



Whole School Policy for Safeguarding Incorporating Child Protection

THIS DOCUMENT IS AN APPENDIX TO THE MAIN OVERARCHING POLICY HELD BY
NEXUS MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

1. Purpose & Aims

- 1.1. The purpose of Discovery Academy's safeguarding policy is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at our school is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:
 - Protect children and young people at our school from maltreatment;
 - Prevent impairment of our children's and young people's health or development;
 - Ensure that children and young people at our school grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
 - Undertake that role so as to enable children and young people at our school to have the best outcomes.
- 1.2. This policy will give clear direction to staff, volunteers, visitors and parents about expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at our school.
- 1.3. Our school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children who are registered pupils at our school. This will also include identifying children who may benefit from early help. The elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support.
- 1.4. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Discovery Academy including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, visitors, agency staff and students.
- 1.5. To provide parents, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection/safeguarding.

2. Our Ethos

- 2.1. The child's welfare is of paramount importance. Our school will establish and maintain an ethos where pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children at our school will be able to talk freely to any member of staff at our school if they are worried or concerned about something.
- 2.2. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff at our school plays a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned.

- 2.3. All staff and regular visitors will, through training and induction, know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose.
- 2.4. Throughout our curriculum we will provide activities and opportunities for children to develop the skills they need to identify risks and stay safe. This will also be extended to include material that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills. At Discovery Academy, we use our PSHE/RSE and IT curriculums to provide opportunities for all children and young people to develop knowledge, skills and understanding on how to keep themselves safe from harm. Pupils are educated at a level that is appropriate to their age, stage and level of ability. They are encouraged to develop appropriate safeguarding vocabulary. The content of curriculum includes a broad range of safeguarding topics such as Bullying, CSE, CCE, Stranger Danger, Safe touching positive relationships and E-Safety.
- 2.5. At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018).

3. Legal Framework

- 3.1. This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people>
- 3.2. The Academy adheres to all aspects of the latest Keeping Children in Safe in Education document. [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

4. Categories of Abuse

- 4.1. Abuse falls into 4 categories: - **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.** Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.
- 4.2. **Physical Abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

4.3. 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.

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

4.5. Emotional Abuse - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may also involve overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; it may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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, though it may occur alone.

4.6. Neglect - may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

4.7. Specific safeguarding issues include but are not limited to:

4.8. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

4.8.2. CSE can occur in all communities and amongst all social and ethnic groups and can affect girls and boys. Children as young as 8 years have been identified, particularly in relation to online concerns. CSE is a complex form of abuse and it can be difficult for those working with children to identify and assess however, all those working in our school are made aware of the potential indicators of grooming and exploitation and how to refer concerns on appropriately.

4.8.3. More information on CSE is contained in Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)

4.9. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

4.9.1. CCE is a form of abuse and has similarities with CSE. It involves an individual or group and takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. More information regarding CCE such as "County Lines" can be found in Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)

4.10. Child on Child Abuse

4.10.1. Child on child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in child on child abuse is under the age of 18. 'Child-on-child' abuse can relate to various forms of abuse (not just sexual abuse and exploitation), and crucially it does not capture the fact that the behaviour in question is harmful to the child perpetrator as well as the victim. Child on child abuse is never treated as "banter".

4.10.2. Key areas where child on child abuse occurs are:

- Bullying, including online/cyber bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- Racist, religious, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- Gender based violence/violence against girls and young women
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Issues relating to gang activity and youth violence
- Voyeurism offences such as "Up skirting"

4.10.3. More information regarding Child on Child Abuse is contained in Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)

4.11. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

4.11.1. FGM is addressed as part of the procedures around '**Honour Based Violence**' which is defined as "crimes which have been committed to protect and defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including FGM, Forced Marriage and practices such as Breast Ironing"

4.11.2. The school has due regard to the **mandatory reporting duty**, which came into force in October 2015, of the FGM Act 2003, which places a **statutory duty** on teachers (along with social workers and healthcare professionals) to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18 years. Staff in this school will be vigilant and will report promptly any FGM or other HBV concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.11.3. More information on these issues can be found in Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)

4.12. **Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism (Prevent Duty)**

4.12.1. The school has due regard to the **Prevent Duty** Guidance 2015, under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which aims to prevent children and young people from being drawn into extremism and terrorism.

4.12.2. We will engage with parents and families as we are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation and we will assist and advise those families who do raise concerns and point them in the direction of support mechanisms i.e., the Local Authority, Police and/or the **Channel Programme**.

4.12.3. As with other safeguarding risks, staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff will use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to the **Channel** programme.

4.12.4. **Channel** is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation.

4.13. **Online Safety**

4.13.1. The predominant issues associated with online safety are:

- Content – exposure to illegal, harmful or inappropriate material
- Contact – harmful online interaction with others

- Conduct – online behaviour that increases the likelihood, or causes, harm

4.13.2. At Discovery Academy, we ensure that we incorporate the teaching of online safety into as many aspects of school life as possible. We also teach specific online safety lessons as part of the PSHE and computing curriculum and offer advice to parents on how to ensure their children are safe online.

4.14. **Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)**

4.14.1. Sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Photos and videos can be shared as text messages, email, posted on social media or increasingly via mobile messaging apps, such as Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

4.14.2. The increase in the speed and ease of sharing imagery has brought concerns about young people producing and sharing sexual imagery of themselves and also sending or receiving sexually explicit text messages. This can expose them to risks, particularly if the imagery/text is shared further, including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation. The production and sharing of sexual images of under 18s is also illegal.

4.14.3. At our school, we understand the responsibility to educate our pupils about all online safety issues; teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking skills to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the internet and related technologies, in and beyond the context of the classroom. We have a separate E-Safety Policy, a copy of which is available from either the school office or the school website.

4.14.4. More information regarding online safety is contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)

4.15. **Children Missing From Education (CME)**

4.15.1. Children missing from education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

4.15.2. Our school has procedures to follow for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect,

including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. All staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage

4.15.3. More information regarding Children Missing from Education is contained in Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022).

5. Additional safeguarding issues

5.1. Looked After Children (LAC)

5.1.1. Our school has a named designated teacher for LAC who works closely with the Virtual School Team and various local authorities depending where each of the looked after children come from.

5.2. Early Help and support for children in need

5.2.1. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Factors that may contribute to the need for Early Help include:

- Disability and/or has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic abuse; and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect

5.2.2. Discovery Academy is committed to offering Early Help to children and families as problems begin to emerge. The Early Help Assessment process is important in order that a plan can be implemented to help children and families. Discovery Academy will support those in need of this help so that we can gather your thoughts and concerns and work together to put in place a plan that will help you and your family. Your information will only be shared for the purpose of ensuring that relevant support is offered to you and your family, and to ensure that services are better coordinated and focused on your family's needs.

5.3. At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018).

6. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Clare Hodgkinson	chogkinson@nexusmat.org
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Danny Ross	dross@nexusmat.org
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Joanne Higgins	jhiggins@nexusmat.org
Head of School	Danny Ross	dross@nexusmat.org
Executive Headteacher	Luci Windle	LWindle@nexusmat.org
Designated teacher for Looked After Children (LAC)	Danny Ross	dross@nexusmat.org
Named Safeguarding Governor	N/A	N/A
MAT Chief Executive Officer	Warren Carratt	ceo@nexusmat.org
Sheffield LADO	Sharon Haigh	sheffieldsafeguardinghub@sheffield.gov.uk 0114 273 4855
Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership	Emily Pickles	emily.pickles@sheffield.gov.uk
Urgent Safeguarding Concerns	Sheffield Safeguarding Hub	If you are worried about a child in an emergency contact 0114 2734855 If in immediate danger, call 999

Role	Name	Contact details
Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST)	Locality Based	0114 2037485
Amber Project	Sheffield Child Exploitation Service	0114 2930937 amberservice@sheffield.go.uk

6.1. The Local Governing Body

6.1.1. The Local Governing Body of Discovery Academy is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and our compliance with it, with delegated responsibilities from the Nexus MAT Board of Directors. Although our Local Governing Body takes collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils, we also have a link governor who champions safeguarding within the school.

6.1.2. The Local Governing Body will ensure that:

- The school contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018);
- The school has due regard to the **Prevent Duty** Guidance 2015, under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which aims to prevent children and young people from being drawn into extremism and terrorism. This may include making a referral to the **Channel** programme which provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals (via MASH) if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation.
- The school has due regard to the **mandatory** reporting duty, which came into force in October 2015, of the **Female Genital Mutilation** Act 2003 which places a **statutory duty** on teachers (along with social workers and healthcare professionals) to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18 years.
- A member of the senior leadership team is designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that there is an alternate (deputy) and appropriately trained member of staff identified to deal with any

issues in the absence of the designated safeguarding lead professional. There will always be cover for this role;

- All staff receive a safeguarding induction and are provided with a copy of this policy, Part One of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2022'* and the staff code of conduct;
- All staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training that is updated regularly; in addition, all staff members will receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via e-mail, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with statutory guidance;
- Safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (September 2022).
- They remedy without delay any weakness in regard to our safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.
- The school has due regard to the mandatory requirement of reporting 'Private Fostering' arrangements to the local authority. 'Private Fostering' is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more.
- The Local Governing Body will receive a safeguarding report on a termly basis that will record the training that has taken place, the number of staff attending and any outstanding training requirements for the school. It will also record all safeguarding activity that has taken place, for example, meetings attended, reports written, training or induction given. It will not identify individual pupils.

6.2. The Executive Headteacher

6.2.1. At Discovery Academy, the Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- Identifying a member of the senior leadership team to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- Identifying an alternate member of staff to act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in his or her absence to ensure there is always cover for the role;
- Ensuring that the policies and procedures adopted by the school, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff;

- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns are addressed sensitively in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing procedures;
- Liaising with the LADO in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff.

6.2.2. The Executive Headteacher may delegate some of these responsibilities to the Head of School, in their absence from site.

6.3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead

6.3.1. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will carry out their role in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in Annex B of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2022'. The DSL will provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.

6.3.2. The DSL and/or deputy DSL at Discovery Academy will represent our school at child protection conferences and core group meetings. Through appropriate training, knowledge and experience our DSL will liaise with Children's Services and other agencies where necessary, and make referrals of suspected abuse to Children's Services, take part in strategy discussions and other interagency meetings and contribute to the assessment of children.

6.3.3. The DSL will maintain written records and child protection files ensuring that they are kept confidential and stored securely.

6.3.4. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of our policy and the procedure they need to follow. They will ensure that all staff, volunteers and regular visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction and have been trained to the appropriate level.

6.3.5. In their absence the above duties will be carried out by the Deputy designated Safeguarding Lead.

7. Staff Training & Induction

7.1. When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our school's safeguarding policy along with the staff code of conduct and told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead is.

7.2. Every new member of staff or volunteer will have an induction period that will include essential safeguarding information. This programme will include

basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record this information and discuss issues of confidentiality. The induction will also remind staff and volunteers of their responsibility to safeguard all children at our school and the remit of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. At induction, all staff will also be provided with a copy of Part One of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2022) and will be asked to read this and sign to confirm that they have read and understood the document.

- 7.3. In addition to the safeguarding induction, all members of staff will undertake appropriate safeguarding training on a regular basis in accordance with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2022). All staff members will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via weekly Andrew Hall update e-mail, at staff meetings) as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- 7.4. All regular visitors and volunteers to our school will be given a set of our safeguarding procedures; they will be informed of whom our DSL and alternate staff members are and what the recording and reporting system is.
- 7.5. The DSL, the deputy DSL and any other senior member of staff who may be in a position of making referrals or attending child protection conferences or core groups will attend regular training. They will also receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the school year in order to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.
- 7.6. The local governing body will also undertake appropriate training to ensure they are able to carry out their duty to safeguard all of the children at our school.
- 7.7. We actively encourage all of our staff to keep up to date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance. Part One of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2022) provides links to guidance on specific safeguarding issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, and Children Missing from Education and Preventing Radicalisation.

8. Procedures for Managing Concerns

- 8.1. Discovery Academy adheres to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through the LSCP.
- 8.2. Every member of staff including volunteers working with children at our school is advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about any aspect of the welfare

of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and have a responsibility to take action as outlined in this policy.

- 8.3. It is not the responsibility of school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, has a duty to recognise concerns and pass the information on in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- 8.4. The DSL should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our school. Any member of staff or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child is at risk of harm must report it immediately to the DSL or, if unavailable, to the Deputy DSL. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.
- 8.5. If a child is in immediate danger or risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately. Anyone can make a referral but in situations where referrals are not made by the DSL, they should be informed as soon as possible afterwards that a referral has been made by someone else.
- 8.6. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded on CPOMS as actions from the initial concern made.
- 8.7. Following receipt of any information raising concern, the DSL will consider what action to take and seek advice from Children's Social Care - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as required. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented on CPOMS.
- 8.8. All referrals will be made in line with Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures
- 8.9. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration by raising concerns again with the DSL and/or the Executive Headteacher. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.
- 8.10. Staff should always follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with MASH, or the police if: the situation is an emergency and the designated senior person, their deputy and the Executive Headteacher are all unavailable; they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety.

- 8.11. Any member of staff who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Head of School, Executive Headteacher or Trust CEO. If any member of staff does not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point they should contact the Safeguarding Children's Unit directly with their concerns.
- 8.12. If an allegation is made or information is received about an adult who works in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Head of School or Executive Headteacher immediately. Should an allegation be made against the Head of School or Executive Headteacher, this will be reported to the Trust CEO.

9. Records & Information Sharing

- 9.1. If staff are concerned about the welfare or safety of any child at our school they will record their concern on CPOMS, if for any reason CPOMS is unavailable a yellow cause for concern form should be used or an email to chodgkinson@nexusmat.org. Any concerns should be passed to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. These forms will then be logged and scanned onto CPOMS by the DLS/DDSL under the category Cause for Concern.
- 9.2. Any information received will be scanned onto CPOMS and actions will be the responsibility of the DSL & Deputy DSL. Child protection information will only be shared within school on the basis of 'need to know in the child's interests' and on the understanding that it remains strictly confidential.
- 9.3. Further information will be added to CPOMS and be kept up to date. (Records of concern, copies of referrals, invitations to child protection conferences, core groups and reports)
- 9.4. When a child leaves our school, the DSL will make contact with the DSL at the new school and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded/transferred to the receiving school in an appropriately agreed manner. We will retain evidence to demonstrate how the file has been transferred; this may be in the form of a written confirmation of receipt from the receiving school and/or evidence of recorded delivery.

10. Working with Parents and Carers

- 10.1. Discovery Academy is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

- 10.2. When new pupils join our school, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the school website. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to MASH.
- 10.3. 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 consent or it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard a child from harm.
- 10.4. We will seek to share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm. A lack of parental engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the school has about a child will not prevent the DSL making a referral to MASH in those circumstances where it is appropriate to do so.
- 10.5. We will seek to share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless:
- 10.5.1. To do so may place a child at increased risk of harm.
 - 10.5.2. Where there is evidence that sharing this information with family would impede any investigation
 - 10.5.3. Where sexual or physical abuse is suspected
 - 10.5.4. To do so would put yourself or staff at risk
- 10.6. In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, the school requires parents to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:
- Full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives;
 - Full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above);
 - Emergency contact details of at least 2 responsible adults (if different from above);
 - Full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from school (if different from the above).
- 10.7. The school will retain this information on the pupil file. The school will only share information about pupils with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil or where a parent has given permission and the school has been supplied with the adult's full details in writing.

- 10.8. At Discovery Academy we use the “Seesaw” system to communicate with parents. We encourage all parents to use this system as it is immediate and two ways.

11. Child Protection Conferences

- 11.1. Social Care will convene a Child Protection conference once a child protection enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been undertaken and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm. A review conference will take place once a child has been made the subject of a Child Protection Plan in order to monitor the safety of the child and the required reduction in risk.
- 11.2. Staff members may be asked to attend a child protection conference or core group meetings on behalf of the school in respect of individual children. Usually the person representing the school at these meetings will be the DSL, Deputy DSL or member of SLT who is familiar with the case. In any event, the person attending will need to have as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible; any member of staff may be required to contribute to this process.
- 11.3. All reports for child protection conferences will be prepared in advance using the guidance and preferably the template provided. The information contained in the report may be shared with parents before the conference as appropriate and will include information relating to the child’s physical, emotional and intellectual development and the child’s presentation at school. In order to complete such reports, all relevant information will be sought from staff working with the child in school.
- 11.4. Clearly child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we are likely to have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open and honest way with any parent whose child has been referred to Children’s Services or whose child is subject to a child protection plan. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents.

12. Safer Recruitment

- 12.1. As per the Trust Recruitment & Selection Policy, we will ensure that the Executive Headteacher, Head of School and at least one member of the Local Governing Body have completed appropriate safer recruitment training. At all times the Executive Headteacher and Local Governing Body will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’, DfE (September 2021)

and that at least one member of any interview panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

12.2. At Discovery Academy we will use the recruitment and selection process to deter and reject unsuitable candidates. We require evidence of original academic certificates. We do not accept testimonials and insist on taking up references prior to appointment. We will question the contents of application forms if we are unclear about them, we will undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks and use any other means of ensuring we are recruiting and selecting the most suitable people to work with our children.

12.3. The Trust will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) of all safer recruitment checks carried out in line with statutory requirements. The Single Central Record is recorded using the "Staff Safe" system. The Single Central Record will contain information on all staff members on the following:

- An identity check
- A barred list check
- An enhanced DBS check/certificate
- A prohibition from teaching check
- A section 128 check (for management positions in independent schools (including free schools and academies)
- A check of professional qualifications
- A check to establish the person's right to work in the UK
- Further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK

13. Safer Working Practice

13.1. All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

13.2. All staff will be provided with a copy of our school's code of conduct at induction. They will be expected to know our school's Code of Conduct and policy for positive handling and carry out their duties in accordance with this advice. There will be occasion when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example if a child has an accident or is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others around them. However, at all times the agreed policy for safe restraint must be adhered to.

13.3. If staff, visitors, volunteers or parent helpers 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 and for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open.

- 13.4. 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 the guidance document 'Safer working practices for adults who work with children and young people' (Safer Recruitment Consortium, October 2015). 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.

14. Managing Allegations Against Staff & Volunteers

- 14.1. Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children at our school. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.
- 14.2. Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.
- 14.3. We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our school are safe to work with children. We will ensure that the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2022) is adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO can be contacted on 0114 273 4855.
- 14.4. If an allegation is made or information is received about an adult who works in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Head of School immediately. Should an allegation be made against the Head of School or Executive Headteacher, this will be reported to the Trust CEO.
- 14.5. The Executive Headteacher or Trust CEO will seek advice from the Trust HR Manager and the LADO within one working day. No member of staff will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.
- 14.6. Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Executive Headteacher, Head of School or Trust CEO should contact the LADO directly on 0114 273 4855.
- 14.7. The School has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or

unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our 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.

15. Relevant Policies

15.1. To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school are appropriately safeguarded the following policies are also included under our safeguarding umbrella:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour Including Team Teach & Positive Handling
- Recruitment & Selection
- Whistle-blowing
- Intimate Care
- E-safety
- Health and Safety including site security
- Harassment and discrimination including racial abuse
- First aid
- Data Protection
- Medication in School
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Educational Visits

16. Statutory Framework

16.1. This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' DfE (July 2018)
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DfE (September 2022)

16.2. It is the responsibility of **every** member of staff, volunteer and regular visitor to our school to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of all of the pupils at this school. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

17. Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools: terms of reference - GOV.UK

- 17.1. *Following the launch of the government's investigation into peer-on-peer sexual abuse, Ofsted has published its terms of reference.*
- 17.2. *This review will look at whether our school have appropriate processes in place to allow pupils to report sexual abuse concerns freely, knowing these will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.*
- 17.3. Responses to Child Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Guidance from the DFE is clear that it does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed advice on what we should do in any or every particular case; it provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for us to consider in our decision-making process.
- 17.4. Ultimately, all decisions at Discovery Academy will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- 17.5. The Designated Safeguarding Lead & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL & DDSL) will take the leading role and will use their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required. Some situations are statutorily clear:
- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
 - the age of consent is 16
 - sexual intercourse without consent is rape
 - rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law; and
 - creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal (often referred to as sexting). This includes children making and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves.
- 17.6. Our basic safeguarding principle is:
- If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger, or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to children's social care. It may be that we have assessed the situation and believe that a referral is needed without parental knowledge in order to safeguard students involved.
 - Once a referral is processed children's social care will consider if early help, section 17 and/or 47 statutory assessments are appropriate
 - We will support in an early help assessment, child protection enquiry, strategy discussion and child protection conference.
 - We will work closely with the police as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes.

18. Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment online

- 18.1. We are aware that incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment that occur online (either in isolation or in connection to offline incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors.
- 18.2. These include the potential for the incident to take place across a number of social media platforms and services and for things to move from platform to platform online.
- 18.3. It also includes the potential for the impact of the incident to extend further than our local community (e.g. for images or content to be shared around neighbouring schools/colleges) and for a victim (or alleged perpetrator) to become marginalised and excluded by both online and offline communities.
- 18.4. There is also the strong potential for repeat victimisation in the future if abusive content continues to exist somewhere online.
- 18.5. We will act in accordance and work with relevant agencies if we are made aware that our pupils are using online platforms which in any way jeopardises the safety of other members of our school community.

19. Managing the disclosure

- 19.1. We will always do our utmost to ensure that victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- 19.2. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report or disclosure. For example, a friend may make a report or a member of our school may overhear a conversation that suggests a pupil has been harmed.
- 19.3. As with all safeguarding concerns, our staff are trained to follow the school protocol regarding the recognised signs of safety and will speak to the DSL or DDSL. This discussion will be handled sensitively and with the support of children's social care if required.
- 19.4. **Our safeguarding practice includes:**
 - Not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example with the designated safeguarding lead or children's social care) to discuss next steps.

- Only sharing the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it.
- Listening carefully to the pupil, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the disclosure will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what etc.
- We make sure to only record the facts as the pupil presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker.
- We are aware that notes of such disclosures could become part of a statutory assessment by children’s social care and/or part of a criminal investigation;
- If possible, we aim to manage disclosures with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the DSL). However, this might not always be possible
- Informing the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as practically possible if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) are not involved in the initial disclosure
- Other related issues and wider context. Where incidents and/or behaviours are associated with factors outside the school or occur between children outside the school, we will consider contextual safeguarding. This simply means assessments of children in such cases should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.
- Recognise that multi-agency early work is in the best interest for all when placed alongside strong school policies, preventative education and engagement with parents and carers.

20. Disclosure

20.1. Confidentiality

20.1.1. Staff taking a disclosure will never promise confidentiality as it is very likely that it will be in the best interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others in order to provide support and engage appropriate agencies., on order to protect pupils and promote the welfare of others pupils within the school setting.

20.1.2. The DSL/DDSL will consider the following:

- Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed a referral should be made to children’s social care
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are always crimes
- The starting point is that a referral will be made to MASH
- The wishes of the victim. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is

reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered

- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: might a crime have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour
- The ages of the pupils involved
- The developmental stages of the pupils involved
- Any power imbalance between the pupils (e.g. is the alleged perpetrator significantly older)
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse (where this may be known)
- Are there ongoing risks?

20.2. Anonymity

- Where we are aware that an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is in progress we will be mindful of anonymity, and the criminal process in general so that we can offer support and act appropriately.
- In addition, we will endeavour to do all we can to reasonably protect the anonymity of any pupils involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. We will carefully consider which staff in our school should know about the report and any support that will be in place for the pupils involved.
- We are however, mindful that if an investigation is ongoing it is not our place to offer guidance and support to the pupils and their families beyond what could reasonably be expected in regards to their education.

20.3. Risk Assessment

20.3.1. When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL/DDSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- The victim
- The alleged perpetrator
- The other pupils (and, if appropriate, staff) at school. The risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic) and will be kept under regular review, reflecting any changes in circumstances. At all times, we will be actively considering the risks posed to all our pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe during school hours. The DSL/DDSL will continue to liaise with children's social care and specialist services as required.
- Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. Any such professional assessments will be used to inform our approach to supporting and protecting the pupils and updating our own risk assessment.
- Other related issues and wider context. Where incidents and/or behaviours are associated with factors outside the school or occur between pupils outside the school

20.4. Referrals to children's social care

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger a likely course of action will be that we make a referral to local children's social care. At the referral to children's social care stage, schools will generally inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of children's social care.
- If a referral is made, children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.
- Where statutory assessments are appropriate, we will (especially DSL/DDSL) work alongside, and cooperate with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.
- We do not need to wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school.
- It will be important for us to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. The risk assessment will help inform all of our decisions.
- In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The school (generally led by the DSL/DDSL) will refer again if we believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, we will consider other support mechanisms such as specialist support and pastoral support

20.5. Managing any delays in the criminal process

- There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. Discovery Academy will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children in the school. The risk assessment will help inform any decision.
- Considering any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator whilst an investigation is ongoing is discussed below in the alleged perpetrator section.
- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, it will be important for the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) to work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school takes do not jeopardise the police investigation.

20.6. The end of the criminal process

- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all the children at the school and, if it has not already, and consider any suitable action in light of our behaviour policy.

- If the perpetrator remains in school, we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator's timetable and movement around the school.
- Our risk assessment will continue to be revisited and revised where necessary. Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other students in the school. We will do our utmost to ensure that the victim and alleged perpetrator remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support in order for them to access their education.
- The alleged perpetrator is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

20.7. Ongoing Support

20.7.1. We will:

- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse.
- Make certain the needs and wishes of the victim are paramount (along with protecting the student) in any response. It is important that they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, and that school is a safe space for them.
- Make certain the victim is not made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Look to provide a physical space for victims to withdraw and avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups
- Maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time. We will do our best to continue to support this need and will continue to work with children's social care and other agencies as required.
- Do all we can to reasonably protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made in accordance with our Bullying Policy.
- Give all the necessary support for the victim to remain in school
- Offer support from our Family Support Team where required
- Sign post to counselling services where required

20.8. Ongoing Considerations

- Where there is a criminal investigation into sexual assault the alleged perpetrator will not be educated in same classes with the victim.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator at a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport to and from school

20.9. Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator

- Discovery Academy recognises that whilst safeguarding the victim (and wider student body) we need to provide education to the alleged perpetrator.
- Advice will be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care and specialist services.
- If it is the case that the alleged perpetrator is moved to another educational institution (for any reason), then we will ensure that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs.

20.10. What we do in school to educate our children against harmful sexual behaviours

20.10.1. We have a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the RSHE curriculum and assemblies. Our programme is developed to be age and stage of development appropriate, and tackles such issues as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships, including information on consent
- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Gender roles, stereotyping, equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- Individual risk assessments and intervention sessions to bridge the gap between any possible incident and the external expert agency being involved
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment
- Keeping safe online
- We ensure DSLs have appropriate and regularly updated training and all staff are trained to recognise signs of safety and harmful sexual behaviours

For further information please contact 0114 4798000

Further Reading & Information

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2nd September 2022– Part 1
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2nd September 2022– Annex A
- Nexus MAT Safeguarding Policy
- Nexus MAT Staff Code of Conduct