

Queenswood



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN (Child Protection) POLICY

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This policy will be updated in accordance with the requirements of the regulations and reviewed at least annually	
Circulation	All Queenswood Staff Queenswood Website Staff Portal

Safeguarding Children Contacts

School contact details	Queenswood School, Shepherds Way, Brookmans Park Hatfield, Herts AL9 6NS 01707 602 510
Principal	Mrs Jo Cameron Jo.cameron@queenswood.org
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mrs Ceri Stokes, Deputy Head Pastoral ceri.stokes@queenswood.org 01707 602 510
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Mrs Violaine Ludwick, Assistant Head Boarding Violaine.ludwick@queenswood.org 01707 602 610 Ms Victoria Greensmith, Deputy DSL Victoria.greensmith@queenswood.org 01707 602 500 Mr Ian Sheldon, Senior Deputy Head Ian.sheldon@queenswood.org 01707 602 614
Governor with Safeguarding Responsibility	Dr Oonagh McGuinness oonaghmcguinness@queenswood.org
Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP)	0300 123 4043
LADO	01992 555420 or by email on lado.referral@hertfordshire.org .
Hertfordshire Consultation Hub	01438 737511
NSPCC Helpline to report sexual abuse	0800 136 663
Police	111

Policy statement

Queenswood is committed to promoting and ensuring the safety and well-being of every pupil at the School. All children have the right to feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. The best interests of the child are paramount to enable children to have the best outcome. This policy ensures compliance with all relevant legislation and guidance including: Keeping Children Safe in Education (referenced hereafter as KCSIE) (September 2024); Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023) (WTSC) and Prevent legislation (2015, updated 2021).

The School recognises it is part of a wider safeguarding system for children and communicates readily with the multi-agency team to ensure appropriate referrals are made and also to promote excellent partnership working practices. The school acknowledges that **safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. It is essential that everybody working in a school or college understands their safeguarding responsibilities.** All staff should make sure their approach is child-centred and they should consider, at all time, what is in the best interests of the child.

Safeguarding must be at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development in our school. There are four key elements of safeguarding at Queenswood School: prevention, protection, support and recording. These areas are detailed further in the policy.

If the school believes or suspects that a crime has been committed, the police will immediately be contacted.

Prevention

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Curriculum
- Staff Training
- Safer Recruitment

Protection

- Implementing safeguarding and child protection procedures and working in partnership with pupils, parents and external agencies.
- Providing multiple opportunities for pupils to disclose concerns
- Providing an environment where pupils feel safe
- Safer Recruitment including whistleblowing

Support

- By identifying individual needs where possible through pastoral tracking overseen by the Deputy Head Pastoral
- By developing, implementing and reviewing plans which meet the needs of pupils.

Records and reporting

- Thorough and accurate record keeping which conforms to legislative requirements and demonstrates consistently best practice.

Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment, inside or outside the home including online
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

See Appendix 1 for more information on the different types of abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for the welfare of the pupils. Therefore, this policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working within the School.

All Staff

All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments. All staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

The Teacher Standards (2012) state that teachers, including Head teachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing as part of their professional duties. KCSIE (2024) makes it clear that all staff have a responsibility to safeguard pupils, regardless of role within the organisation. This includes, when necessary, reporting concerns to external agencies, for example Social Care. All staff must have an 'it could happen here' approach. Staff must never assume that somebody else will take action and must therefore share information, following the correct channels, that might be critical in keeping our pupils safe. This is **everyone's responsibility**, regardless of their role within the school. There are, however, key people within Queenswood who have specific responsibilities for safeguarding children. Any member of staff could make a referral to Children's Services, although normal practice at Queenswood is to refer matters to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Ceri Stokes.

Staff are responsible for those whom they have invited to visit and must follow all the procedures outlined in the Visitor Policy. Staff must comply with the Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure (Safer Recruitment) Policy if they are arranging regular visitors or volunteers, or any visiting coaches, trainers or professionals. Staff should liaise with HR well in advance of the visit so the correct procedures and checks can be undertaken. Failure to comply with these procedures will result in a disciplinary hearing and might be classed as gross misconduct.

Staff are advised in the Staff Code of Conduct to avoid being alone in a room with a pupil. Where for reasons of timetabling, confidentiality or other circumstances this is not practicable, staff should ensure that the door to the room has an unobstructed glass panel or is left open. Advice is provided by the DSL, who also visits Gosling where the tennis scholars are coached, and advises their staff about our policy and procedures, and gives them a hard copy of the documents listed above. The Director of Tennis oversees the pastoral wellbeing of the pupils who regularly visit Gosling.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

At Queenswood the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Deputy Head Pastoral, Mrs Ceri Stokes .

Deputy Designated Senior Leads

The Deputy Designated Senior Leads (DDSLs) are Mrs Violaine Ludwick, Assistant Head Boarding and Ms Victoria Greensmith, Deputy DSL, the Senior Deputy Head, Mr Ian Sheldon and the Principal, Mrs Jo Cameron. There is a weekly Safeguarding meeting and half termly audits and safeguarding policy and procedures meetings

The safeguarding team, and the DSL in particular, are responsible for:

- Co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of safeguarding children policies and procedures within the School, ensuring that all temporary and volunteer members of staff are made aware of the School's policy and procedures for safeguarding children.
- Sharing information and liaising with the Principal where appropriate.
- Liaising with other agencies and representing the School at relevant inter-agency meetings.
- Ensuring that locally-established procedures are followed.
- Acting as a consultant for staff to discuss concerns including concerns about pupils who may benefit from early help, reviewing and referring children whose situation has not improved.
- Making referrals as necessary and seeking informal advice from the Hertfordshire Consultation Hub when appropriate. Children who have suffered or are at risk of serious harm would be reported to Children's Social Care immediately. Those in need of additional support may be referred for inter-agency assessment, with the consent of the parent(s) and / or pupil, using local processes including the use of the Early Help Assessment (EHA), Team around the Child (TAC) and Multi Agency-Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Maintaining a confidential recording system with records kept for 35 years or longer, after discussion with the principal. Records of concerns, discussions and decisions are recorded, with all rationale for any decisions made.
- Organising appropriate training for all staff including at induction and regular updates and training for the DSL and her DDSLs at least every two years. Temporary and voluntary staff will be made aware of the arrangements.
- Ensuring the delivery of education about safeguarding to the pupils, e.g. through PSHCEE/RSE and tutorials.
- Ensuring children receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalation by acting on and referring early signs of abuse and neglect.
- Keeping clear records, listening to the views of the child, reassessing concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information and challenging inaction. These records should include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- Ensuring data sharing is in line with legislation and does not prohibit protecting children from harm.
- Taking overall responsibility for Online/E-Safety including, training staff on the monitoring and filtering of ICT and their responsibility.
- Ensuring there is monitoring of the internet filtering system, but ensuring there is not 'over blocking' which might lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught.
- Raising any concerns in SLT meetings, seeking both practical and emotional support, where needed.
- Providing an annual report to Governors and updates at all Board meetings.

Board of Governors and Nominated Governor

The Board of Governors maintains close oversight of all safeguarding matters and undertakes a review, at least annually, of this policy, including an update and a review of the effectiveness of the policy implementation. Working with the DSL, the Governors will ensure the implementation of the policies and procedures is effective and comply with the law at all times. This includes allegations against staff.

The Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding.

Their training should be regularly updated. Governors are expected to read KCSIE. Governing bodies and proprietors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Without prejudice to the Board's responsibility for safeguarding children, there is a nominated governor with responsibility for the monitoring of the effectiveness of the School's Safeguarding Children Policy, including the Prevent Duty and procedures on behalf of the Board of Governors. The current nominated Governor is Dr Oonagh McGuinness.

- The DSL submits an annual safeguarding report for the Board's formal consideration; this is the Hertfordshire Annual Safeguarding Audit, which is a comprehensive overview of safeguarding practices developed by the Child Protection School Liaison Service. If necessary, this is forwarded to the Hertfordshire Child Protection School Liaison Officer Team. The specific oversight of safeguarding children matters is delegated to the Board's Education Committee, which addresses both academic and pastoral issues at the School.
- The Governors ensure that the School contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 through effective implementation of this policy and procedures and effective co-operation with local agencies.
- The Governors ensure that this policy and procedures will assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in Part 1 and appendix B of KCSIE 2024. The implementation of these policy provisions will be checked through discussion between the Governors and the DSL at termly Board Meetings, evidenced in minutes. The Nominated Governor, Dr Oonagh McGuinness, is responsible for a termly check of the following: training records, referral information in respect of requests for help and support for individual children, issues and themes which may have emerged within the School and how these have been handled, and the contribution the School is making to local discussions on safeguarding matters. She reports to the Board of Governors. Minutes will be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate the breadth and depth of review. Governors should recognise the expertise staff have, and ensure opportunities are provided for staff to contribute to shaping safeguarding arrangements.
- The Governors ensure that any organisation renting the premises have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed). The Governors ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, through PSHCEE and RSE. They should ensure that there is filtering and monitoring of the internet, but that there is no 'over-blocking'. They should ensure that these systems are in place and regularly review their effectiveness. The following advice to Governors is recommended in KCSIE (2024)
- Governors are asked to complete annual training, including NSPCC Safeguarding for Governors as well as attending multiple Governor Meetings where they are given regular update training and in depth reviews of current safeguarding situations within the School community. Those Governors who are unable to attend, are sent notes and presentations to review.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children-and-adults-strategy>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Safer Recruitment

The School complies with all Safer Recruitment practices as set out in KCSIE 2023 part 3. The Principal, Mrs Jo Cameron, and the Head of Human Resources, Mrs Kechi Abia, the Senior Deputy Head, Mr Ian Sheldon, the Deputy Head Pastoral, Mrs Ceri Stokes, the Assistant Head Boarding, Mrs Violaine Ludwick and other senior members of staff, have completed the appropriate external training for the safer recruitment or selection of any new member of staff, so that every recruitment or selection interview is attended by at least one fully trained member of staff.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are undertaken and there is compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 before a person begins working at the school. For appointments to management positions, checks will take place to ensure they have not been prohibited by the Secretary of State; additionally, the school will undertake a Section 128 Prohibition from Management Check for anyone who has been appointed to a management position from outside the school or promoted to such a position from inside the school. Additionally, as part of the shortlisted process and due diligence regarding teaching staff, an online search may be conducted of the shortlisted candidates to ascertain any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview. The Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy (Safer Recruitment) explains in detail the process and required checks.

Procedures

1. Member of staff – initial actions

Any member of staff who is informed of an incident or suspects that a child has been abused, either within or external to the School, must immediately report this information to the DSL or, in her absence, a DDSL or, in their absence, the Principal. There should be no prior consultation with any third party. Where the allegation relates to harmful sexual behaviours, if possible, the disclosure should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably with the DSL or a DDSL). When a child makes a direct disclosure, the following steps should be taken:

- a) Listen carefully to the child
- b) Refrain from questioning except to clarify meaning.
- c) Explain to the child that you will need to pass this information on to the DSL (or DDSL) who has the responsibility for ensuring the appropriate protection of children within the School.
- d) Carefully record what the child has told you, what you have observed and what you have said. As soon as possible, upload this information onto CPOMS, the online pastoral tracking system. Use the body map to illustrate any injuries observed. Records must be factual and not reflect personal opinion or judgment; staff should keep in mind that their record may be shared with partner agencies or during a court process
- e) Remember, whilst decisions to seek support would normally be taken in consultation with parents and pupils, their consent is not required when there are reasonable grounds to believe the child is at risk of significant harm
- f) Any member of staff who is informed of, or suspects, a case of alleged child abuse is not in a position to give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality to the informant. He/she should, however, affirm that the information will only be passed on to the minimum number of designated people, so that the appropriate action can be taken. He/she should also assure the informant that whatever action may be necessary will be taken to protect the informant from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure of alleged abuse has been made.
- g) Members of staff should not investigate reports of abuse themselves. Alleged victims, alleged perpetrators or those reporting abuse should not be interviewed beyond the point at which it is

clear that there is an allegation of abuse. Any investigation will be conducted by appropriate external authorities once the matter has been referred to Children's Services.

- h) Every member of staff has a legal responsibility to report anything that might indicate that a child is suffering, has suffered or is likely to suffer some form of abuse. Significant changes in behaviour may be noted at any time. However, any concern whatsoever must be reported to the DSL and the assumption must not be made that someone else will already have done something. The personal and professional immunity of any member of staff making such a report will be protected under the provisions of the Whistleblowing Policy. Staff have responsibility to speak to external agencies if they feel that the School has not dealt with the matter effectively.
- i) The DSL, DDSL or Principal will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns whenever a concern arises. A DSL is contactable to all trip leaders during the holidays. All staff should be able to reassure victims of abuse that they are being taken seriously and will be supported. Children and young people should never be made to feel ashamed or that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a victim every be made to feel ashamed for making a report. All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

2. Making a Referral (DSL/DDSL/Principal)

a) Pupils

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and, if appropriate the police) is made immediately.

The DSL, DDSL or Principal must submit a referral form as soon as possible to Children's Services, and within 24 hours. For Hertfordshire referrals, advice can be sought from the Hertfordshire Consultation Hub on 01438 737511. A referral must be submitted using the online form found here (an account must be created first):

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/childprotection

If there are concerns that a child is at risk of immediate significant harm, the first action is to call 999. If unsure then the Consultation Hub can be contacted for advice on 01438 737511. You can also contact the Child Abuse Investigation Unit via 101. This is a specialist team within the police with countrywide responsibility for undertaking child protection investigations.

When the referral has been made, there should be a response within 24 hours. If this does not happen within 3 days, the DSL or Principal must make contact. The following should be recorded by the DSL:

- i. The team manager's proposed actions, who will take what actions, the expected timescale of each action. Or,
- ii. The justification for NFA (no further action)

If there is a social care assessment, the key designated staff member (usually the DSL or DDSL) will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process to help social care assessments consider contexts outside the home and enable a contextual approach.

Parents should be aware that the School's first priority is the welfare of each pupil and thus the matter of how and when to inform parents will be discussed with the social care team first. The School will always endeavour to work closely with the parents, as this will normally be in the best interests of the pupil. However, the school does not require parental consent for referral to statutory agencies if there is suspicion or a belief that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm from notifying the parents first.

Referrals for Early Help or Section 17 will always require one parent and pupil awareness; referrals of this nature should only be made by a member of staff, following discussion with the DSL and/or DDSLs.

b) Allegations against a member of staff or volunteer

If an allegation is made that a member of staff/volunteer has behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child, or possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child, or behaved towards a child in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and immediately inform the Principal and the DSL (unless the DSL or Principal is the subject of the concern). For full details, please refer to the Whistleblowing policy and the low-level concern policy.

They should also make a written record of the allegation using the informant's words and including the time, date and place of the alleged incident, what was said and details of anyone else present. This record should be signed and dated and passed immediately to the Principal. The Principal is trained in dealing with allegations against staff, including volunteers.

If an allegation of child abuse is made against the DSL, the member of staff receiving the allegation must inform the Principal immediately. In the Principal's absence, the allegation must be reported instead to the Chair of Governors, obtaining contact details from the Bursar, Mr Ian Williams, Clerk to the Governors. ian.williams@queenswood.org

If the concerns regard the Principal or a Governor, then the Chair of Governors must be contacted or, in their absence, (or if the concerns regard the Chair of Governors) the Vice Chair of Governors obtaining contact details from the Bursar, Mr Ian Williams, Clerk to the Governors. ian.williams@queenswood.org In this instance the Principal must not be informed.

If there are concerns that a child is at risk of immediate significant harm, the first action is to call 999. If unsure, then the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership can be called on 0300 123 4043.

The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) can only be contacted via the LADO duty team on 01992 555420 or by email on lado.referral@hertfordshire.org. Written records of these conversations should be kept, and communication with the individual and the parents agreed. Due weight to the views of LADO should be taken into account when considering suspension. In a case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

The Principal should, as soon as possible, following a briefing from the LADO, inform the subject of the allegation. In the case of an allegation of child abuse against a member of the boarding staff who has been suspended pending an investigation, the School may have to make alternative accommodation arrangements available. The School must not undertake their own investigations

without consulting the LADO. In borderline cases, discussions with the LADO can be held informally and without naming the School or individual.

In response to an allegation, staff suspension should not be the default option. An individual should only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification should be recorded by the School and the individual notified of the reasons. Allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records and any that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious should not be referred to in employer references. Confidentiality should be maintained and every effort made to guard against unwanted publicity until the accused is charged or the DFE/NCTL publish information. Pupils that are found to have made malicious allegations are likely to have breached School behaviour policies. The School should therefore consider whether to apply an appropriate sanction, which could include temporary or permanent exclusion (as well as referral to the police if there are grounds for believing a criminal offence may have been committed). If there has been a substantiated allegation against a member of staff the School will work with the LADO to establish if improvements can be made to procedures or practice.

c) Allegations against a child – Child on Child abuse

Incidents of child abuse may also result from the actions of one child against another, known as Child on Child Abuse (a fuller description of this type of abuse is found on page 14).

Staff must report these concerns to the DSL or DDSLs as soon as possible and within 24 hours.

Every effort should be made to continue the educational provision for all parties during the investigation process that may be initiated by external agencies. As a boarding school, Queenswood takes seriously the possibility of abuse by peers and would respond appropriately. The Anti-Bullying Policy is stressed to all pupils.

Reporting to External Agencies

Queenswood is required to report promptly to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), on leaving the School, the name of any person working in regulated activity (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children, and the DBS referral criteria are met. This includes: dismissal, suspension (in some cases, the referral for discretionary barring will be made at the point when a member of staff is suspended; for instance, if the police are investigating and it looks like it might take a long time (forensic computer searches) or the person has been charged but remains suspended pending the court case), non-renewal of a fixed term contract, no longer engaging a supply teacher, terminating a placement of a student teacher or other trainee, no longer using staff employed by contractors, resignation, volunteers or where they withdraw from training, working or volunteering. The report will include as much evidence about the case as possible. 'Compromise Agreements' cannot prevent this referral, nor can an individual's refusal to co-operate with an investigation.

The School has a duty to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had they not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. This might be for 'unprofessional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute', or a conviction for a relevant offence. -The School will also report to the TRA if it considers that the member of staff has acted in an unprofessional manner at any time during their employment at the school.

Similarly, the school will make a referral to the relevant regulatory body if a health professional has been dismissed as a result of conduct that falls below their professional standards; for example, NMC (school nurses), HCPC (physiotherapist, SaLT, educational psychologist, etc)

Staff Training: Safeguarding Induction and Training

Safeguarding training, for all new staff and volunteers, forms part of the induction process. This is carried out by the DSL or an external safeguarding expert. Staff are then regularly trained with regular updates about the causes of abuse, and are encouraged to have an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ and a commitment to act in the best interests of the child. The updates will also include changes to key documentation, policies and processes.

The School adheres to DfE guidance, contained in KCSIE 2024, that all members of staff should have appropriate training in child protection and safeguarding issues. The Principal, DSL, DDSLs, the Heads of Year and SMT undertake a course in initial child protection training and inter-agency working, and then a refresher course, at least every two years. Staff are trained in line with advice from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and from KCSIE (2024) to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. New members of staff receive internal training as part of their induction programme on joining the School, which includes:

- The School’s Safeguarding Children Policy
- The Staff Code of Conduct, including the whistleblowing procedure and the Online Safety Policy.
- The identity of the DSL and DDSLs
- A copy of Part 1 of KCSIE (2024) and Annex B
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing in Education (the safeguarding response)
- The Online Safety Policy and the Mobile Phone Policy including management of access to 3G/4G/5G
- As an inclusive community, Queenswood recognises its specific responsibilities in relation to Looked After and previously looked after Children. The Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures the staff have information they need when required.
- Managing Child on Child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including upskirting
- Online safety (for both staff and pupils)

Prevent Training

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that training on Prevent and Channel awareness is given to staff and governors in order that they can identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas. This is part of the Safeguarding training. Additionally, online training is available for staff here: <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu>

Additionally, all staff must read at least part 1, 5 of KCSIE (2024) and Annex A on an annual basis. They must click to confirm that they have read the policy on CPOMS and QHR.

Education and Online Safety

Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding issues. Pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through the curriculum (including Computer Science) and in PSHCEE. The Online Safety Policy makes it clear that visiting internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material including any which encourage radicalisation is unacceptable. The School has a filtering and monitoring system which blocks sites which promote extremist views and encourage radicalisation, as well as other potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The DSL regularly

receives updates and checks the input to assess any inappropriate internet activity. Staff are also aware of their responsibility to monitor ICT, apps and websites.

As part of the PSHCEE curriculum, appropriate guidance on keeping safe from abuse is delivered to all year groups each year; this includes bringing in external speakers, as well as delivering material in tutorials and year group meetings. The safe use of electronic equipment and access to the internet is covered. This includes ensuring pupils are aware of the Mobile Phone Policy. In addition, the Prefect team are given a more detailed briefing on the School's Safeguarding Policy, organised by the DSL, so that they understand the correct action to be taken should they receive any allegation of abuse from another pupil.

The PSHCEE curriculum tackles, at an age-appropriate stage, issues such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- The concepts of, and laws relating to – sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and how to access support, and
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.

Cybercrime, as defined as a criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet, is something that young people can, deliberately or inadvertently, become involved in. Children who are particularly skilled in computing and technology may be drawn into cybercrime; this includes activities such as hacking, 'denial of service' attacks (where a website is made unavailable) and creating and using malware such as viruses.

All staff need to be aware that abuse can happen online, offline or both. Abuse that is online can include abusive, harassing or misogynistic message, non-consensual sharing of indecent images (particularly in chat groups) and sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content. Pupils are regularly reminded of the people they can talk to if they have any concerns. Heads of Year are aware of the filter system and how to respond if a safeguarding concern is raised. For further detail refer to the [Online Safety Policy](#).

Transparency and Whistleblowing

A copy of this policy will be kept in the DSL's office along with other policy documents relating to safeguarding issues. All teaching staff, as well as senior members of the support staff, have a copy of this policy which has been explained to them, so that they are fully aware of all procedures. It is hoped that parents and guardians will always feel able to make contact with the School to address any matters of concern. Queenswood will never ignore any allegation of child abuse and will always investigate it thoroughly and expeditiously, contacting appropriate agencies as set out in this policy. Any perceived deficiencies or weaknesses in Queenswood's safeguarding children arrangements should be reported immediately to the DSL and must be remedied without delay. If staff are in any doubt they should speak to the DSL. The NSPCC has a whistleblowing helpline for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding safeguarding failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 08:00-20:00 Monday - Friday and email help@nspcc.org.uk

For low-level concerns (please see the separate policy on Low-level Concerns), staff are encouraged to voice their concerns. There is a form to record these concerns, which can be found here:

[Low Level Concerns Form](#)

Early Help

All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. 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.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member or carer in custody, or is affected by familial offending;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol abuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse, such as FGM or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child; and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provisions or a pupil referral unit.

Domestic violence and abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Where police have been called to a domestic violence incident where children are in the household and experienced that incident, the police will inform the DSL through Operation Encompass. This ensures that the school has up to date safeguarding information about the child.

All staff are aware of the impact domestic violence can have on a child. If any of our staff are concerned that a child has witnessed domestic abuse, they will report their concerns immediately to the DSL.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. All staff should be clear as to the school policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; we have a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse.

We will continue to encourage pupils to report any abuse, including past abuse, to a trusted adult and will publicise the NSPCC helpline **0800 136 663**, that was set up in response to the many worrying incidents raised on 'Everyone's Invited.'

Child on Child abuse can take many forms, including:

- **bullying** (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- **abuse in intimate personal relationships** between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse);
- **physical abuse** such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include in online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- **sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;** (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- **sexual harassment**, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- **causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- **consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos** (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- **upskirting** (which is a criminal offense) – which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- **initiation/hazing type violence and rituals** (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element);
- **prejudiced behaviour** - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse, for example, pupils being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

At our school, we take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- An open and honest environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Assemblies and tutorials are used to provide a moral framework outlining acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying and other abuse.
- We have Anti-Bullying Ambassadors in every year group who meet regularly to determine ways of reaching each year group with proactive campaigns and messages to foster an environment where bullying isn't acceptable or tolerated.
- RSE and PSHCEE are used to reinforce the message through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities.
- Staff will endeavour always to create surroundings where everyone feels confident and at ease in school.
- We will ensure that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where pupils might be vulnerable.

We need to recognise that, even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, that doesn't mean it isn't happening at Queenswood. Staff need to be vigilant and have the attitude that it could happen here.

All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be passed to the DSL, or a DDSL, immediately. They will then be investigated and dealt with as follows.

- **Information gathering** – children, staff and witnesses will be spoken with as soon as possible to gather relevant information quickly to understand the situation and assess whether there was intent to cause harm.
- **Decide on action** – if it is believed that any young person is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children’s social care. The DSL will then work with children’s social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police.
- **Inform parents** - as with other concerns of abuse, the school will normally seek to discuss concerns about a pupil with parents. Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.
- **Decide on appropriate sanctions** – these will vary, depending on the situation and seriousness of it; they could range from detention to exclusion.

Where allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made, the school will act in accordance with the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024).

Supporting those involved

The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their circumstance and the nature of the abuse. Support could include counselling, mentoring, the support of family and friends and/or support with improving peer relationships or some restorative justice work.

Support may also be required for the pupil that harmed. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil and/or change behaviours. Once those needs have been met, the consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation. The School will take advice from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, or the relevant local authority if the pupil(s) live outside Hertfordshire, on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the alleged victim and perpetrator. If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupils involved are supported during the interview by an appropriate adult and until the investigation is completed. Confidentiality will be an important consideration for the School and advice will be sought as necessary.

Historical Allegations

We take any allegations of sexual abuse seriously and will act promptly to any disclosure of historical abuse. If this allegation is made by past pupils, we will work with them to ensure that they are supported and that any disclosure is acted upon and reported, in line with our policy, to external agencies, such as the police.

Anyone with any allegation that is historical should contact the DSL or the Principal. Each allegation is taken seriously and victims will be supported and never made to feel that they are creating a problem or that this should have been reported earlier.

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

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or 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 and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As 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.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include noncontact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. 38. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

So called Honour-Based Abuse (HBA) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

So called 'Honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBA are abuse.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under

the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on pupils of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Such procedures may be carried out in this country or abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

While all staff should speak to the DSL or DDSL with regard to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers and other professionals¹. If a teacher or health professional (for example, the school nurse), in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher or health professional **must** report this directly to the police. Unless there is good reason not to, they should also inform the DSL. Other staff who discover that a girl has experienced FGM should inform the DSL in line with this policy. Any member of staff who suspects that a girl may have experienced or may be at risk of FGM should inform the DSL / DDSLs.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales, the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England. Any concerns should be immediately reported to the DSL or DDSL.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Prevent Duty

Queenswood takes seriously the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales and aims to mitigate the risk of pupils being drawn into extremist activity or being subject to radicalisation in the following ways: The Principal is responsible for a risk assessment (appendix 3), which takes into account our geographical area and intake. Weekly meetings between the Principal and Deputy Head Pastoral include discussing any concerns about radicalisation. Pastoral meetings between the Heads of Year and Deputy Head Pastoral will also raise any concerns.

The DSL is the single point of contact who oversees and co-ordinates the School's implementation of the Prevent Duty in addition to being the DSL. She will make referrals via the Hertfordshire Designated Safeguarding Schools' Officer or the Channel Programme, as appropriate and will report concerns however, any member of staff can make a referral, if necessary. It is important to note that normally this would be done in consultation with parents and pupils, but their consent is not required for a referral where there are reasonable grounds to believe a child is at risk of significant harm.

This is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation. Channel uses existing collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners (such as the education and health sectors, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services), the police and the local

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- ¹ FGM: 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 and other professionals to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18. Those failing to report such cases to the police will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by 'to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out' is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. The School nurses receive training in FGM.

community to identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism. They will assess the nature and extent of that risk and develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Channel is about safeguarding children and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they face before illegality occurs. Channel is one tactical option employed by Prevent and has recently been placed on a statutory footing.

Further advice from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance

There is a DFE dedicated telephone helpline for non-emergency advice for staff and governors.

0207 340 7264 counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

In addition to Channel, concerns can be reported to the

Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321

Crime stoppers: 0800 555 111

The Police: 101

Any staff who have a concern about radicalisation must raise it with the DSL, or, in her absence, the Principal or DDSLs. Appendix 2 provides guidance on indicators of a child at risk of radicalisation.

Any external agency or speaker invited onto School grounds will be accompanied by the member of staff who invited them following background and content checks to ascertain suitability. Staff are aware of their duty to promote Fundamental British Values (FBV).

PSHCEE, Chapels and assemblies teach pupils to manage risk, resist pressure, make safe choices and seek help if needed. Within the curriculum, many subjects cover democracy, diversity, mutual respect and debate contentious issues. The School has an evidence document to support the monitoring of the delivery of FBV and how the risk of radicalisation is mitigated.

Absence is monitored and followed up on by House Staff, including where boarders go at weekends. All passports for boarders who live overseas are collected by House staff and stored securely. Queenswood have a Prevent Risk Assessment which is updated annually.

Mental Health

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

Only appropriately, trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

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

Schools and colleges can access a range of tools and advice which will enable them to identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies. More information can be found in the Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance, which is located on the gov.uk website.

Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. See Rise Above for links to all materials and lesson plans. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, ensuring that they are following their child protection policy, and speaking to the DSL or DDSL.

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, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in 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.

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery. 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.

Children who have a social worker

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Local authorities and / or parents and carers will share this information with us, and the DSL will hold and use this information to inform decision about safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare and ensuring that academic and pastoral support is available to them. Where we are aware that a child has had a social worker in the past, we will ensure that academic and pastoral support is available, if required.

Additional Issues

The following issues have been identified as potential safeguarding concerns. They have been risk assessed for Queenswood, and where there are additional policies, they have been identified below:

- **Bullying including cyberbullying.** The procedures for this are in the School's Anti Bullying Policy. Staff are aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy, which is clear about every member of staff having responsibility for tackling bullying. This includes any racist, sexist, homophobic or disability discriminatory language.
- **Mental Health** - there is a non-statutory document, 'Mental Health and behaviour in schools' providing advice. Queenswood recognises that poor mental health is a threat to the welfare of children, and training and discussion opportunities are regularly provided to staff, parents and pupils. More information can be found in the School's Mental Health Policy.
- **Children missing from education** - the School recognises that regular absence and/or long-term absence is potentially a safeguarding issue. The School Routines document and the Queenswood Procedures Relating to Children Missing in Education cover Absence, the Attendance Register and the Admissions Register. This includes unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education.
- Domestic violence and abuse

- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Child-on-Child abuse
- Private fostering
- Youth Produced Imagery (Sexting): Pupils are told that anyone who has or passes on indecent images of someone under 18 is actually breaking the law, and that both having and distributing these images is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Encouraging or inciting someone to take or send ‘sexts’ can also be illegal. As well as the legal consequences, there are other issues to ‘sexting’ including the emotional and reputational damage this can cause.
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Trafficking
- Modern Slavery
- Children who are within the court system

The fact that a child or young person may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+. Risks of harm can be compounded where children who are LGBTQ+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced, and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone, other than a parent or a close relative, cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child’s parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Private fostering may apply in situations where an international boarder is not able to travel home during the school holiday and alternative arrangements need to be made. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify local authority children’s services as soon as possible. The school also has a legal duty to notify the local authority.

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL and the school should notify the local authority of the circumstances.

Other related school policies and procedures

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy (Safer Recruitment) (HR Policy)
- Staff Code of Conduct (This provides clear guidance about behaviour and actions so as not to place pupils or staff at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil, including access to boarding accommodation, one-to-one tuition, music, performing arts or sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, appropriate electronic communication with a pupil, etc.)
- Missing Pupil Policy

- Mobile Phone Policy
- Children Missing from Education
- Procedure for reporting and searching for missing pupils
- Guidelines for the use of physical restraint
- Whistleblowing Policy located in Employment Handbook
- Supervision Policy
- KCSIE (2024) and Annex B
- Visitor Policy
- PSHCEE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Queenswood Low Level Concerns
- Queenswood Procedures Relating to Children Missing in Education (This covers the procedures relating to absence and the Attendance Register (also covered in the Pupil Behaviour Policy) and the Admission Register.

APPENDIX 1

TYPES OF ABUSE, NEGLECT & EXPLOITATION

(PLUS POSSIBLE SIGNS FOR STAFF TO RECOGNISE)

Abuse is any form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical, as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or extra-familial context setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (eg via the internet). Abuse can take place wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Harm can include children witnessing the ill-treatment of others.

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. All staff, but especially the DSL and deputies, should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect and should consider whether children are at risk or exploitation in situations outside of their families (this is known as contextual safeguarding). Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. They should be able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL. All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

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.

Possible signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if recurrent
- Refusal or unwillingness to discuss injuries
- Improbable explanation of injuries
- Untreated injuries or unattended lingering illness
- Shrinking from physical contact
- Fear of returning home or parents being contacted
- Unexplained pattern of absence
- Fear of undressing
- Fear of medical attention
- Aggressive or bullying attitude
- Over compliant behaviour
- Significant inexplicable changes in behaviour
- Deterioration in quality of work

Emotional Abuse

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

Possible signs of Emotional Abuse

- Withdrawal and depression
- Low self esteem
- Changes in behaviour
- Social isolation
- Mistrust of adults
- Self-inflicted injuries
- Frequent stomach and other pains
- Sudden speech disorders
- High level of attention-seeking behaviour
- Over compliance
- Signs that they have seen, heard of experienced domestic abuse and its effects

Sexual 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

Sexual abuse also includes sexual violence and sexual harassment, which can occur between two children of any sex, known as Child-on-Child abuse. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence is sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, such as rape, sexual assault and assault by penetration. Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to;

- Sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting

- Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone
- Interfering with someone's clothes
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature

Online sexual harassment might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images or videos and sharing sexual images or videos (both often referred to as sexting); inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

Possible signs of Sexual Abuse

- Bruises, scratches or bite marks on the body
- Pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections
- Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age
- Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- Refusal to stay with certain people or go to certain places
- Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
- Withdrawal from friends

Child on Child abuse

Child on Child abuse can take many forms, including:

- **bullying** (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- **abuse in intimate personal relationships** between peers;
- **physical abuse** such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include in online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- **sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;** (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- **sexual harassment**, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- **causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- **consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos** (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- **upskirting** – which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- **initiation/hazing type violence and rituals** (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element);
- **prejudiced behaviour** - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with Child on Child abuse, for example, pupils being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

Vulnerable children: children who need a social worker and CIN (Child in Need) and CPP (Child Protection Plans)

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

Queenswood will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This may also include children in the court system.

Mental Health

Queenswood has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. The Mental Health Lead at Queenswood is our Resident School Counsellor, Miss Katie Bishop.

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately, trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

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

As a school, we work hard to ensure there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems. Towards that end, we have a School Counsellor who works closely with the DSL to provide counselling and mental health support to pupils. Additionally, Heads of Year can request intervention from the School Counsellor (and this can be done electronically through CPOMS) for pupils who need this support.

More information can be found in the [mental health and behaviour in schools guidance](#); Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people. See [Rise Above](#) for links to all materials and lesson plans.

Neglect

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

Possible signs of Neglect

- Excessive hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing or scrounging
- Untreated illness or injury
- Constant tiredness

Serious violence

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in 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.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. 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. Female Genital Mutilation: whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

Further advice is available from the document 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners' March 2015: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused>

APPENDIX 2
INDICATORS OF CHILDREN AT RISK OF
RADICALISATION

Vulnerability

- Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural/ religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them
- Personal Crisis – Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
- Personal Circumstances – Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy
- Unmet Aspirations – Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of civic life
- Criminality – Experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement/ reintegration, previous involvement with criminal groups

Access to extremism / extremist influences

- Is there reason to believe that the child/young person associates with those known to be involved in extremism - either because they associate directly with known individuals or because they frequent key locations where these individuals are known to operate? (e.g. the child/young person is the partner, spouse, friend or family member of someone believed to be linked with extremist activity)
- Does the child/young person frequent internet access locations, or is there evidence to suggest that they are accessing the internet for the purpose of extremist activity? (e.g. Use of closed network groups, access to or distribution of extremist material, contact associates covertly via Skype/email etc)
- Is there reason to believe that the child/young person has been or is likely to be involved with extremist/ military training camps/ locations?
- Is the child/young person known to have possessed or is actively seeking to possess and/ or distribute extremist literature/ other media material likely to incite racial/ religious hatred or acts of violence?
- Does the child/young person sympathise with, or support illegal/illicit groups e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?
- Does the child/young person support groups with links to extremist activity but not illegal/illicit e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings.

Experiences, Behaviours and Influences

- Has the child/ young person encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection?
- Is there evidence of extremist ideological, political or religious influence on the child/ young person from within or outside the UK?
- Have international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest had a personal impact on the child/ young person resulting in a noticeable change in behaviour? It is important to recognise that many people may be emotionally affected by the plight of what is happening in areas of conflict (i.e. images of children dying) and it is important to differentiate them from those that sympathise with or support extremist activity

- Has there been a significant shift in the child/ young person's behaviour or outward appearance that suggests a new social/political or religious influence?
- Has the child/ young person come into conflict with family over religious beliefs/lifestyle/ dress choices?
- Does the child/ young person vocally support terrorist attacks; either verbally or in their written work?
- Has the child/ young person witnessed or been the perpetrator/ victim of racial or religious hate crime or sectarianism?

Travel

- Is there a pattern of regular or extended travel within the UK, with other evidence to suggest this is for purposes of extremist training or activity?
- Has the child/ young person travelled for extended periods of time to international locations known to be associated with extremism?
- Has the child/ young person employed any methods to disguise their true identity? Has the child/ young person used documents or cover to support this?

Social Factors

- Does the child/ young person have experience of poverty, disadvantage, discrimination or social exclusion?
- Does the child/ young person experience a lack of meaningful employment appropriate to their skills?
- Does the child/ young person display a lack of affinity or understanding for others, or social isolation from peer groups?
- Does the child/ young person demonstrate identity conflict and confusion normally associated with youth development?
- Does the child/ young person have any learning difficulties/ mental health support needs?
- Does the child/ young person demonstrate a simplistic or flawed understanding of religion or politics?
- Does the child/ young person have a history of crime, including episodes in prison?
- Is the child/young person a foreign national, refugee or awaiting a decision on their immigration/ national status?
- Does the child/ young person have insecure, conflicted or absent family relationships?
- Has the child/ young person experienced any trauma in their lives, particularly any trauma associated with war or sectarian conflict?
- Is there evidence that a significant adult or other in the child/young person's life has extremist views or sympathies?

More critical risk factors could include: -

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters
- Articulating support for extremist causes or leaders
- Accessing extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element
- Possessing extremist literature
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- Joining extremist organisations
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour

If you have any concerns, discuss them with Mrs Ceri Stokes, the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Further advice may be found on the NSPCC website www.nspcc.org.uk or government guidance on the issues listed via the GOV.UK website

“Prevent Action Plan”

Queenswood School recognises that it has a duty under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, 2015, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Governors are asked to review and sign off on all Safeguarding documents. They also monitor and address and concerns that may be a ‘PREVENT’ concern.

Duty	What this means	Action	By whom
Risk assessment			
Assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism	Staff can demonstrate a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff have read “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (DfE, 2024 Part One and Annex A and B) The Prevent Lead has informed staff of their duties as set out in “The Prevent Duty” (DfE, June 2023). 	<p>All staff</p> <p>Prevent Lead</p>
	Staff can identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and how to support them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Prevent Lead has informed staff about signs and indicators of radicalisation and how some students are susceptible to radicalisation. 	Prevent lead
	There is a clear procedure in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff have read the Safeguarding Policy which includes a statement regarding the school’s “Prevent” duty. All staff understand how to record and report concerns regarding risk of radicalisation. 	<p>All staff</p> <p>All staff</p>
	The school has identified a Prevent Lead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff know who the Prevent Lead is and that this person acts as a source of advice and support. 	All staff
Prohibit extremist speakers and events in the school	The school exercises “due diligence” in relation to requests from external speakers and organisations using school premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the person/organisation to establish whether they have demonstrated extreme views/actions. Deny permission for people/organisations to use school premises if they have links to extreme groups or movements. Provide justification for their decisions in writing DBS risk assessment – completed by the member of staff and shared with security and reception to assess the danger. 	<p>Prevent lead</p> <p>Started to implement Sept 2022 with all staff.</p> <p>All staff</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest speakers may receive a statement when they sign in, to say that they agree to follow our Prevent Policy. 	
Campus Security	<p>Security of its premises and learners</p> <p>Visitors access to site</p> <p>On site dangerous or hazardous substances are kept secure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security is on during the school day with CCTV and access for cars through monitored gates. • Pupils and staff are encouraged to challenge anyone without a Lanyard or visitors sticker. • HoD have a health and safety risk assessment and audit of hazardous substances. 	<p>Bursar</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>H&S manager.</p>
Working in Partnership			
The school uses existing safeguarding arrangements in exercising its Prevent duty.	Staff record and report concerns in line with existing policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff record and report concerns via CPOMS 	All staff
Referrals are made to relevant agencies where a Prevent concern is identified.	The Prevent Lead makes appropriate referrals to other agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent referrals are made via the National Referral form and send to Hertfordshire Prevent at prevent@herts.pnn.police.uk • Advice may be sought regarding Prevent concerns by calling our HCC Prevent Programme Manager at sophie.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk 07773094897 • The Prevent lead supports the Channel process by sharing information and carrying out agreed actions. 	Prevent Lead
Staff training			

Equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.	Leaders within the organisation understand the requirements of the Prevent Statutory Duty. Assess the training needs of staff in the light of the school's assessment of the risk to pupils at the school of being drawn into terrorism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent Awareness Training. • Ensure that the designated safeguarding lead is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation. • All staff are expected to complete training. • Staff are signposted to the Home Office on-line training- www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/ 	Designated Safeguarding Lead/Prevent Lead
IT Policies			
Ensure that pupils and staff are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools	The school has policies in place which make reference to the "Prevent" duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant policies in place and embedded: • Online Safety Policy • Acceptable use policy • Anti-bullying policy 	Prevent Lead
	Children are taught about on-line safety with specific reference to the risk of radicalisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum reflects this duty. 	All Staff
Ensure pupils (and staff) are unable to access unlawful radicalising material which promotes proscribed terrorist groups.	The school has software to monitor online activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT staff have put in key words for monitoring and have meetings with DSL and the safeguarding team to feedback any suggestions / improvements. • Audits are completed regularly. 	DSL and ICT team
Building children's resilience to radicalisation			

<p>Ensure that pupils have a “safe environment” in which to discuss “controversial issues”.</p>	<p>Pupils develop “the knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through PSHHE/Citizenship, and other curriculum activities, pupils are able to explore political, religious and social issues. • Pupils are taught about the diverse national, regional and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect. • Staff and pupils are aware of the “Let’s Talk About It” website. www.ltai.info • Relevant staff are aware of the government guidance : https://www.gov.uk/government/news/guidance-on-promoting-british-values-in-schools-published/ 	<p>PSHE staff</p> <p>Other relevant staff</p>
<p>Ensuring Pastoral care</p>	<p>Pupils are provided with effective welfare and pastoral support which results in learners (and staff) being supported and the risk of vulnerabilities being exploited low.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys with pupils to consider pupils welling and how safe they feel in school. • Pastoral team assess and discuss surveys and use mentors, assemblies and any requirements of learners are supported and monitored. 	<p>Pastoral team</p>
<p>Promoting British Values</p>	<p>The school has a culture and ethos where British Values are celebrated, which leads to a culture of respect and tolerance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments are asked to review BV and considered where these elements can be taught. Assemblies, lectures and chapels have a key theme of respect and tolerance. Extremist views are challenged. 	<p>All Staff</p>

References:

“Keeping Children Safe in Education: Information for all school and college staff” DfE, September 2024

“The Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers”

“Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales”