturers to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

## Appendix C

### MANAGING ALLEGATIONS/CONCERNS ABOUT INDIVIDUALS WHO WORK OR VOLUNTEER WITH CHILDREN

To ensure safeguarding is prioritised for children, it is recommended that all LADO referrals should go through the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Referrals to Children's Social Care need to be considered when a child is at risk of significant harm and an individual who is working or volunteering with children has:-

1. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
2. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
3. Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

When considering the definitions of harm and whether threshold is met for a LADO consultation or referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the following guidance provides information about the criteria and process. The examples provided are not exhaustive as the nature of allegations can sometimes be complex, depending on the history of those who are involved.

#### **Behaviours that have or are Likely to Cause Harm**

These are more likely to fall in the remit of professional conduct, for example:

- Contact with children and young people through social media and private email accounts
- Bullying, threats and intimidation
- Comments of a personal, derogatory or racially abusive nature which could cause emotional harm.
- Physical contact of a non-sexual nature, but which breaches a code of conduct
- Providing rewards and incentives which are not sanctioned within a code of conduct and could single out particular children or young people to the detriment of others.

These types of behaviour should be discussed with the LADO in the first instance, as they have happened in isolation. Sometimes there is a fine line between harm and behaviour constituting a possible criminal offence. If they form part of a pattern or there are other concerns about the context, consideration would need to be given to whether a referral was required.

#### **Behaviours Associated with Criminal Offences**

If a child or young person makes an allegation of sexual or physical abuse, a Statement of Referral (SOR) should be sent to the MASH without delay. The SOR should contain as much information as possible regarding the allegation, full details of the victim and perpetrator. There might be times when there is uncertainty about the process and if in doubt the MASH or LADO can be contacted for guidance prior to sending the SOR. Examples where a SOR is warranted are:

- Physical abuse and restraint where injuries have been caused to a child including; scratches, cuts, bruises, red marks, swelling, bites and broken bones
- Disclosures of sexual abuse, including direct contact, historic incidents, links to exploitation, grooming and online abuse
- Physical abuse or inappropriate restraint, pushing or shoving without injury, but this has been witnessed.

- In incidences where allegations of physical abuse are difficult to corroborate because they have not been witnessed or there is a history of previous allegations from a young person, a discussion should still be had with MASH about whether the threshold for a referral is met. MASH might not agree a referral once they have consulted with Police, but will give advice about liaison with the LADO and/or an internal investigation.

Please note that if injuries have been observed and these should be documented on a body map, with a description of size, location and the type of injury seen. Photographs should not be taken by other professionals or sent by email as Police and a Paediatrician will usually take photographs and measure these to scale. There are occasions when Police might ask for this to be done, and agreement will be needed about this on a case by case basis.

### **Behaviours Which Might Pose a Risk to Children**

Any of the behaviours already identified could meet this criteria. However, there are some behaviours in the workplace which would breach the code of conduct but have not caused immediate harm. In other instances in a person's personal life could impact upon their professional or voluntary role with children and young people, for example:

- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol in the workplace
- Inappropriate use of work IT equipment in work or at home e.g. viewing adult pornography
- Failure to protect or report a safeguarding concern
- Personal involvement with Children's Services, for example Child Protection Plans for own children
- Domestic Abuse
- Arrest or prosecution for a criminal offence outside of work including sexual offences in relation to children or adults, violence, drugs, drink driving

In the first instance any code of conduct issues should be discussed with the LADO. Agencies might be contacted about other incidents where Police and Children's Services involvement has happened, but there might also be times when criminal activity in someone's personal life is not reported to Children's Social Care and there should be a discussion with MASH about this.

If any professionals become aware that there are safeguarding concerns in an individual's private life and they work or volunteer with children, there should be a consultation with the LADO to consider how this can be monitored or addressed. If there are child protection concerns, and social care involvement the employer should be made aware in case there are additional factors to take into consideration with that person's role. If there is social care involvement under child in need, it might still be necessary to inform the employer, but the level of concerns will need to be discussed and an action plan agreed. The employee should be encouraged to talk to their employer in the first instance.

### **NEXT STEPS**

If it is agreed it meets the threshold for Level 3, when this is on the cusp of Level 3 and Level 4, the MASH Practice Manager will discuss the referral with Police and the LADO. A decision will be made about whether there is a risk of significant harm which requires a strategy discussion. If this is not agreed the LADO will follow up with an employer or organisation who will be asked to conduct an internal investigation.

**NB: If the child already has an allocated Social Worker, contact should be made with the MASH in the first instance and agreement will be made about who will lead investigation.**

Decisions will also need to be made about immediate action needed to safeguard any children, and this might include whether an adult needs to be refrained or suspended prior to a strategy meeting. Consideration also needs to be given to any other employment or voluntary work the individual is involved in. This action will need to be agreed with HR on advice from the LADO and Police if there is a potential criminal investigation.

If it has been agreed there is a risk of significant harm a Strategy Meeting will be held, where all relevant professionals, a representative from HR/Personnel, Police and the LADO will be invited to attend. The victim and alleged perpetrator will not be included in this meeting. The strategy meeting should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral being received.

A Manager from the Duty and Assessment Team or MASH will chair the meeting unless there is an allegation involving a Children's Social Care employee or Foster Carer, in which case the LADO will chair the meeting. However, if the Duty or MASH Managers are not available the LADO might chair the strategy meeting to avoid unnecessary delays. The reason for this is that the immediate and wider safeguarding issues for any child or young person the alleged perpetrator might have contact with will need to be considered.

If the child already has a Social Worker from another team, it is usually agreed that the allocated team will take forward the strategy meeting with the LADO, unless there are concerns about Child Sexual Exploitation. In this instance the MASH Practice Manager might still have involvement in the meeting. This might also be the case when there is a conflict of interest, and it is considered an independent manager should chair the meeting.

Action Plans will be formulated at the strategy meeting, and a decision might be made to have a review meeting, particularly if there are gaps in information which need to be clarified.

### **OUT OF HOURS REFERRALS**

If a child has made a disclosure of physical or sexual abuse and there is physical evidence a Statement of Referral (SOR) should be discussed with the Emergency Duty Service (EDS). They will be able to liaise with the Police. The Police might decide with EDS to start a joint investigation over the weekend to avoid delay.

### **OUTCOMES**

Once a strategy meeting has taken place the following outcomes will be taken forward:

1. NFA as the allegation is found to be unsubstantiated, false, unfounded or malicious.
2. NFA for Children's Services, but there are issues to address in relation to professional conduct or suitability, as concerns were substantiated, but did not meet threshold for criminal investigation. Unsubstantiated outcomes are the most difficult ones to address, as there might still be concerns, but insufficient evidence to proceed; e.g. a disclosure of sexual abuse where the victim is not willing to make a statement, or physical abuse where there are no injuries, but the account was credible. However, there are occasions when action might be considered to minimise any identified concerns or risks, and this will need to be considered on a case by case basis. HR will provide support and the

LADO will need to be kept updated of outcomes. In these cases the concerns might be addressed via an internal investigation and disciplinary meeting or through additional training and monitoring. This could be resolved with the individual being or remaining suspended as a neutral act pending the outcome of enquiries or while they remain at work.

3. Duty and Assessment (DAT) or one of the long-term social work teams will take forward a Family Assessment under Child in Need (Section 17 Children Act 1989) as unmet needs were identified for the victim or children linked to the perpetrator. This could result in universal services on levels 1-3 on the continuum of need or longer term social work support and action in relation to alleged perpetrator might result in outcomes in 1 and 2 above.
4. DAT or one of the long-term social work teams will undertake a Family Assessment due to Child Protection Concerns (Section 47 Children Act 1989). This could result in the actions/outcomes in 1-3 above.
5. The Police might undertake a criminal investigation in relation to a suspected criminal offence when concerns are substantiated. This can take several months to complete especially if IT equipment needs to be checked and the Crown Prosecution Service then needs to review the file. This will often result in the perpetrator remaining on bail for an extended period, while they remain suspended from their employment or voluntary role. HR and the LADO will provide support and liaise during this period, including advice about whether a DBS referral is warranted.

### **MISCELLANEOUS REFERRALS TO OTHER TEAMS**

There are occasions, when agencies including the NSPCC, OFSTED and Complaints Team receive complaints or safeguarding concerns from parents or other third parties, which do not meet the criteria for a SPOA referral or LADO Consultation. Early Years providers also have a duty to report injuries to children which occur on the premises. These should be dealt with as follows:

- OFSTED/NSPCC Complaints, which do not meet threshold for referral to SPOA, should be passed to or discussed with the LADO to establish whether the Academies Safeguarding Officer/Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES) need to investigate.
- Any accidental injuries which happen at a childminder's home or in an Early Years setting need to be reported to OFSTED and the relevant Standards and Learning Consultant in the Early Years Improvement Team.