Blue Skies School: Safeguarding and child protection policy

This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff.

It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and can demonstrate they have read and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Key Safeguarding Contacts

Position	Name	Contact information
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	**Jo Higgins**	jo@blueskiesschool.co.uk 01634 357770
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	**Danielle Atterbury**	danielle@blueskiesschool.co.uk 01634 357770
Safeguarding Proprietor	**Jo Higgins**	jo@blueskiesschool.co.uk 01634 357770

Created by:	Danielle Atterbury - Deputy Headteacher	**Date:** September 2024
Approved by:	Jo Higgins	**Date:** September 2026
Last reviewed:	Lauren Higgins (Headteacher) **Date:** November 2026 (interim update following leadership changes)	
Next review due by:	September 2027 (or sooner following any updates to guidance and legislation)	

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1. What to do if you have a welfare concern in Blue Skies School

You have concerns about a child

Immediately record on CPOMS and inform DSL

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Consider whether the child has suffered, or is at immediate risk of harm e.g. unsafe to go home
- Access the MSCP Inter-Agency Threshold Criteria for Children in Need for further guidance.
- If the child **is at imminent risk of harm, make** a telephone contact to First Response - 01634 334466 (out of working hours contact Out of Hours on 03000419191) and/or call 999.
- If your concern is high, but the child if **NOT** at imminent risk, or for Family Solutions referrals use (the portal)
- For early help, consider if internal support or referral to other agencies is appropriate
- Use the MSCP Threshold Guidance.

A referral is made

Within 1 working day a social worker makes a decision about the type of response required

LA social care team takes action and informs the referrer

Referral not required. School takes relevant action and monitors as required.

If concerns escalate, make a referral

No formal assessment required

School considers Early Help assessment and accesses other support as required

Staff must keep the child's circumstances under review and **re refer, if appropriate, to ensure circumstances improve**

2. Introduction and Ethos

Procedures in this policy apply to all staff, including temporary or agency staff, students on placement, advisory board members and volunteers and are consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

- Blue Skies School recognises our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and all those directly connected (staff, volunteers, proprietors, leaders, parents, families, and learners) are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children and have an essential role to play in making this community safe and secure.

- Blue Skies School recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within school that will help children to be safe and feel safe. In our school children are respected and encourage to talk openly. All children (defined as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and all children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.

- Staff challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour. They are vigilant to sexualised/aggressive touching/grabbing. We recognise that groups at particular risk include girls, pupils/students who are, or are perceived to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans or gender questioning, and pupils/students with SEND. We recognise that these children can be targeted by other children and acknowledge the importance of a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. Pupils/students are protected from up-skirting, bullying (including cyberbullying), homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents. Staff have familiarity with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Human Rights Act 1998 and recent reforms to the Act and how they apply to safeguarding.

- Staff will promote an anti-discriminatory culture and will challenge racist, faith-based and other prejudice-based behaviour, recognising the harm it causes.

- This policy applies where there are any child protection concerns regarding children who attend the school/college but may also apply to other children connected to the school/college, for example, siblings, younger members of staff (under 18) or children on student/work placements.

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- Our school acknowledges the need to treat everyone with equity, with fairness, dignity and respect. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents. Staff have familiarity with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Human Rights Act 1998 and recent reforms to the Act and how they apply to safeguarding

- Staff are aware that Safeguarding is always broadening its scope to encompass a wider range of concerns. This includes not only traditional safeguarding issues but also emerging areas such as online safety and the impacts of domestic violence. Schools are now expected to address these diverse issues comprehensively, ensuring that all potential risks to students are identified and managed. With the rise of digital interactions and increasing awareness of domestic abuse's impact on students, it's crucial for safeguarding practices to cover these areas. An expanded scope ensures that schools are equipped to handle a broader spectrum of issues, contributing to a safer school environment.

- Through their day-to-day contact with pupils and their direct work with families, all staff and volunteers in school have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse, neglect and/or exploitation at an early stage. Our school may be the only secure, stable, and predictable element in their lives.

- Blue Skies School recognises the need for a trauma-informed approach to safeguarding, considering the root causes and possible underlying trauma behind children's behaviour.

- Blue Skies School will endeavour to support the welfare and safety of all pupils through:

  - Ensuring that the child's welfare is of paramount importance.
  - All staff are trained and can recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the school's procedures and lines of communication.
  - Ensuring that children's mental and physical health or development is not impaired.
  - Providing children a balanced curriculum including PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education); RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) to help pupils stay safe, recognise when they don't feel safe and identify who they might / can talk to.
  - Work with parents to ensure that parents understand the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations.
  - Keep confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals.
  - The voice of the child is evident in case files and informs schools policy developments.
  - Ensuring that the school practices safer recruitment processes in checking the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, visitors/contractors, and parents about expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our children at our school.

- Blue Skies School expects that if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they will act immediately.

- This policy is implemented in accordance with our compliance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, **'**Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026 (KCSIE) which requires individual schools and colleges to have an effective child protection policy.

- The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including proprietors, temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers and are consistent with those outlined within KCSIE 2026.

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3. Policy Context

- This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes:
    - DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE)
    - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (WTSC)
    - Ofsted: renewed Education Inspection Framework (November 2025)
    - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000)
    - Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures (Online)
    - The Education Act 2002
    - The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

- Sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002 require school governing bodies, proprietors, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age. Such arrangements will have to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

4. Definition of Safeguarding

- Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 as:
    - protecting children from maltreatment
    - preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
    - ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
    - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes (Children includes everyone under the age of 18)
    - Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.

- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.

Child protection - is a part of safeguarding and is defined as activity undertaken to protect specific children from significant harm. This includes harm inside or outside the home or online.

- Blue Skies School acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including (but not limited to):
  - Abuse and neglect
  - Bullying, including cyberbullying
  - Children with family members in prison
  - Children Missing Education (CME)
  - Child missing from home or care
  - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
  - Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
  - Contextual safeguarding (risks outside the family home)
  - County lines and gangs
  - Domestic abuse
  - Drugs and alcohol misuse
  - Fabricated or induced illness
  - Faith abuse
  - Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls
  - Hate
  - Homelessness
  - Human trafficking and modern slavery
  - Mental health
  - Nude or semi-nude image sharing, including AI-generated or digitally altered images
  - Online safety
  - Child-on-child abuse
  - Preventing radicalisation and extremism
  - Private fostering
  - Relationship abuse
  - Serious Violence

- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- So-Called honour-based abuse including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
- Upskirting

(Also see Part One and the annexes of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026)

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5. Policy Compliance, Monitoring and Review

- Blue Skies School will review this policy at least annually. The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any significant national events, local child protection concerns and/or any changes to our procedures.

- The proprietors have strategic leadership responsibility for Blue Skies School safeguarding arrangements ensure that the school complies with their duties under legislation. They ensure policies, procedures and training in the school is effective and complies with the law at all times.

- The Designated Safeguarding Leads / Headteacher will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems in school to the Proprietors. The Proprietors will not receive details of individual situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight.

- This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our school and through our school newsletter.

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6. Key Responsibilities

6.1 Governance and Leadership

- The Proprietors and staff have regard to the guidance in KCSIE and will ensure our policies, procedures and training is effective and always complies with the law.

- The Proprietors and leadership team ensure that policies and procedures are in place so that appropriate action is taken, in a timely manner, to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

- The Proprietors and leadership team have a strategic responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and comply with their duties under legislation.

- The Proprietors and leadership team ensure that all Proprietors receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training, appropriate to their role at induction. This training is regularly updated and equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge; to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.

- Jo Higgins is the nominated proprietor for safeguarding, who will take the lead role in ensuring that: the school has an effective policy which interlinks with related policies; that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed; and that the policies are reviewed at least annually and when required.

- The proprietor will ensure they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

- The Proprietor will regularly review the effectiveness of school filtering and monitoring systems. They will ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff are:
  • aware of and understand the systems in place
  • manage them effectively
  • know how to escalate concerns when identified.

- The Proprietors, Headteacher and Leadership Team will ensure that the DSL is suitably supported in their role; has the appropriate status, authority, funding, resources, and training. They assure themselves that the DSL understands they have the responsibility in leading safeguarding and child protection across the school.

6.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- The Designated Safeguarding lead carries out their role as identified in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, these duties are set out in their job description.
- The school has appointed Jo Higgins, Proprietor, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). They are a member of the senior leadership team. The DSL has the overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems in school.

- Blue Skies School has appointed two Deputy DSLs (DDSLs), who have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSL's absence.
    - Danielle Atterbury – Deputy Headteacher
    - Natalie Bucklen – School Business Manager

- Whilst the activities of the DSL may be delegated to the deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and this responsibility will not be delegated.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead undergoes appropriate training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. DDSLs are trained to the same standard as the DSL. Accredited DSL training, specific to the role, is renewed every two years. Knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals, **at least annually,** according to the needs of the school.

- The headteacher is kept informed of any significant issues by the DSL.

- The DSL and any deputy DSL's training will be updated formally every **two years,** but their knowledge and skills will be updated through a variety of methods (e-bulletins, conferences, local meetings, other training etc.) at regular intervals and **at least annually**, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

- Availability - during term time the DSL (or a DDSL) will always be available (during school hours) for school staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Adequate and appropriate cover arrangements are made for school trips and any out of hours/out of term activities.

- Cover arrangements for when the DSL is unavailable are clear, reliable and known to all staff. In the DSL's absence, a named Deputy DSL (Danielle Atterbury or Natalie Bucklen) acts in their place, and staff can also raise concerns through the confidential safeguarding mailbox (safeguarding@blueskiesschool.co.uk), which is monitored by the safeguarding team during school hours. These arrangements are checked regularly to make sure they work in practice.
  During school holidays, the DSL will provide appropriate emergency contact details to the MASH Education Lead on the understanding that these will only be used if absolutely necessary and will not be shared elsewhere.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for fulfilling the duties outlined in Annex B of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE). These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **It is the role of the DSL to:**
  - Act as main contact point for all school staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
  - Manage and maintain the confidential paper/electronic case management systems to record concerns about pupils to ensure the quality of information is accurate, proportionate, and timely, also assessment/referrals are made appropriately.
  - Coordinate safeguarding action for individual children. In the case of Children in Care, the DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority who looks after the child (with the DSL liaising closely with the designated teacher.)
  - liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform them of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019
  - To liaise with safeguarding partners, other agencies, and staff in line with KCSIE 2026 and WTSC 2026.
  - Ensure that Medway referral procedures are followed as necessary (see referral process page 2).

- Support educational outcomes by effectively sharing information about welfare, safeguarding, and child protection concerns—including those affecting children with a social worker—with teachers and school or college leadership team
- As required represent and liaise appropriately with other professionals and ensure the school is represented at multi agency safeguarding meetings (including child protection conferences).
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff during term time for staff in the school to be able to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- Understand the importance of information sharing both within the school and with other schools and agencies.
- To encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff this will assist with any measures the school may put in place to protect them.
- Ensure all staff access appropriate safeguarding training and relevant updates in line with the recommendations within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

6.3 Members of Staff

The welfare and safety of children is the responsibility of all staff in school. ANY concern for a pupil's welfare MUST be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- **All members of staff have a responsibility to:**
  - Provide a safe environment in which children can learn and promote the child's welfare
  - Maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned and to always act in the best interests of the child.
  - be alert to any issues of concern in a child's life at home or elsewhere including the online world.
  - Understand the early help process and their role in it.
  - Be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, so that they can identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

- Understand that children may not feel ready to or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or that they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. They may feel embarrassed, humiliated or are being threatened. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have any concerns about a child.
- Consider wider environmental factors in a child's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare.
- Be aware of the process of making referrals to children's social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
- Build trusting relationships which facilitate communication with children and young people.
- Know what to do if a child tells them that he or she is being abused, neglected or exploited and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child.
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Understand and comply with this policy and understand other safeguarding policies and systems.
- Staff help improve and enhance the safeguarding policy through their contributions and development.
- To undertake and engage with regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.
- Be aware of and take appropriate action to raise concerns regarding poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. (This may include accessing the school whistleblowing policy)
- act in line with our staff code of conduct/behaviour policy
- act in line with the Teachers' Standards which state that teachers (including headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

6.4 Children and Young People

- Children and young people (pupils) have a right to:
    - Contribute to the development of school safeguarding policies.

- Report abuse confidently knowing concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be listened to and effective action will be taken.
- Seek help from a trusted adult and feel listened to.
- Learn how to keep themselves safe by recognising when they are themselves at risk and how to get help when they need it, including online.

6.5 Parents and Carers

- Parents/carers have a responsibility to:
    - Work in partnership with the school to safeguard and promote the welfare of child/ren and understand Blue Skies School statutory responsibilities in this area.
    - Read and adhere to the relevant school/policies and procedures.
    - Talk to their children about safeguarding issues with their children & support the school in their safeguarding approaches.
    - Identify behaviours which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm including online
    - Follow the procedure for lodging complaints to address issues and guarantee Blue Skies School's prompt response.
    - Seek help and support from the school, or other appropriate agencies.

- We are committed to working with parents positively, openly, and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so to protect a child/ren.

However, the welfare and safety of children is the responsibility of all staff in school and ANY concern for a pupil's welfare MUST be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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7. Recognising Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

- As a school we are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely individual events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple

issues will overlap with one another, for further guidance: Responding to Abuse and Neglect. This is outlined locally with the Medway Threshold Guidance.

- Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy).
- Early identification of issues allows schools to provide support before problems escalate. By addressing concerns at an early stage, schools can prevent more severe issues from developing and provide timely help to students who may be experiencing difficulties in silence.

- All staff in school should be aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect. There are four categories of abuse:

    - **Physical abuse**: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

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

    - **Sexual abuse**: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

    - **Neglect**: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

The most up to date definitions and possible indicators and signs of abuse are found in Appendix 1 of this document. Staff should also refer to *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2018.*

- All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. Indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation do not automatically mean a child is being abused, however all concerns should be taken seriously, reported and explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.

- The warning signs and symptoms of child abuse, neglect and exploitation will vary from child to child. Children also develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviours for a younger child might be normal for an older child.

- Blue Skies School recognises that some children have additional or complex needs and may require access to intensive or specialist services to support them.

- All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. **Extra-familial harms** take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

- Parental behaviours may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff should also be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.

- Children may report abuse happening to themselves, their peers or their family members. All reports made by children to staff will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with this policy.

- By understanding the warning signs, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family. It is important to recognise that a warning sign doesn't automatically mean a child is being abused.

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8. Specific Safeguarding Issues

- Blue Skies School is aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context.

- Blue Skies School staff are mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (such as a child in need or a child with a protection plan).

- All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, and sharing nudes or semi-nude images (also known as nudes and semi-nudes) put children in danger. The categories/issues that follow are by no means an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the current themes in safeguarding and protecting children.

8.1 Child-on-Child Abuse

- Blue Skies School recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers. This is referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms.

- Blue Skies School believes and understands the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Staff understand that that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.

- Blue Skies School recognises that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:
    - bullying, including cyberbullying
    - physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
    - sexual violence and sexual harassment
    - 'upskirting', which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm

- nude or semi-nude image sharing (including AI-generated or digitally altered images)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

- Staff and leadership recognise that that some child-on-child abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved, (i.e. for gender-based abuse, girls are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators) however, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and all reports will be taken seriously.

    - In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, we will implement a robust anti-bullying policy, providing an age/ability appropriate PSHE and RSE curriculum, providing a range of reporting mechanisms e.g. worry boxes, dedicated reporting emails monitored by DSLs, online report forms and form time

- Blue Skies School will not tolerate, dismiss or minimise any harmful behaviours in school and will take swift action to intervene when this occurs. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated school policies, including child protection, anti-bullying and behaviour.

- Alleged victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse may be supported by taking reports seriously, listening carefully, avoiding victim blaming, providing appropriate pastoral support, working with parents/carers, reviewing educational approaches, and in cases of sexual assault, informing the police and/or First Response.

- The school will take steps to ensure that appropriate curriculum time is dedicated to enable children to develop an awareness and understanding of abusive behaviour and minimise the risk of all forms of child-on-child abuse. We will also ensure that children recognise warning signs and sources of support available both within the school and externally (such as Kent Police, ChildLine etc.).

8.2 Sexual Violence or Harassment

- Blue Skies School follows the guidance outlined in part five of KCSIE 2026 which has now merged with the content of DfE guidance 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges'. When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment
- Blue Skies School recognises that harmful sexual behaviour sits on a continuum, from behaviour that is developmentally expected through to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent behaviour. Staff will challenge misogynistic attitudes and language, recognising their link to harmful sexual behaviour, and will never dismiss abuse as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.
    - If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

- Blue Skies School recognises sexual violence, and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children and can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable.

- Staff must be vigilant and recognise that information may come from overheard conversations or observed behaviour changes. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school will not be dismissed or downplayed and will be treated as seriously and in line with relevant policies/procedures.

- Blue Skies School recognises that staff must be vigilant and recognise that information may come from overheard conversations or observed behaviour changes.

- It is essential that all victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment or be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

- Immediate consideration will be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted).

- When there has been a report of sexual violence or harassment, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other children, and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.

- Where possible KCSIE 2026 recommends that two members of staff manage reports of sexual violence and harassment.

- Reports will initially be managed internally by the Blue Skies School and where necessary will be referred to Integrated Children's Services and/or the Police.

- The decision making and required action taken will vary on a case by case basis, but will be informed by the wishes of the victim; the nature of the alleged incident (including whether a crime may have been committed); the ages and developmental stages of the children involved; any power imbalance between the children; if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; if there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or Blue Skies School staff; and, any other related issues or wider context.

- We will reassure and teach our pupils / students to understand that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them.

- Blue Skies School will regularly review decisions and actions to update and improve policies and practice.

- The school will consider the physical and mental health implications for both the victim and perpetrator. It is identified that both individuals will need additional support and provision of further information about harmful sexual behaviours and may need signposting to further sources of support.

8.3 Nude and/or Semi-Nude Image Sharing by Children

- DSLs will respond to concerns as set out in the non-statutory UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (Updated March 2024)

- The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' is used to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams of/by young people under the age of 18. Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal which makes responding to incidents complex.
- This includes images and videos that have been created or altered using artificial intelligence (AI) or other digital tools. All incidents involving nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated imagery, are treated as safeguarding concerns.

- When made aware of concerns involving nude or semi-nude image taking/sharing involving children, staff are advised to:
    - Report any concerns involving nude or semi-nude image sharing involving children to the DSL immediately.
    - Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it – this may be illegal. If staff have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g., if a child has shown it to them), this will be immediately reported to the DSL.
    - Not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
    - Not say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved.
    - Explain to child(ren) involved that they will report the issue to the DSL and reassure them that they will receive appropriate support and help.
    - Not ask the child or children involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery and not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the child(ren) involved or their, or other, parents and/or carers. This is the responsibility of the DSL.

- Blue Skies School recognises that nude and semi-nude image sharing, including AI-generated or digitally altered images, is a safeguarding issue; this also includes AI produced sexual imagery. All concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL (or deputy).

- the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff and will speak with the children involved if appropriate.

- parents and carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process to best support children, unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put a child at risk of harm.

- a referral will be made to Child Services and/or the police immediately if:
    - the incident involves an adult (over 18).
    - there is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, age of SEND).
    - the image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of 13, depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child's developmental stage, or are violent.
    - a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

- All decisions will be recorded in line with our child protection procedures and will be based on the consideration of the best interests of any child involved. The DSL may choose to involve other agencies at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed at a later date.

- If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

8.4 Gangs, County Lines, Serious Violence, Crime and Exploitation

- Blue Skies School acknowledges the impact of gangs, county lines, serious violence, crime and exploitation. Any concerns regarding gangs, county lines, serious violence, crime and exploitation will be reported and responded to in line with other child protection concerns.
    - The initial response to child victims is important and staff will take any allegations seriously and work in ways that support children and keep them safe.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

- Blue Skies School recognises both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity.

- Blue Skies School recognises that children can become trapped in CCE as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

- The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can also be very different to that of boys. We also recognise that boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

- Blue Skies School recognises that CSE can occur over time to be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities and includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

- Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator

- The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by

violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

- CSE can be difficult to spot and sometimes mistaken for "normal" teenage behaviour. Knowing the signs can help protect children and help them when they've no one else to turn to. To support in identifying the signs of child sexual exploitation please refer to the Exploitation Identification – Toolkit Kent and Medway and the MSCP Risk Assessment tool for sexually active young people.

- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of CSE or CCE, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

Gangs, County Lines and Serious Violence

- All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

- Blue Skies School recognises that certain factors may increase a child's vulnerability to involvement in serious violence. These include being male, frequent absence or permanent exclusion from school, experiences of child maltreatment, and involvement in criminal activity such as theft or robbery. Additionally, the risk of serious violence may be heightened during times when pupils/students are travelling to and from school or college, particularly just before or after the school day.

- Criminal exploitation of young and vulnerable people is a common feature in the facilitation of county lines drugs supply, whether for the storage or supply of drugs, the

movement of cash, or to secure the use of dwellings held by vulnerable people in the rural marketplace this is commonly referred to as cuckooing.

- All staff have been trained and recognise the need to be vigilant for the signs and aware of risk factors which may increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, exploitation, and gang activity including but not limited to:

  - Being male – however girls who are exploited can be very different to that of boys, indicators may not be the same, but professionals need to be aware that girls are just as much at risk as boys.
  - Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
  - Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
  - Change in friendships/relationships with others/groups
  - Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
  - having experienced child maltreatment
  - Unexplained gifts/new possessions – these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation
  - Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
  - having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
  - a significant decline in educational performance
  - signs of assault or unexplained injuries

Further advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance. County Lines Toolkit For Professionals - The Children's Society in partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council.
Serious violence can include carrying or using knives and other weapons, and may be linked to peer conflict, bullying and criminal exploitation. Children whose education has been disrupted, including those who have been suspended or excluded, attend alternative provision or are on reduced timetables, may be at greater risk. The DSL will consider the risk of exploitation and serious violence when completing risk assessments and behaviour support plans, and staff will be aware that risks can be higher at certain times, such as immediately after school.

- Where an exploitation concern has been identified, the form linked below is to be used to provide intelligence to the police to get a better understanding of local exploitation concerns and issues. Through this portal you can report Perpetrators of child exploitation, Places and Spaces where Child Exploitation is suspected of taking place and vehicles believed to be connected to be exploiting children. Please use the link to - Report an Exploitation Concern Online.

This is for Child Exploitation specifically. But for general vulnerability concerns, they still need to be reported directly to the police in the usual way (101 or 999).
Please note, this portal is also not suitable for reporting crime as is not monitored 24/7.

- Blue Skies School will make referrals to Children's Social Care, and the police should we have reason to believe a student has become involved in this activity.

8.5 Mental Health

- Blue Skies School will ensure that all staff have an awareness of mental health problems and be aware in some cases, that it can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff are aware of how children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

- Where children have suffered abuse, neglect and exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACES), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is important that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are '**well placed'** to identify behaviour suggestive of a mental health problem or being at risk of developing one.
- Self-harm, suicidal ideation and risk of suicide are safeguarding concerns in their own right. Staff will be alert to warning signs, such as talk of hopelessness or of wanting to die, withdrawal, unexplained injuries, or changes in behaviour, eating or sleep, and will

report any concern to the DSL immediately. Where there is an immediate risk to life, staff will call 999.

- Blue Skies School takes a whole-school approach to mental health. We recognise that autistic young people may communicate distress differently, so changes in behaviour will always be explored rather than assumed to be part of a child's needs.

- If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

- Blue Skies School are aware that there is a need for monitoring student wellbeing at multiple levels - whether by individual students, year groups, or specific demographics such as SEN (Special Educational Needs) students. Schools must use detailed reporting to track and address wellbeing concerns effectively. Understanding wellbeing across various levels helps schools identify specific needs and tailor interventions appropriately. This approach ensures that no student is overlooked and that support is provided where it is most needed.

8.6 Online Safety

- It is recognised by Blue Skies School that the use of technology presents challenges and risks to children and adults both inside and outside of school

- The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. With child exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation, bullying for example, technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

- Blue Skies School will empower, protect and educate the community in their use of technology and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

- The DSL has overall responsibility for online safeguarding within the school but will liaise as necessary with other members of staff.

- The DSL and leadership team have read, understood and acted upon all guidance regarding Online Safety within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026.

- Blue Skies School identifies the breadth of issues within online safety can be considerable, but they can be broadly categorised into four areas of risk:
    - **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
    - **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
    - **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (including consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- Blue Skies School recognises that generative artificial intelligence (AI) presents additional risks, including harmful contact through AI tools and chatbots and the misuse of AI to create harmful or abusive content, such as deepfakes. Staff will follow the DfE's guidance on generative AI in education.
    - **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

- Blue Skies School recognises the specific risks posed by mobile phones, wearable technology and cameras, and, in accordance with KCSIE 2026, has appropriate policies in place that are shared and understood by all members of the school community. Further information reading the specific approaches relating to this can be found in the school's E Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Confidentiality Policy which can be found in the staff room/ Reception and/or website etc.
- Pupils hand in their mobile phones on arrival. Phones are stored securely in a lock box during the school day and returned at home time, so the school is phone-free for pupils throughout the day, in line with DfE guidance.

- Blue Skies School uses a wide range of technology. This includes computers, laptops, tablets and other digital devices, the internet, our learning platform, and email systems.
    - All School owned devices and systems will be used in accordance with our acceptable use policies and with appropriate safety and security measures in place

- All members of staff have access to appropriate, regular and up-to-date online safety information as part of their safeguarding training.

- Blue Skies School will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on school equipment and systems used by pupils and staff, including school devices used by pupils at home.

- Filtering and monitoring are an important part of the school's online safety responsibilities, but they are only one part of our approach to online safety. Pupils and adults may have access to systems external to the school control, such as mobile phones and other internet enabled devices and technology. Where concerns are identified, appropriate action will be taken.

Monitoring & Filtering

- The Proprietors, Senior Leadership Team and Advisory Board shall be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to risks from the school's IT system. They will ensure that there are appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and will review their effectiveness on a regular basis. This will be through IT internal reviews, use of an external audit tool such as 360Safe (SWGfl) and a monitoring and filtering working party consisting of the Safeguarding Team. The use of the SWGfl tool to check the filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Child Abuse) will support in ensuring compliance.
- The DSL will take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring system in place as part of their role
- The DfE's filtering and monitoring standards will be reviewed regularly and discussed with IT staff and service providers in order to ensure continued compliance.
- Training for all staff should include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring

- To support schools and colleges to meet this duty, the Department for Education has published filtering and monitoring standards which set out that schools and colleges should:
  • identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
  • review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
  • block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
  • have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs
  A senior leader oversees the review of filtering and monitoring. The annual review covers all internet-connected devices used by pupils, in all locations.

- Please also see Blue Skies School following polices;

Acceptable use policy: Staff

Acceptable use guidance: Students

- Blue Skies School recognises that many pupils and parents will have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phones and other enabled devices, this is external to the school's control. Where concerns are identified appropriate action will be taken. Upon entry to the school building, all phones and tablets must be left with reception in the metal box. Refusal to surrender any items will trigger the positive behaviour policy and parents will be contacted for persistent refusal to follow instructions.

- Blue Skies School will ensure a comprehensive whole school curriculum is developed and in place to enable and equip all pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world and manage the risks effectively. **DSLs and SLT may find it helpful to access UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) '*Education for a Connected World Framework*' and DfE '*Teaching online safety in school'* guidance.**.

- The school will also support parents and the wider school community (including all members of staff) to become aware and alert to the need to keep children safe online. We will share information with parents/carers about:
    • what systems are in place to filter and monitor online use
    • what children do online as a part of their learning, including the sites they may asked to access
    • who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online, as a part of remote learning

- The DSL will respond to online safety concerns in line with this and other associated policies such as anti-bullying and behaviour.
    - Internal consequences and/or support will be implemented as appropriate.
    - Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with local policies and procedures.

Where children are asked to learn online at home in response to a full or partial closure:

- Blue Skies School *will ensure any remote sharing of information, communication and use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements.*
- *All communication with learners and parents/carers will take place using* Blue Skies School *provided or approved communication channels; for example,* Blue Skies School *provided email accounts and phone numbers* ***and/or*** *agreed systems* ***e.g., Google Classroom.***
    - *Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the DSL.*
- *Staff and learners will engage with remote teaching and learning in line with existing behaviour principles as set out in our* Blue Skies School ***behaviour policy/code of conduct.***
- *Staff and learners will be encouraged to report issues experienced at home and concerns will be responded to in line with our child protection and other relevant policies.*
- *When delivering remote learning, staff will follow our Remote Learning Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).*

- *Parents/carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access.* Blue Skies School *will be informed who from the school their child is going to be interacting with online.*
- *Parents/carers will be encouraged to ensure children are appropriately supervised online and that appropriate parent controls are implemented at home.*

Additional guidance for DSLs and SLT regarding remote learning is available at DfE: Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) offers exciting opportunities in education, supporting children's learning and helping staff reduce workload. However, its use also presents safeguarding risks to both children and staff, as well as potential threats to system security and data integrity.

Leaders should consider developing a standalone AI policy or referencing AI use within relevant curriculum or IT policies. This should cover both on-site and off-site use, ensuring compliance with school/college policies and national legislation, including data protection requirements.

Further guidance and policy templates can be found here:

- **Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK**
- **Using AI in education settings: support materials - GOV.UK**
- **Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK**
- **Generative AI in education: user research and technical report - GOV.UK**
- **Generative AI in education: educator and expert views - GOV.UK**
- **Data protection in schools - Artificial intelligence (AI) and data protection in schools - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**
- **Artificial Intelligence and Online Safety | SWGfL**
- **Using artificial intelligence (AI) safely | Internet Matters**
- **Integrating AI in Schools: New Policy Template Available | SWGfL**
- **Ofsted's approach to artificial intelligence (AI) - GOV.UK**
- **National AI Strategy - GOV.UK**

- **Blue Skies School r**ecognises the potential benefits of generative AI tools in supporting teaching, learning, and reducing staff workload—when used safely, responsibly, and with appropriate infrastructure. However, we also acknowledge the

safeguarding, ethical, legal, and educational risks associated with AI, including exposure to harmful content, data breaches, academic dishonesty, and misinformation.

- To manage these risks, only AI tools approved by the senior leadership team—following appropriate risk and data protection assessments—may be used for educational or work purposes. A list of approved tools will be maintained and reviewed regularly.
- Staff and students will be informed of the benefits, risks, and expectations around AI use through training, policies (such as acceptable use and AI-specific policies), and curriculum content where appropriate.
    - list how this will be achieved, for example through specific lessons, AI policy, acceptable use policies, staff training etc. **Amend as appropriate to the school/college context.**
- Any misuse of AI will be addressed in line with existing policies, including behaviour, safeguarding, data protection, and complaints procedures. Serious concerns, such as AI-generated child sexual abuse material or deepfake abuse, will be handled in accordance with local safeguarding procedures and national guidance, including from the IWF, NCA-CEOP, and UKCIS.

8.7 Children Missing Education (CME) and Children who are absent from education

- All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called ‘honour’-based abuse or risk of forced marriage

- Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing or being absent in the future.

- Blue Skies School recognises that, when a child is not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, so we work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible.

- Where there are concerns that a child has unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, the school will respond in line with its statutory duties (DfE Children Missing Education and local support available from the Medway attendance and children missing education teams
    - Attendance Team: aassa@medway.gov.uk
    - Children Missing Education: cme@medway.gov.uk

- It is important that staff are aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

8.8 Domestic Abuse

- Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it in their own intimate relationships, can have a serious, long lasting impact upon children and is a form of child abuse.

- Blue Skies School recognises that domestic abuse can encompass but is not limited to psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional abuse.

- Blue Skies School is an Operation Encompass School. This is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership, to support children who witness and experience Domestic Abuse.

- Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our school/college/nursery/setting about all police attended Domestic Abuse incidents involving any of our children, where possible, PRIOR to the start of the next school day.

- Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures and where appropriate, a referral to the First Response will be made if there are any concerns about a child's welfare.

- Where the school is unsure of how to respond to a notification, advice may be sought from the First Response, or the Operation Encompass helpline which is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990.

- In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

8.9 So-called 'Honour-Based' Abuse

- So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

- All staff need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

- If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a **mandatory reporting duty** placed on **teachers** that requires a different approach (see following section).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

- FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

- Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a **statutory duty** upon **teachers,** to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining pupils or students.

- The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e., where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence). In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty FGM Fact Sheet

- Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Forced Marriage

- Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. Forced marriages occur when either or both participants have been pressured into entering matrimony, without giving their free consent. It's not the same as an arranged marriage, which may have been set up by a relative or friend and has been willingly agreed to by the couple.

- Blue Skies School recognises that some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Sometimes violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

- It is, however, illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not used

- Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can found at The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

Breast Ironing

- Breast flattening is a form of child abuse. See the CPS legal guidance on Child Abuse

- Breast Ironing is the process whereby young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down using hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education

- There are potentially significant physical and psychological consequences and risks related to this practice. Breast flattening is a form of child abuse. Therefore, professionals must follow their Local Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures.

8.10 Preventing radicalisation

- The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a duty on specified authorities, which includes schools, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the PREVENT duty). The school's work in promoting life in modern Britain and promoting Fundamental British Values (democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith) through the curriculum and pastoral programs underpins this strategy.

- Staff should be aware that there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly,

radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).

- The department has published advice for schools on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

- Every member of staff at Blue Skies School recognises that children exposed to radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability and should be approached in the same way as protecting children from other risks.

- All staff and proprietors should complete the Prevent online Awareness training package developed by the Home Office which includes guidance on how to identify people who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and how to refer them into the Channel process.

- Staff will be supported to use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and will act proportionately; staff will report concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who, where appropriate, will follow the local procedures in regard to making a Prevent referral.

- If there is an immediate threat to safety, the police will be contacted via 999.

- Where a child is receiving support regarding concerns relating to preventing radicalisation, for example, through the 'Channel' programme, the DSL will consider if it would be appropriate to share any information if/when a child leaves to attend any new schools/colleges, so support can be put in place in place for when the child arrives. Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and Channel training from the Home Office.

8.11 Looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers

- Blue Skies School acknowledges and understands the common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation, and a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable.

- The school has a 'designated teacher' (Danielle Atterbury, Deputy Headteacher) who works with local authorities, including the Virtual School Medway (including the virtual school head), to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after or who have been previously looked after, including those in kinship care.

- The designated teacher will work with the DSL to ensure appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.

- Blue Skies School understands their responsibility to inform the Local Authority via First Response of Private fostering arrangements when they believe that a child is being cared for as part of a private fostering arrangement. (When a child under 16, or 8 if they are disabled is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a relative for 28 days or more).

8.13 Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning

- A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, other children can sometimes target them. Blue Skies School recognises children who are LGBTQ+ or are thought to be LGBTQ+ by other children, can be singled out by their peers or other individuals in the community.
- When supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

- Blue Skies School will not initiate any action relating to social transition. Where a child or their parents request social transition, the school will follow the statutory guidance in KCSIE 2026: each request will be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis, parents will be involved as a priority (except in the rare circumstances where this would put the child at significant risk of harm), and all decisions will be recorded. School records will reflect the child's biological sex, and toilets, changing rooms and any overnight accommodation will be provided on the basis of biological sex.
- Children may face greater risks where they do not have reliable adults around them that they feel they can trust and be open with.
- LGBT education is part of our curriculum for Relationships Education/Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education, and our staff will work to eliminate extra obstacles and create a safe environment that encourages children to voice their concerns.

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9 Child Protection Procedures

- Blue Skies School adheres to the MSCP Safeguarding Children Procedures. The full MSCP procedures and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the MSCP website https://www.medwayscp.org.uk/mscb/

- If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. See page 2 for a flow chart setting out the process for staff when they have concerns about a child.

- If a child is at risk of imminent danger or harm concerns will need to be referred by telephone to First Response 01634 334466 and/or the police. If it is an emergency the police need to be called on 999.

- If there are child protection concerns the role of the school is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.

- Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be referred to Children's Services and Family Solutions via the Medway online form (the portal)

- Once staff have spoken to the DSL, the options the DSL will take will then include:
    - managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes.
    - a Family Solutions referral or Early Help Assessment
    - Make a referral for statutory services, for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm.

All information and actions taken including the reasons for any decision/actions made, will be fully documented on a child's record.

- All staff are aware of the process for making a request for support referrals for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

- Wherever possible the school will share safeguarding concerns, or the intention to refer a child to Children's social care, with parents or carers. However, staff will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions it may be necessary to consult with First Response and/ or the police for advice on when to share information with parents/carers.

- If the DSL is not available to discuss an immediate and urgent concern, staff can seek advice from the Deputy DSL. They may also seek advice from Early Help co-ordinators for level 2 ONLY advice Monday – Friday. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral to external services, then they will inform the DSL, and Headteacher, as soon as possible.
- Staff may pass information about a child to the DSL but remain anxious about action subsequently taken. Staff should feel able to check the progress of a case with the DSL so that they can reassure themselves the child is safe, and their welfare is being considered. If following this process, the staff member remains concerned it is the responsibility of that staff member to follow the school's escalation process.

- If a child's situation does not appear to be improving, then the DSL (or the person that made the request for support) will consider a re-referral.

- If, after a request for support or any other planned external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will consider following MSCP escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves. DSLs may request support with this via the Education Safeguarding Service.

- All members of staff are made aware of the internal and local Early Help/Family Solutions support services. Where a child is being offered or receiving Family Solutions support, staff will be supported to understand their role in any Early Help assessment or intervention. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with other professionals, and in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

- The DSL will keep all Early Help cases under constant review and consideration will be given to a request for support to the First Response if the situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

- **The child's wishes**
  - Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the **best** interests of the child at their heart. **However, this should not prevent safeguarding action being taken, for the child or children involved.**

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10 Children Who May Benefit from Early Help

Any child may benefit from early help at some point, but all staff should be alert to the potential need for early help for those who:

- Have a disability, a specific additional need or particular health condition.
- Has an SEN, whether or not they have an EHCP.
- Has a mental health need.
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- Is frequently missing from education, home, or care.
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from education – including those who attend a Pupil Referral Unit or Alternative Provision.
- Is at risk of radicalisation.

- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation.
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending.
- Has challenging family circumstances, such as parental substance misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour-based abuse, such as FGM or Forced Marriage
- Is a privately fostered child.
- Is pregnant or is a young parent.
- Is showing early signs of harmful behaviour.
- Is repeatedly removed from class or is on a part-time or reduced timetable.

Where it is identified that a child may need early help support, staff and the DSL will respond in line with Section 9 of this policy.

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11 Record Keeping

- Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

- Our child protection records will contain a clear and detailed summary of any concerns raised, including how they were followed up and resolved. Records will also note any actions taken (or not taken), the rationale behind decisions made, and the outcomes.

- All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing on the school's safeguarding concern system CPOMS. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

- If staff have a concern, they should follow their own organisation's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy)
  Options will then include:
  • managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes
  • undertaking an early help assessment or

• making a referral to statutory services for example as the child could be in need, is in need or is suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

- The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

- Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (such as a child in need or a child with a protection plan).

- DPA and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- As a school we highlight the importance of safeguarding students' personal information and providing secure methods for students to voice their concerns. Schools must now ensure that data is handled with the utmost care and that students can express their worries confidentially. Proper data protection helps maintain student trust and ensures that sensitive information is not misused. Secure channels for communication allow students to share their concerns without fear of their privacy being compromised.

- Child Protection records will record facts and not personal opinions. A body map will be completed if injuries have been observed.

- If, in exceptional circumstances, photos of injuries are required for evidence purposes, this should be carried out by specialist police officers. If for some reason, you are **directed** to take photos of an injury by a social worker or police officer, only do so on receipt of an email confirming the name of the person requesting, their role, the date, time, and the rationale behind this decision. Staff can challenge this request if they do not feel comfortable and wait for a social worker/police officer to attend.

- Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the child's words and will be signed and dated by the member of staff. If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL.

- Safeguarding records are kept for individual children and are maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in the school. Safeguarding records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL. Safeguarding records are shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis only.

- All safeguarding records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the child's subsequent school/setting, under confidential and separate cover. These will be given to the new DSL, and a receipt of delivery will be obtained.

12 Child protection files

- When children leave the school (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

- Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs, or the named person with oversight for SEN in colleges, are aware as required.

- In addition to the child protection file, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to

continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives

- If a child is subject to a child protection plan or there are other ongoing concerns at the time of transfer, then it is strongly recommended that the transferring DSL arrange to meet with the receiving DSL in person to ensure there is effective transition and handover of information.

- Child protection files should always be kept by the education setting where the child is on role. Transferring settings do not need to keep copies of child protection files, but if there is reason to, they must be kept in accordance with data retention (see section 7). In cases where there may be ongoing involvement from transferring settings, for example if any siblings still attend your setting, DSLs may wish to take copies of chronologies etc.

13 Multi-agency Working

- Blue Skies School identifies that they have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Proprietors should ensure that the school or college contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

- Blue Skies School recognises and is committed to its responsibility to work within the MSCP multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The leadership team and DSL will work to establish strong and co-operative local relationships with professionals in other agencies in line with statutory guidance. Examples of multi-agency partnerships may include professionals such as social workers, early help practitioners, health professionals (including pediatricians, health visitors, mental health services, and speech and language therapists), specialist teachers, educational psychologists, staff from other schools or settings attended by the child, and the police.

- Blue Skies School will endeavour to identify those children and families who may benefit from the intervention and support of external professionals and will seek to enable referrals (in discussion with parents/carers) as appropriate.

- Blue Skies School recognises the importance of multi-agency working and will support attendance at relevant safeguarding meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings or other early help multi-agency meetings

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14 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Blue Skies School expects all staff to treat information they receive about children and young people in a highly discreet and confidential manner. Confidential information should **never** be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a **'need to know basis'.**

- All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep any information confidential, they also have a professional responsibility to be proactive and share information as early as possible, to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about safety and welfare. This will only involve those who need to be involved, such as the DSL and Medway Children's Services.

- KCSIE, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), DfE Data Protection in schools guidance and DfE 'Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners guidance provides further details regarding information sharing principles and expectations.

- Blue Skies School recognises our duty to share relevant information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity as per statutory guidance outlined within KCSIE 2026.

- The Data Protection Act 2018 places a duty on organisations and individuals with regards to processing personal information fairly and lawfully. As a school we adhere to data protection, yet we do not allow this to stand in our way in the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of our children in our care. DfE ''Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners'' (2018) provides further detail

- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the Designated

Safeguarding Lead and may require further referral and subsequent investigation by the appropriate authorities.

15 Complaints

- Blue Skies School has a complaints procedure (http://www.blueskiesschool.co.uk/policies) this can also be found in the staff room/upon request from the office**.** As a school we encourage children and families to raise complaints, concerns or comments with us. We have a robust internal investigation process.

- Whilst we encourage members of our community to report concerns and complaints directly to us, we recognise this may not always be possible. Children, young people, and adults who have experienced abuse at school can contact the NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' helpline on 0800 136 663 or via email: help@nspcc.org.uk

- Safeguarding concerns should be raised with school immediately. If a concern or a child is at immediate risk, then the individual needs to contact First Response 01634 334466 or the police on 101. All visitors are given a safeguarding leaflet that outlines how to share concerns and code of conduct expected by visitors/contractors.
- All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process.
    - Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with in line with section 19 of this policy.

16 Staff Induction, Awareness and Training

- All members of staff have been provided with a copy of Part One of "*Keeping Children Safe in Education"* (2026) which covers Safeguarding information for all staff.

- School leaders including the DSL will read the entire document. All members of staff, whatever their role, will read and understand Part One in full.

- All Members of staff have signed to confirm that they have read and understood Part One in full. The *signed log kept by the business manager.*

- The DSL will ensure that all new staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) receive child protection training and information to ensure they are aware of the Blue Skies School internal safeguarding processes as part of their induction. This is by sharing policy and specific training by the DSL and/or DDSL. This also includes access to the Educare software package.

- All staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training is regularly updated. Induction and training are in line with advice from the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership.

- In addition to child protection training all members of staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

- All staff members (including temporary/supply staff) will be made aware of the school's expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the staff behaviour policy (or code of conduct) and Acceptable Use Policy.

- Proprietors recognise the expertise staff build through undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. Opportunity should therefore be provided for staff to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) will provide an annual report to the Proprietors detailing safeguarding training undertaken by all staff and will maintain an up-to-date register of who has been trained.

- Blue Skies School has a nominated Safeguarding lead for the Proprietors (Jonathan Higgins), who ensures that all proprietors will access appropriate safeguarding training which covers their specific strategic responsibilities on a regular basis. Training will provide them with the knowledge to ensure their school's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective. This includes strategic responsibility for online safety.

17 Safe Working Practice

- All members of staff are required to work within clear guidelines on Safe Working Practice / the school's Code of Conduct. The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers have read the child protection policy and staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and understand that their behaviour and practice must be in line with it.

- Staff are aware of the school's Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention Policies, and any physical interventions must be in line with agreed policy and procedures and national guidance.

- A list of staff that have accessed physical intervention training will be kept by the Headteacher and updated in-line with use of reasonable force DfE guidance. All incidents will be recorded in-line with guidance.

- There may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force in order to safeguard children from harm. Further information regarding our approach and expectations can be found in our Positive Behaviour Support policy.

- If staff, visitors or volunteers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in school, who they are with, for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open.

- Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. This advice can be found in Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings May 2019 (Safer Recruitment consortium). All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

- Staff should be particularly aware of the professional risks associated with the use of electronic communication (e-mail; mobile phones; texting; social network sites) and

should familiarise themselves with advice and professional expectations outlined in the school's E Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

18 Staff Supervision and Support

- Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.

- The induction process will include familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if members of staff have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- The school will provide appropriate supervision and support for all members of staff to ensure that:
    - All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
    - All staff will be supported by the DSL in their safeguarding role.
    - All members of staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.

- The DSL will also put staff in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish. Staff can also approach organisations such as their Union, the Education Support Partnership or other similar organisations directly.

19 Safer Recruitment

- Blue Skies School values the importance of developing a safe culture and is committed to ensure that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our pupils and staff.

- Blue Skies School will use the recruitment and selection process to deter, identify and reject unsuitable candidates. We will ensure that detailed checks are carried out and evidence is provided e.g. criminal record checks (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks, together with references and interview information, this will aid the school in deciding about the suitability of the

prospective employee. The school will also carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any issues that are publicly available online

- Proprietors will ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts the interview has completed safer recruitment training. At all times the Headteacher and Proprietors will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*, DfE (2026).
- Volunteers who regularly teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children are in regulated activity and will have an enhanced DBS check with a barred list check, whether or not they are supervised. Supervising pupils on work experience for more than three days in any 30-day period is also regulated activity, and the appropriate checks will be carried out.

- Safer recruitment procedures will include the requirement for appropriate checks in line with national guidance (see: Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment)

- The school maintains an accurate Single Central Record (SCR) in line with statutory guidance.

- We are also committed to supporting the statutory guidance from the Department for Education on the application of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006 in schools.

- We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions, court orders, cautions, reprimands and warnings.

- Where the school places a learner with an alternative provision provider, the school will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that child. The school will undertake appropriate checks to ensure the provider meets the needs of the pupil, including written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment

20 Allegations Against Members of Staff, including Supply Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

- Blue Skies School recognises that 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.
- When an allegation is made, the Headteacher (or the Proprietors, where the allegation concerns the Headteacher) will consider a referral to the LADO at the earliest opportunity. Allegations against trainee teachers will be handled in the same way as allegations against supply and contracted staff.

- All staff, contractors and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

- Blue Skies School understands the duty to refer to the LADO where it is alleged that anyone working in the school has:

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

- In depth information regarding staff allegations can be found within our Procedures for Managing Allegations against Staff policy**.** This can be found (in the staff room and Google Drive). All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the schools safeguarding regime. The leadership team at Blue Skies School will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.

- If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers/supply staff/visitors) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

- Allegations should be referred immediately to the Headteacher or Proprietors in their absence who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member. Please refer to the Medway LADO Leaflet if you need further information.

- In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher then staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the Proprietors who will contact the LADO in the first instance.

- Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headteacher or Proprietors should contact **the LADO directly on 01634 331065.**

- The Headteacher or Proprietors will seek advice from the LADO within 24 hours of the alleged incident. No member of staff or the Proprietors will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

- Where headteachers are unsure how to respond, for example if the school is unsure if a concern meets the harm 'thresholds', advice will be sought via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Enquiry Line and/or the Education Safeguarding Service

- Blue Skies School has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service 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 school, 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 HR.

20.1 Low Level Concerns that do not meet the 'harms threshold'

- Blue Skies School Staff Code of Conduct explains what a low-level concern is and the importance of sharing concerns. We have clear reporting procedures for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor

practice. We also acknowledge that low-level concerns can arise in several ways from various sources, e.g. suspicion, complaint or a disclosure. Procedures in place for confidentially sharing, recording and handling of low-level concerns

- A low-level concern is any concern (no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt') that a member of staff has acted in a way that:
  - is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
  - does not meet the allegations threshold or is not considered serious enough to refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

- Low-level concerns can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent and thoughtless, through to behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.

- Where low-level concerns are reported, the headteacher should liaise with the LADO Service on 01634 331 065

- The Medway LADO policy states that all allegations, including low level are considered with the LADO, please communicate and engage with the LADO in relation to all low-level concerns.

20.2 Whistleblowing Procedure

- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the leadership team. All members of staff are made aware of the school's Whistleblowing procedure (available in the staff room or on Google Drive). It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.

- Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

21 Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- Blue Skies School understands that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. These children may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. The DSL will work closely with the staff team to plan support as required.

- All staff will ensure that children with SEND will be able to overcome the barriers that exist for this group of children and specifically ensure that those with communication difficulties will be supported to make sure that their voice is listened to and acted upon.

- It is important that all staff are aware that children with SEND may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse and that some children can be disproportionally impacted by things like bullying and exploitation without outwardly showing signs.

- All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour/mood change or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability and be aware that children with SEND may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse. To address these additional challenges, our school will always consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND.
- Staff are aware that children with SEND may not recognise that what is happening to them is abuse, may find it harder to tell someone, and may be more dependent on adults, including for intimate care, which can increase their vulnerability.
- Staff understand that managing a child's medical condition is not, on its own, a reason for a safeguarding referral. However, repeated concerns, such as medication or medical appointments being regularly missed, may indicate neglect and will be reported to the DSL.

22 Curriculum and Staying Safe

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) states that the curriculum should ensure opportunities for "developing children's understanding, awareness and resilience".

- Schools play a pivotal and essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour; what is 'safe'; to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned.

- The school uses the PSHE and RSE curriculum to increase self-esteem, self-awareness and social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making. This ensures that our pupils have a range of strategies to ensure their own protection and that they are able to also protect others. Online safety is also integrated into the curriculum.

- We recognise the crucial role that school plays in preventative education. We have a whole school approach that creates a culture of zero tolerance for racism, ableism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia and sexual violence/harassment.
- The school ensures that those delivering the PSHE curriculum have been trained and equipped to deliver high quality PSHE education in a safe way. For further information and training on Medway PSHE programs please follow the link: School PSHE programmes.

- Children feel they can talk to a range of staff when they feel they are worried and can give feedback about their school experience. Children at Blue Skies School will be listened to, heard and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.

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23 The Use of School Premises by Other Organisations

- Services or activities provided separately by another organisation from time to time may seek to use the school premises. The Headteacher or Proprietors will seek written assurance that the organisations concerned have suitable policies and procedures in place with regard to safeguarding children and that relevant safeguarding checks have been made for all staff and volunteers.

- Without this assurance then an application to use the premises will be refused.

Although Blue Skies does not currently permit external organisations to use the premises, we are aware that if this situation is to change then Blue Skies School may receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). As with any safeguarding allegation, Blue Skies will follow the safeguarding policy and procedures, including informing the LADO.

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24 Security

- Blue Skies School has a responsibility to provide a secure site that is controlled by clear management directives, but the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore, all staff and people on the site have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light. Staff will be expected to adhere to any safety arrangements.

- Visitors and volunteers must only enter through the main entrance and after signing in at the office will be issued with a visitor's pass. The school has a clear system of ensuring visitors are to be accompanied/supervised by regulated staff members. Visitors will be expected to adhere to any safety arrangements.

- Blue Skies School will not tolerate or accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens school security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. This type of behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the school site.

- Any individual on site who is not known or identifiable by a visitor's pass may be challenged by any staff member for clarification and reassurance.

25 Use of 'Reasonable Force'

Blue Skies School acknowledges that in certain situations, staff may need to use reasonable force to safeguard children from harm. This refers to actions involving physical contact to control or restrain a child, ranging from guiding them to safety to intervening in more serious incidents such as fights or preventing injury. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than necessary.

Further details on our approach can be found in our Behaviour Policy and in line with the DfE statutory guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force. Any use of force must be lawful, necessary and proportionate, used only by appropriately trained staff, and recorded and reviewed. Additional advice is available in Part Two of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

26 Monitoring and Review

- All school staff (including temporary/supply staff and volunteers) will have access to a copy of this policy. The policy will also be available to parents/guardians.

- This policy was updated in November 2026 to reflect the new guidance and legislation issued in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

- All staff will have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents. The DSL will review the policy following any child protection concerns (including following learning identified from serious case reviews) or allegations against staff to ensure that it reflects appropriate, accurate and up-to-date safeguarding practice.

- The policy forms part of our school development plan and will be reviewed annually.
- The policy is included in our school development plan and will be evaluated each year by the proprietors, who are responsible for overseeing safeguarding and child protection systems.

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27 Local Support

All members of Staff at Blue Skies School are made aware of local support available. If a child may be at risk of imminent harm, you should call Children's Services First Response Team on 01634 334466 and/or the Police on 999

- **Contact details for Education Safeguarding Officer (Education Safeguarding Service)**
  - Kate Barry (Education Safeguarding Officer)
  - 01634 331017

- kate.barry@medway.gov.uk
- educsafeguarding@medway.gov.uk

- **Operational LADO and Education Safeguarding Manager**
  - Maisie Adkins (Education Lead in MASH – For MASH Enquiries only)
  - 01634 331065
  - maisie.adkins@medway.gov.uk
- **Contact details for the LADO:**
  - Telephone: 01634 331065
  - Further information and contact details found: Advice and resources for professionals

- **Children's Social Work Services**
  - First Response: 01634 334466 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm)
  - Out of Hours: 03000 419 191

- **Kent Police**
  - 101 (or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm)

- **Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP)**
  - mscp@medway.gov.uk
  - 01634 336 329

28 National Support

Support for staff

- Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline

Support for Pupils

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

- The Mix: www.themix.org.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Fearless: www.fearless.org
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

Support for adults

- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): napac.org.uk
- MOSAC: www.mosac.org.uk
- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org

APPENDIX 1: Definitions of Forms of Abuse/Specific Safeguarding Issues

Definitions of Forms of Abuse

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

- **Abuse**: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

- **Physical abuse**: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
  Please click on the hyper link for further information, advice and guidance: NSPCC Physical Abuse

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

or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
Please click on the hyper link for further information, advice and guidance: NSPCC Emotional Abuse

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

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

  Please click on the hyper link for further information, advice and guidance: NSPCC Neglect

Specific Safeguarding Issues

Please see below links to information and guidance about specific safeguarding issues. You will find further information in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Mental Health

- The department has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools.

In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See Rise Above for links to all materials and lesson plans.

  - Mind: www.mind.org.uk
  - Moodspark: https://moodspark.org.uk
  - Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
  - We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Every mind matters https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/

The department is providing funding to support costs of a significant training programme for senior mental health leads and the national rollout of the Link Programme. Training for senior mental health leads, will be available to all state-funded schools and colleges by 2025, to help introduce or develop their whole school or college approach to mental health

Support for Learning Disabilities

- Respond: www.respond.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

Domestic Abuse

- Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk
- Domestic abuse services: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
- Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line: www.mensadviceline.org.uk
- Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Respect Phoneline: https://respectphoneline.org.uk

Honour based Violence (FGM and Breast Ironing)

- Forced Marriage Unit: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage
- Information and resources https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/female-genital-mutilation
- FGM Factsheet: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496415/6_1639_HO_SP_FGM_mandatory_reporting_Fact_sheet_Web.pdf
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information: www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
- National FGM Centre http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/fgm/

Contextual Safeguarding, Child-on-Child abuse, Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation:

- Contextual Safeguarding Network: https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk
- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
- Rape Crisis: https://rapecrisis.org.uk
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights: www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights
- Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse - CSA Centre

Substance Misuse

- Drugs advice for Schools: Gov.uk Drugs advice for schools
- Talk to Frank https://www.talktofrank.com/
- We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/

Online Safety

- CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Report Harmful Content: https://reportharmfulcontent.com
- Parents Info: www.parentinfo.org
- Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- NSPCC/ Net Aware: www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety and www.net-aware.org.uk
- Get safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org
- Stop it Now!: www.stopitnow.org.uk
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes - this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support.
- LGFL 'Undressed' provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.

Radicalisation and hate

- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk

APPENDIX 2: Related Safeguarding Policies

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read in conjunction with the policies as listed below: (to be read and followed alongside this document).

- Behaviour management and use of physical intervention
- Code of Conduct/Behaviour policy
- Searching, screening and confiscation
- Online Safety; social media and Mobile technology
- Anti-Bullying
- Data protection and Information sharing
- Image use
- Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)
- Personal and intimate care
- Health and safety, including plans for school reopening
- Attendance
- Risk assessments (e.g. school trips, use of technology, school re-opening)
- First aid and accidents - including safer eating/allergies/infection/asthma
- Managing allegations against staff
- Staff behaviour policy, including Acceptable Use of Technology Policies (AUP)
- Safer recruitment
- Whistleblowing

APPENDIX 3: Procedure for dealing with disclosures (the 6 R's – what to do if)

1. Receive:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief you display denial to a child or show shock or disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down.
- Accept what is being said without judgement.
- Take it seriously.

2. Reassure:

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable. Don't make promises that you can't be sure to keep, e.g. "everything will be all right now".
- Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets. You have a duty to report your concerns.
- Tell the child that you will need to tell some people, but only those whose job it is to protect children.
- Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk and reassure them they have done the right thing.

3. React:

- React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether you need to refer the matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- **Do not** ask leading questions; "Did he/she….?" Such questions can invalidate evidence.
- Do ask open "TED" questions; Tell explain describe
- Do not criticise the perpetrator; the pupil may have affection for him/her
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff
- Explain what you have to do next and who you must talk to

4. Record:

- Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes

- Record the date, time, place, words used by the child and how the child appeared to you – be specific. Record the actual words used by the child
- Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions – keep it factual.

5. Remember:

- Contact the designated member of staff
- The designated teacher may be required to make appropriate records available to other agencies

6. Relax

- Get some support for yourself