



Child Protection Policy (External Publication Only)

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Statutory	Yes

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1. Safeguarding Policy Statement

A whole-school, child centred approach is fundamental to all aspects of everyday life at Watford Grammar School for Girls. In practice this means keeping the child at the centre of decision making in our partnership working with children and their families. As stated in Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the welfare of children is paramount and that they are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in the family life is necessary.

We hope that parents and carers will support us to undertake our statutory duties to offer early help support and share information with other agencies where necessary. We want to work in collaboration with parents and carers to promote the health and welfare of all our pupils. We know that when children feel safe they are free to learn and develop.

At Watford Grammar School for Girls we strive to create a culture which enables children to express their wishes, feelings, and talk about anything that is of importance to them. We believe that every child deserves to receive an education within an environment that feels safe to learn and develop. We want our pupils, staff, parents and carers to have confidence and trust in our goals and know that collaborative working is fundamental to create and maintain a child-centred approach to safeguarding.

This policy outlines the commitment to our legal duties to safeguard children, the responsibilities of our staff and the specific roles and responsibilities for our key Designated Safeguarding Leads and Governance.

2. Important Safeguarding contacts

School's In-House Contacts

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Sam Moore, Deputy Headteacher	s.moore@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Binde Dodhia, Director of KS3	b.dodhia@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
	Katie Holes, Director of KS4	k.holes@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
	Bal Randhawa, Director of KS5	b.randhawa@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
	Jacqui Paddick, Safeguarding Officer	j.paddick@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
Online Safety Lead	Katie Holes, Director of KS4	k.holes@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

Designated Teacher for Children Looked After	Sam Moore, Designated Safeguarding Lead	s.moore@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)	Sara Robinson, SENCO	s.robinson@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
Mental Health Lead	Sam Moore, Designated Safeguarding Lead	s.moore@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
DSL Prevent Lead	Bal Randhawa, Director of KS5	b.randhawa@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
Chair of Trustees	Camilla Woods	Governor.c.woods@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
Vice Chair of Trustees	Mike Lewis	Governor.m.lewis@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk
Link Safeguarding Trustees	Sharmin Pirbhai	Governor.s.pirbhai@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

Non-School Contacts

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Duty LADO	LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Hertfordshire County Council Children's Social Care	Customer Service Centre	Children's Services includes SOOHS (Out of Hours Service-Children's Services) – 0300 123 4043
Hertfordshire County Council's Prevent Programme Manager	Sophie Lawrence Prevent referrals Parent guidance Advice line for members of the public Channel helpline	https://thegrid.org.uk/assets/prevent-national-referral-form-2025.pdf Parents' Booklet (educateagainsthate.com) ACT Early Prevent radicalisation 0800 011 3764 020 7340 7264
NSPCC Helpline	N/A	Call: 0808 800 5000 Email help@NSPCC.org.uk.
Police	N/A	Emergency 999, non-emergency 101

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**, and the **Governance Handbook**. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners (see section 4 definitions).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- Academy trust governance guide - 7. Compliance - provides guidance for boards on how to meet their legal and regulatory responsibilities with regards to compliance. It covers various aspects of compliance, including admissions, attendance, complaints, education, funding and finances, health and safety, inspections, political impartiality, protecting and sharing information, safeguarding and pupil welfare, pupil behaviour, schools causing concern, school day and school year, management of academy premises, control and community use of academy premises, school uniform, staffing, and whistleblowing.

This guidance is a reference document for those involved in trust governance. It provides essential information from a range of sources on the trust board's roles and legal responsibilities. The Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) and our funding agreement have more information on contractual requirements.

- **The Children Act 1989** (and **2004 amendment**), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the **Serious Crime Act 2015**, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- **Statutory guidance on FGM**, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- **Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty**, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- **The Human Rights Act 1998**, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the **European Convention on Human Rights** (ECHR)
- **The Equality Act 2010**, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our trustees and headteacher should carefully

consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment

- **The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**, which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused** is guidance from the Department for Education and is designed for anyone who works with children and families. This is additional guidance that details signs of abuse and neglect to look out for and what action to take if professionals are concerned. The first point of reference for those working and volunteering in education settings should still be Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and the setting's own Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures.
- **The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership HSCP** sets out for all agencies our Child Safeguarding Arrangements for Hertfordshire to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children, young people and families see **HSCP Procedures Manual** and also **Continuum of Need for children and young people 2023 (hertfordshire.gov.uk)** They have a strategic function rather than operational direct work with children. Their vision and values are committed to delivering multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements of the highest quality and advocate how all partners practice should continuously evolve to reflect the changing needs and circumstances of our community. This is in line with statutory guidance, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018**

The three local safeguarding partners jointly leading the Partnership are:

- **Hertfordshire County Council:** represented by the Director of Children's Services.
- **Hertfordshire Constabulary:** represented by the Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing.
- **Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board:** represented by the Director of Nursing & Quality Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care Board.
- Resolution of Professional Differences including Escalations - effective partnership working is key to keeping children and young people safe from harm. HSCP encourages constructive challenge as part of our culture of learning and partnership working. In May 2025, the HSCP published this revised policy for resolutions and escalations.
- Specific guidance for Schools/Education - schools and educational institutions play a critical role in safeguarding children and young people. It is essential that they adhere to the established resolution process to ensure timely and effective resolution of professional differences.

Escalation of Concerns and Professional Disagreements about Decisions, including Convening an ICPC **4.5.3 Escalation of Concerns and Professional Disagreements about Decisions, including Convening an ICPC (proceduresonline.com)**

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners produced by the DfE, outlines the importance of sharing information about children, young people, and their families in order to safeguard children. It provides clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally to achieve improved outcomes. It also includes the “Seven Golden Rules for Sharing Information”, which provide a framework to support information sharing where practitioners have reason to believe failure to share information may result in the child being at risk of harm. It is non-statutory and has been produced to support practitioners in the decisions they take to share information, which reduces the risk of harm to children and young people and promotes their well-being.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Definitions: Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding as defined by The Children Act 1989, means

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

Working Together to Safeguard Children further extends this definition to include:

- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework.

Child/ren: The legal definition of a child in the UK includes everyone under the age of 18.

Early Help: Families First is the term used in Hertfordshire for services that work together to support families who need extra help. These are also known as early help services. Early Help is part of all agencies’ ‘preventative’ safeguarding responsibilities, acting as soon as possible to tackle difficulties for children and families before they escalate into something that is more difficult to overcome. Hertfordshire’s Early Help offer comprises:

- The Continuum of Need guidance aims to ensure that support in Hertfordshire is offered at the earliest opportunity, with an approach that enables us to work effectively alongside families. The Continuum of Need is a threshold document that supports everyone working with Hertfordshire’s children and families to identify the “Level of Need” and the service responses that can be expected. It sets out how we can work together, by placing the child and family at the centre, sharing information, and working with families to help them to find solutions early to prevent their difficulties from

escalating. It is not intended to be a prescriptive guide and does not replace professional judgement.

- The Continuum of Need model represents a spectrum of needs, visualised through a windscreen. This illustrates how we respond to the needs of children and their families across the four levels of need: Universal, Additional, Intensive and Specialist (Child Protection or Child in Need).
- The purpose is that services work collaboratively and openly with families for interventions and referrals in most instances.
- Early Help is Hertfordshire's local offer and relies on children and families sharing concerns identified and the willingness to engage; this means that full consent from children and families is required.

Families First Assessment (FFA) is Hertfordshire's Early Help assessment tool and is used to identify needs and organise the right services to support a family. With consent, DSLs, along with other professionals, can initiate and lead on these. Further information can be found on the **Families First Portal**.

Child in Need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Children in Need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 by a social worker. Agencies have a duty to cooperate with Children's Services, and parental consent is required.

Child Protection under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, places a duty on the Local Authority to make enquiries and decide whether to take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Such enquiries, supported by other organisations and agencies, as appropriate, should be initiated where there are concerns about all forms of abuse and neglect. This includes female genital mutilation (FGM) and other honour-based violence, and extra-familial threats including radicalisation and sexual or criminal exploitation. There may be a need for immediate protection whilst an assessment or enquiries are carried out. Parental consent is not required if this would place the child at further risk of harm.

Significant Harm is the threshold for a Child Protection response. If Children's Services suspect a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, then they must by law carry out child protection enquiries. Harm is defined in the Children Act 1989 as the ill-treatment of a child or the impairment of their health or development. This can include harm caused by seeing someone else being mistreated, for example by witnessing domestic abuse. The phrase 'significant harm' was introduced by the Children Act 1989. The Act does not define 'significant'. The question of whether or not harm is 'significant' relates to its impact on a child's health or development.

The Gateway is the 'front door' to Hertfordshire's social care. The Gateway Service receives contacts and queries via calls or emails.

A 'Contact' is where a member of the public or a professional makes contact with Children's Services about a child who may be a child in need of support or protection, and where there is a request for information or a service.

The 'Referrer' is the member of the public or professional making contact with Children's Services.

Referral is a possible outcome of a Contact, where a social worker or manager considers a statutory response may be required. In some instances, it may be identified that a child may be better supported via other services such as Early Help or Universal Services (e.g. health, schools, family centres, etc.).

The Gateway operates to the principle that every family (child and their parent/carer) has the right:

- To be told when a professional is worried about the safety or wellbeing of their child by that professional
- To have their consent obtained when someone wishes to make a request for support on their behalf
- To be front and centre of the plan to keep their child safe and well.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is co-located, within the Gateway. It is a partnership comprising of colleagues from Children's Services, Health, Police, and Probation; advisory support is provided by Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and satellite partners. These agencies work together to improve the quality of the information sharing process when identifying the needs and risks of children and their families. They make decisions at the earliest opportunity and make recommendations about what services and resources the child and family may benefit from.

Although all contacts being assessed by MASH or early help services are important, it is less likely that they will meet the threshold for Child Protection (significant harm).

Children Looked After: A child is 'looked after' (in care) if they are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours. Children can be in care by agreement with parents or by order of a court. The placement providing the care can be a connected person to child or LA approved foster carer.

Kinship Care refers to a type of care where a child who cannot be looked after by their birth parents is cared for by relatives or friends. The government in England has launched a Championing kinship care: the national kinship care strategy to improve kinship carers' financial stability, education, training, and partnership with local authorities and other agencies.

Legal Care Arrangements:

- Informal Kinship Care
- Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

- Child Arrangements Order (CAO)
- **Kinship Foster Care**
- **Private Fostering:** You're a private foster carer if you're not a close relative and you're looking after a child who's under 16 (or under 18 if they're disabled) for more than 28 days in a row.
- **Adoption by a Family Member or Friend**

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

Neglect is a form of abuse and is 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. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

The three **safeguarding partners** locally known as Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (**HSCP**) comprises of:

- **Hertfordshire County Council:** represented by the Director of Children's Services.
- **Hertfordshire Constabulary:** represented by the Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing.
- **Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board:** represented by the Director of Nursing & Quality Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care Board.

Safeguarding Partners are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). These three partners have the strategic responsibility for setting out safeguarding procedures and arrangements for all organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children, and who are required to work together to safeguard and promote their welfare. These organisations and agencies are named in statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what is appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

5. Equality statement, children with protected characteristics

Some children are at greater risk of harm, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. At Watford Grammar School for Girls we are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and ensuring that all children are provided with the same protection regardless of any additional needs, barriers or protected characteristics they may have. As stated in the Equality Act, 2010, we recognise the protected characteristics that may be applicable to our pupils:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

All staff and volunteers understand the importance of recognising that a child may benefit from Early Help intervention, and it is integral to our whole school approach to look and listen out particularly for children:

Who are disabled or have certain health conditions and have specific additional needs

- Who has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health, and Care plan)
- Who has a mental health need
- Who is a young carer
- Who 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
- Who is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home, or care
- Who has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- Who is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Who is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Who has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Who is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse

- Who is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- Who is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- Who is a privately fostered child.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We know who our pupils are with special educational needs, disabilities, or additional health needs and recognise that they may face additional barriers, that can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, relate to the child's impairment without further exploration
- Assumptions that children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties
- Reluctance to challenge carers (professionals may over empathise with carers because of the perceived stress of caring for a disabled child)
- Disabled children often rely on a wide network of carers to meet their basic needs and therefore the potential risk of exposure to abusive behaviour can be increased
- A disabled child's understanding of abuse
- Lack of choice/ participation
- Isolation.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The most common reason for a child to become looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We therefore ensure that the appropriate arrangements are in place to support these children and keep them safe from further harm. This includes:

- Appointment of a Designated Teacher (DT) for CLA (see Important Contacts in Part 2)
- Appropriate staff made aware of a child's looked after status
- Ensure that necessary staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding of the child's needs
- Ensure the child's record contains a clear understanding of their legal status and care arrangements, including the levels of authority delegated to their carer and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility
- Keep contact details of the child's social worker, carer(s) and name and contact details of the virtual school head for DT to liaise with.

Children with a Social Worker (CWASW)

Since 2021 the role of virtual school heads has included a responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of;

- children looked-after,
- children previously looked-after; and
- children with a social worker – defined as any child who has been assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and currently has a social worker; it also includes those who have been assessed as needing, or previously needing, a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding or welfare reasons.

In line with **Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)** this has been extended to include:

- children who have previously had a social worker – the cohort of children with a social worker and those who have previously had a social worker who are aged from 0 to 18; and
- children in kinship care arrangements - this means any friend or family member, who is not a child's parent but raising them for a significant amount of the time, either as a temporary or permanent arrangement.
- Children who are in Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Children Missing from Education (CME)

In offering advice and information to workforces that have relationships with children with social workers, virtual school heads identify and engage with all key professionals in Hertfordshire and beyond, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for CWASW e.g. DSL and deputies, social workers, headteachers, trustees, special educational needs co-ordinators, mental health leads, other Local Authority partners, including Designated Social Care Officers for SEND.

Watford Grammar School for Girls ensure that our Designated Teacher has the appropriate training, so they are able to take the leadership of this crucial area of our safeguarding arrangements in collaboration with our Designated Safeguarding Lead which includes:

- Working closely with virtual school heads to ensure that funding is best used to support the child's educational achievement and development needs that are identified in their personal education plans.
- Collaborating with the virtual school heads to also promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

All staff and leadership are required to support HSCP principals to safeguarding children by exercising their professional curiosity at all times. April 2025 Professional Curiosity.

6.Roles and responsibilities of all staff and leadership/management

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees at Watford Grammar School for Girls and is consistent with national duties outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and local expectations expected

within **Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual**. Our Child Protection (CP) policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities. The school also remains responsible for the safeguarding of any child and young person it places with an alternative provision provider and follows the procedures set out in KCSIE 2025 for any placement.

Watford Grammar School for Girls plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/ misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence / harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral support systems
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly through PACE and Forum lessons, tackling 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 FGM and how to access support
 - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable.

Role and Responsibility of all staff, volunteers, supply staff and contractors

All staff at Watford Grammar School for Girls are required to read at least Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), and the reviewed version of this guidance at least annually and sign to say that they have read this and have understood the content.

Translated versions of Part One Keeping Children Safe in Education can be found at **Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 Translations | LGFL**. This is accessible for all staff, volunteers, parents and carers whose first language may not be English, should they wish to use this.

Staff who work directly with children are also expected to read Annex B of KCSiE (this sets out specific safeguarding issues that by the virtue of a child's circumstances suggest they could be at greater risk of abuse and neglect).

Staff involved in the recruitment of other staff, for example Heads of Department and support staff in managerial roles, are also expected to read Part Three of KCSiE: Safer Recruitment.

All staff will be required to:

- Read Part One and Annex B (if they work directly with children) and Part Three (if they are involved in the recruitment of staff) of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, **Keeping Children Safe in Education**, and review this guidance at least annually.
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the above guidance and understand their role.
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents and carers aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- Contribute to creating a culture for pupils who are LGBTQ+ to speak out and share their concerns.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our school's safeguarding arrangements and systems are explained to staff as part of their induction and thereafter reviewed with staff at least annually. All new staff / volunteers are given copies of our school's CP policy, which includes the following link to KCSiE:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181955/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf essentially these are the key guidance provided:

- Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- The role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies
- The Behaviour Policy
- Online safety policy
- Safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods
- KCSiE advises school staff who work directly with children should read Annex B, this contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Staff should follow this Child Protection Policy and speak to the DSL (or a deputy)
- It is crucial that all staff look out for children who may benefit from Early Help along with children in Specific Circumstances (Annex B KCSiE 2025), the Early Help assessment process 'Families First Assessment' and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to the Local Authority Children's Social Care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play

- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines) **See Annex B Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025**
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The importance of supporting families and providing a culture of support to encourage parents/carers to seek support and engage with our school and professionals when issues emerge or become a concern
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online (this is referred to as extra familial harm or contextual safeguarding)
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL for Child Protection in this school is:

NAME: Sam Moore (Deputy Head) Tel: 01923 223403, ext: 208

There should be a Deputy DSL (DDSL) in the absence of the lead DSL.

The Deputy DSLs for Child Protection in this school are:

NAME:

Binde Dodhia (Director of KS3)	Tel: 01923 223403, ext: 287
Katie Holes (Director of KS4)	Tel: 01923 223403, ext: 299
Bal Randhawa (Director of KS5)	Tel: 01923 223403, ext: 260
Jacqui Paddick (Safeguarding Officer)	Tel: 01923 223403, ext: 223

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team, and we also have Deputy DSLs (DDSL) within our senior leadership team and our staffing group. Whilst one of the DSLs is referred to the 'lead' and will coordinate the DSL team, they are all trained at the same level to ensure that at all times one or more of them are available to carry out all of their designated functions in safeguarding.

- The DSL takes lead responsibility for our school's child protection and wider safeguarding arrangements. This includes online safety and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.
- During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

- In the event that non-urgent matters arise out of school hours, safeguarding concerns can be reported via CPOMS.
- When the DSL is absent, please contact the school's Deputy DSLs as above. The school office can radio for the DSL on duty.
- If the school's DSL and deputies are not available or cannot be reached, The Headteacher (Monday – Thursday), Sylvia Tai, the Headteacher (Friday), Chris Wilshaw, and Deputy Headteacher, Kevin Coetzee, are also trained DSLs and can be contacted for child protection and safeguarding support.
- For trips and visits taking place outside of the school day, there must be two emergency contacts, one of which must be a member of the SLT. If this member of SLT is not a DSL, they will be able to contact a DSL / Deputy DSL on behalf of the trip leader if safeguarding or child protection support is urgently required.

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (Local Authority Children's Social Care, Channel Programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or Police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of behaviours that may impact on a child's engagement and learning that may require consideration through safety/support planning, this includes the impact on themselves but also to other children
- Have a good understanding of harmful behaviours that may require risk management, safety planning and/or support in school, this includes those presented by children within the setting, their parents/carer or associated adults where necessary
- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school.

The DSL will also:

- Keep the Headteacher informed of any issues
- Liaise with Local Authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate
- Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with Police and Local Authority Children's Social Care colleagues to prepare the school's policies
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a Police investigation or search

- The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputy(s) are set out in their job description. See KCSiE, **Annex C**

Role and Responsibilities of the Trustee Board

Our Trustee Board have a strategic role within our leadership and management team and must ensure that all staff comply with legislation and local guidance at all times.

The Trustee Board will:

- Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation
- Evaluate and approve recommendations identified through quality assurance activity that the DSL undertakes to review safeguarding practice through audits and termly governing reports to ensure that they have regular oversight and hold the Headteacher accountable for the practice improvement
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Appoint a link trustee to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing body. This is always a different person from the DSL
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- Ensure that all trustees:
- Read **Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety**, and review compliance of this task at least annually.
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the above guidance
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:
- Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
- Reviewing the **DfE's filtering and monitoring standards**, and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards. This role is undertaken by an appointed Online Safety link trustee.

The Trustee Board will make sure:

- The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support

- Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
- The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
- The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors). Section 11 of this policy covers this procedure
- That this policy reflects those children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised
- Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/ activities are children on the school roll):
 - Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/ procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
 - Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
 - Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply.

See **Keeping Children safe during community activities, after-school club and tuition: Non statutory guidance for providers running out of school settings**

- The Chair of Trustees will act as the ‘case manager’ in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate (see Section 11 managing concerns and allegations).
- Section 13 (Training) of this policy has information on how trustees are supported to fulfil their role, also see Part two KCSiE 2025.

Role and Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
 - Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
 - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/ carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the ‘case manager’ in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate

- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this
- Ensure the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable.

Role and Responsibilities of Virtual School Heads

Virtual School Heads:

- Virtual School Heads have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of pupils with a social worker
- They should also identify and engage with key professionals, e.g. DSLs, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), social workers, mental health leads and others.

7. Confidentiality and sharing information

The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 does not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Watford Grammar School for Girls recognises that timely information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a safeguarding disclosure, as this may not be in the child's best interests.

The following principles apply to Watford Grammar School for Girls confidentiality agreement:

- . Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- . The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.
- . If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- . Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.
- . If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about sexual violence or sexual harassment:
 - Even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there is another legal basis under the Data Protection Act that applies.
 - The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.
 - The DSL should consider the following points:
 - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk).
 - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to Local Authority Children's Social Care where the child resides.

- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the Police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the Police remains.
- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
 - Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system.
 - Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved.
 - Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.
- The government's **information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners** includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record keeping in section 12, and allegations of abuse against staff in section 11.

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy).

8. Recognise and respond to abuse, neglect, and exploitation

In this section, any reference to the DSL will mean both lead and all deputy safeguarding leads.

Recognising Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

All our staff are aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation outlined below. They understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of our school, inside and outside of their homes, wholly online or via the use of technology offline. They are also aware that harm to a child can be caused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. We encourage our staff to be professionally curious and mindful of what to look out for as this is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection at the earliest opportunity.

Physical Abuse

Definition:	Indicators:
A form of abuse which may involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting • Shaking • Throwing • Poisoning 	Bruises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonly on the head but also on the ear, neck or soft areas (abdomen, back and buttocks)

- 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 (Fabricated induced illness FII)

- Defensive wounds commonly on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet
- Clusters of bruises on the upper arm, outside of the thigh or on the body
- Bruises with dots of blood under the skin
- A bruised scalp and swollen eyes from hair being pulled violently
- Bruises in the shape of a hand or object
- Bruises on non-mobile babies.

Burns or scalds:

- Can be from hot liquids, hot objects, flames, chemicals, or electricity
- These may be on the hands, back, shoulders or buttocks. Scalds in particular may be on lower limbs, both arms and/or both legs
- A clear edge to the burn or scald
- Sometimes in the shape of an implement – for example, a circular cigarette burn
- Multiple burns or scalds.

Bite marks:

- Usually oval or circular in shape
- Visible wounds, indentations or bruising from individual teeth.

Fractures or broken bones:

- Fractures to the ribs or the leg bones in babies
- Multiple fractures or breaks at different stages of healing
- Risks and vulnerability factors

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but babies and children who have a disability are at a higher risk of suffering physical abuse (Jones et al, 2012).

Emotional Abuse

Definition:	Indicators:
<p>The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person • Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate • Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction • A child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another • Serious bullying (including cyberbullying) • Causing a child to feel frightened or in danger • Exploitation or corruption of children. <p>Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone. It can be difficult to recognise emotional abuse and children may not always realise they are experiencing it. However, there may be indicators in the way a child behaves and reacts to certain situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack confidence • Struggle to control strong emotions • Struggle to make or maintain relationships • Display behaviour that is inappropriate to their stage of development (for example not being able to play, developing language late or using language you may not expect of a child their age). <p>Older children may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts • Seem isolated from their parents • Lack social skills or have few, if any, friends • Use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn't expect them to know for their age • Risk and vulnerability factors • Children from any background can be at risk of emotional abuse. But some are more vulnerable than others.

Sexual Abuse

Definition:	Indicators:
<p>Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>Online abuse - sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse</p> <p>Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males, women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.</p> <p>Child-on-child abuse - the sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school policy and procedures for dealing with it.</p>	<p>Not all children will realise they are being sexually abused, particularly if they have been groomed, but there may be physical, behavioural and emotional signs that indicate a child has experienced sexual abuse.</p> <p>Physical indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruising • Bleeding • Discharge • Pain or soreness in the genital or anal area • Sexually transmitted infections (Lindon and Webb, 2016) • Girls who are being sexually abused may become pregnant at a young age. <p>Emotional and behavioural indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being afraid of and/or avoiding a particular person (including a family member or friend) • Having nightmares or bed-wetting • Being withdrawn • Alluding to ‘secrets’ • Self-harming • Running away from home • Developing eating problems • Displaying sexualised behaviour or having sexual knowledge that is inappropriate for their stage of development • Misusing drugs or alcohol.

Neglect

Definition:	Indicators:
<p>The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate food • Clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) • Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger • Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) • Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment • It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs. 	<p>Neglect can be difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there is a serious problem. Children and young people who are neglected might have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor appearance and hygiene, being smelly or dirty (unkempt) • Being hungry or not given money for food • Having unwashed clothes, the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter • Health and development problems, regular illness or infections • Anaemia • Body issues, such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints • Medical or dental issues • Missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations • Not given the correct medicines • Poor language or social skills.

Exploitation

Definition:	Indicators:
<p>Exploitation in relation to children refers to the use of children for someone else’s advantage, gratification, or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child’s physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression or ill-treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): this is a type of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. It can involve contact and non-contact activities and can occur without the child’s immediate recognition; this is due to their grooming by the abuser. • Child Labor Exploitation: this involves the use of children in work that is harmful to their physical and mental development. It deprives them of their childhood, potential, and dignity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Trafficking: children are recruited, moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold. They are often used for forced labour, sexual exploitation, or illegal activities. • Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): this is where children are involved in activities of a criminal nature, often in gangs. They may be forced or manipulated into committing crimes, such as selling drugs or stealing.
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Safeguarding Issues and Specific Forms of Abuse

All our staff understand that children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. They are aware that 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), drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, radicalisation, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) and can put children in danger.

Staff are aware that Extra Familial Harms can present online, in a child's environment/neighbourhood, school and any place/space that children occupy or access such as:

- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Children and the Court system
- Children absent from education
- Children with family members in prison
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- Mental health
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Preventing radicalization
- The Prevent Duty
- Channel
- Sexual violence and Sexual harassment between children in schools
- Serious Violence
- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage)
- FGM and the mandatory reporting duty for teachers

- Forced marriage.

Detailed information about what staff understand about these forms of abuse and safeguarding issues is outlined in Appendix 4.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced the first ever statutory definition of Domestic Abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. They may also experience it within their own intimate relationships.

Our staff understand that these experiences can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

Our staff are aware that Domestic Abuse can include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse and that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and Domestic Abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Types of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse can be, but is not limited to the following, signs to look out for and be professionally curious about:

- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Economic abuse
- Technology-facilitated abuse
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse
- Stalking
- Violence against woman and girls (**VAWG**) includes but not limited to harassment, stalking, rape, sexual assault, murder, honour-based abuse, coercive control and while men and boys also suffer from many of these forms of abuse, they disproportionately affect women. [Crime and Policing Bill: reducing violence against women and girls \(VAWG\) factsheet - GOV.UK](#)

Child-to-parent-abuse (CPA) or adolescent-to-parent abuse (APA) is any behaviour used by a child or young person to control, dominate or coerce parents. It can include emotional, verbal, physical or financial abuse and includes “coercive control,” or in other words, the parent or other adult is compelled to change their own behaviours for fear of further abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM includes ‘*all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs.*’

FGM is illegal in the UK and is considered as a form of child abuse that has significantly harmful and long-lasting consequences. It can also be referred to as ‘female genital cutting,’ ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation.’

Our teachers are aware of their mandatory reporting duty and the requirement to immediately contact the Police if they are

- Informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her.
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 (and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl’s physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth).

The duty for teachers above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. In these circumstances, teachers know they must report to the DSL who will follow local safeguarding procedures.

Our members of staff who are not teachers, are aware that if they suspect a child is at risk or that FGM has been carried out, they should report this to the DSL immediately.

Preventing radicalisation

This section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14 March 2024.

Watford Grammar School for Girls is compliant with the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 under section 26, we exercise our duty, to have “*due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism*”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty is one of our wider safeguarding obligations. Our DSLs and senior leaders are aware of the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education.

Our staff are aware that children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is a part of our school’s safeguarding approach.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

The Prevent Duty is concerned with all forms of terrorism and extremism. It also includes some forms of nonviolent extremism. For example:

- Right Wing extremism
- Religious extremism
- Environmental and Animal Rights extremism
- School Massacre ideology

- Involuntary Celibate (Incel) ideology

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the Government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are **factors that may indicate concern**.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to Children's Services **website** or **Channel**, the Government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which all staff and trustees can call to raise concerns about extremism for a pupil. In non-emergency situations DSLs can also email **counter.extremism@education.gov.uk**. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

Concerns about Mental Health

Mental Health difficulties can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Poor or deteriorating mental health can also be a safeguarding concern in its own right. Our staff know to be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing mental health or be at risk of developing one.

If a staff member has a concern about a child's mental health, no matter the level of the child's emotional difficulties, they must speak to the school's DSL who will evaluate if the child is at risk of immediate harm, and if so, will escalate to the appropriate level of support which includes speaking to the school lead for Mental Health.

If a child is experiencing low moods, low self-esteem and general anxiety, our school mental health lead will be able to provide some advice about some self-accessed support through relevant approved wellbeing websites and apps. If, however, the child is presenting with a concerning level of low mood and anxiety for a period then our mental health lead will discuss with the child and their parents/carer to explore options of support.

If someone is experiencing suicidal thoughts but they do not need physical input from A&E, then consideration will be given to accessing support from the Single Point of Access (SPA)/Crisis team. If a referral for targeted mental health support is required, then a referral through SPA will be made.

If, however, a child/young person is at immediate risk the school will recommend they need to be sent to A&E or dial 999.

What all staff need to do to respond if abuse, neglect and exploitation is suspected or been disclosed.

All staff, volunteers, and trustees must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding concern that meets threshold for referral to Children's Social Care. For early help intervention (non-CP) see the **continuum of need** and the **Families First Portal**

If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

DSLs will make referrals in the following way:

- 1) If it is immediately apparent that a child has suffered significant harm or is at risk of harm e.g. suffered abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, the school's DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care to request support at the earliest opportunity; consent will be gained where appropriate. If there has been a crime committed within the circumstances of the abuse, they will also report this to the Police.
- 2) Alternatively, if not an immediate risk but the child is considered to be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm they will make a referral to Children's Social Care; consent will be gained where appropriate. Anyone can make a referral to Police and/or Children's Services therefore, we expect all staff and volunteers in our school community to act immediately and not delay if they consider a child to be in immediate danger using the pathways below.

For non-DSLs to make a referral to Children's Social Care:

Access the online Hertfordshire referral here:

<https://earlyhelpportal.hertfordshire.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/ehassess#assess/>

The staff member must inform the DSL as soon as possible.

To contact the Police:

Call Police on 999 if urgent, if not urgent call 101.

If a child resides in a neighbouring Local Authority (out of Hertfordshire County) the GOV.UK webpage for reporting child abuse to your local council: **Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)** is accessible to assist staff.

Concerns about a child (not considered to be suffering harm, at risk of suffering harm or in immediate danger)

As per KCSiE (2025), staff "*should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision*" (support). Where staff have a concern for a child which does not indicate that they are suffering or likely to suffer immediate harm or in immediate danger they should follow the setting's internal processes for submitting a Record of Concern. At Watford Grammar School for Girls, all concerns are submitted via CPOMS, on the day they occur. All staff receive CPOMS training as part of their induction when they join the school.

Concerns about a child may include, but are not limited to:

- Safeguarding
- Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment,
- Prevent,
- Mental Health,

- Online filtering and monitoring (newly specified in KCSiE this year) as well as any other relevant specific safeguarding issues.

The key is to report, via CPOMS, anything which does not seem right, no matter how small, as this helps us build up a picture for that child and identify if we early help and support could be of benefit.

Upon receipt of the Record of Concern, the DSL (or deputy DSL) should consult Hertfordshire's Continuum of Need where appropriate or, if needed, seek further consultation to consider an appropriate level of response to take. The DSL (or deputy) should acknowledge the concern and feedback wherever appropriate. Staff must not assume that action has been taken unless they have received feedback from the DSL (or deputy DSL) who responded.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or volunteer

All staff are aware they should be prepared, when possible, as children can disclose spontaneously.

We consider the term 'the child's voice' to represent not only what children say directly, but rather the many ways that children communicate with us, including both verbal and non-verbal communication. The child's lived experience means seeing and understanding their experiences from their point of view, our staff understand that it is very important to always record exactly what a child has said rather than interpret this from an adult/ their own perspective. Watford Grammar School for Girls is situated within Hertfordshire County which has a rich and diverse population, we cannot and do not assume that all children and their families will have English as their first language nor may a child with SEND have speech or language ability to convey verbally any difficulties they may experience without aids and methods to facilitate their voice. Therefore, our staff give careful consideration to knowing that a child may:

- Not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers.

All staff at Watford Grammar School for Girls must ensure that no child is ever made to feel that they are 'any trouble' if they need time and space to share their worries with staff.

Watford Grammar School for Girls culture of safeguarding endorses the following principles of meaningful engagement with children to include:

Listen

- Be patient – a child may be finding it hard to find the words to express themselves. Let them tell their story in their own words
- Do not interrogate – you may 'taint' evidence by asking leading questions or suggesting what may have happened. Maintain your professional curiosity, ask open-ended prompts.

Reassure

- Reassure the child they are not in trouble and that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Do not tell the child they should have told you sooner

- Reassure the child that it is not their fault – victims can often be blamed by their abusers.
- Do not promise confidentiality – if the child asks you to keep it a secret, explain who you need to tell to keep them safe, if appropriate
- Explain to the child that you will have to share the information and explain what may happen next.

Stay Calm

- Try not to panic, be aware of your own reactions and feelings, avoid showing shock, anger, or disgust
- Do not insult the alleged abuser, however frustrated you may privately feel, children can be very protective of people they care about, even if that person is abusing them.

Report

- Write up your conversation on CPOMS as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it. Include any actions you have taken.
- Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police directly (see section 8). Prioritise this above all other work.
- Do not disclose any information to anyone aside from those within your DSL team, unless you are told to do so by a relevant agency involved in the safeguarding process.

Reporting systems for children

Watford Grammar School for Girls is committed to ensuring that all children feel safe and comfortable to share and report any concerns and/or allegations about their life at home, in the community, online or regarding a member of staff or other children in the school. As outlined above, all our staff are clear on the importance of listening and supporting children when making disclosures, and the need to reassure them.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when assessing information, considering necessary actions and any subsequent implementation of advice or support.

To achieve this, we have:

- Clear systems in place for children to report abuse, knowing they will be listened to and supported
- Accessible reporting systems which are well promoted and understood by the children so they can easily report concerns via this pathway should they wish
- A clear culture and ethos in our school that promotes taking concerns seriously and offers children opportunities to safely express their views and any worries they may have.

- Children are encouraged to report any concern, no matter how small, to any member of staff they trust. This may include:

- Form Tutor
- Head of Year
- Director of Key Stage
- Member of the DSL Team, including the DSL or Safeguarding Officer
- Any of their teachers
- Support staff

There are posters around the school reminding students of who they can talk to about a concern, and regular reference is made to reporting to trusted adults and identifying a child's 'support network' in PACE and Forum lessons.

- The school website has a MS Form to report bullying, harassment, assault and discrimination. Students are reminded of this through posters, assemblies and through signposting in PACE and Forum lessons.

Concerns that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has taken place or a child is at risk of FGM

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) explains that FGM includes 'all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs.'

FGM is illegal in the UK and is considered as a form of child abuse that has significantly harmful and long-lasting consequences. It can also be referred to as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Any teacher who either:

- is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her;
- or observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 (and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth)

must immediately report this to the Police, personally on 999. This is a mandatory, statutory duty and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. In addition, staff should also discuss the concerns with the DSL to report to Children's Services, as appropriate.

The duty for teachers above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. In these circumstances, the teacher must report to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures to be taken.

Any other member of staff who discovers that FGM has been carried out on a child under 18 must report this to the DSL immediately to ensure local safeguarding procedures are followed.

If a member of staff who is not a teacher, suspects a child is at risk or suspects that FGM has been carried out, they should report to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures.

Please see **5.1.17 of the HSCP Procedures Manual** for further information about

Concerns about extremism

The Prevent duty is concerned with all forms of terrorism and extremism. It also includes some forms of nonviolent extremism (far right and extreme far right groups, religious extremist groups, environmental and animal rights extremism, unclear ideology).

Unless your concerns indicate that the child is at immediate risk of harm or danger, report your concerns to the DSL. In rare circumstances where the DSL may not be available, staff should speak with a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from Children's Services, if appropriate. Staff must inform the DSL of their actions as soon as possible.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This can include seeking advice from Hertfordshire County Council's Prevent Programme

Manager, a referral to Children’s Services 0300 123 4043 or **Channel**, the government’s programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which all staff and trustees can call to raise concerns about extremism for a pupil. In non-emergency situations DSLs can also email **counter.extremism@education.gov.uk**. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

Concerns about mental health

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. Poor or deteriorating mental health can also be a safeguarding concern in its own right. Our staff know to be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If a staff member has a concern about a child’s mental health which they consider to also be a safeguarding concern, they must consider if the child is at risk of immediate harm; and if so, should follow steps in in section 8.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is not also a safeguarding concern, log this on CPOMS. The DSL Team and Mental Health Lead will then agree a course of action.

The Single Point of Access (SPA) Mental Health phonenumber is available 24/7 on 0800 6444 101 and can be used when there is an urgent or ‘crisis’ concern as well as for moderate and non-urgent concerns. Further information and resources can be found on **The Grid**.

Concerns about child-on-child abuse

At Watford Grammar School for Girls, we know that children can abuse other children. No abuse at Watford Grammar School for Girls will ever be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. We are committed to upholding a culture that prevents unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

In most circumstances, incidences of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our School’s Behaviour Policy, but this Child Protection Policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes).

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- Staff must record the allegation on CPOMS. If the student has been seriously harmed or is at risk of serious ongoing harm, the member of staff must report this in person to a DSL as a matter of urgency. Staff should not investigate the matter

- The DSL will assess and if consider the relevant next steps which may include, making a referral to Children’s Services as well as the Police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), if appropriate
- The DSL will consider whether a risk assessment or a safety and support plan would be beneficial for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected, with a named person they can talk to if needed. This should include consideration of all aspects and areas of the school environment and beyond for example off-site activities and school transport
- The DSL will be committed to engaging the child and their parents / carers to gain their views and contributions and liaise with other agencies to assess any identified risks, unmet needs and relevant measures or support required.
- The DSL will be committed to ensuring that where concerns are raised about child-on-child abuse, incidences are taken seriously and dealt with fairly. DSLs will consider all information available to them and ensure that any action or decision is proportionate for all children involved, and that such decisions do not disproportionately impact on their access to education, although at times some restrictions or adaptations may be required to manage identified risk.

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the Police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator.

Our DSLs are committed to ensuring that where concerns are raised about child-on-child abuse, incidences are taken seriously and dealt with fairly. DSLs will consider all information available to them and ensure that any action or decision is proportionate for all children involved, and that such decisions do not disproportionately impact on their access to education, although at times some restrictions or adaptations may be required to manage identified risk. Please see Appendix 3 of this policy and **Part Five of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025.**

Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we expect all staff to:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders, for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners

- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment.
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
 - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
 - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
 - That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
 - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
 - A child’s friend may report this directly to a staff member or make comments (if they do, staff should be professionally curious)
 - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
 - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
 - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
 - That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.
 - The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns.
 - That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including the potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side.

The DSL will take the lead role in managing any proposed risk by the alleged perpetrator(s) and will provide support at the same time, it is not our intention to villainise children, but it is everyone’s responsibility to uphold the Behaviour Policy and standards within the school to maintain a safe environment. Such assessments or plans will be robust but sensitive to the individual needs of the children to ensure any identified risk is managed as effectively as possible whilst also supporting them to continue accessing a satisfactory level of education.

Risk management strategies can be put in place while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the Police. Although another agency such as the Police or Children’s Services is or has investigated an incident, it is our duty here at Watford Grammar School for Girls to ensure we identify and implement our own assessment and management of the concerns, informed by the needs of our school and the children we care for and the advice and outcomes of those agency’s actions. This is to ensure that all children and staff are supported and always protected. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, considering whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the Police and/or Children’s Services to determine this

- There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or inappropriate for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing.

Risk Management Plan (RAMP) and Safety and Support Plan (S&SP)

RAMP - When there has been a report of sexual violence, or and harassment, the DSL (or a deputy) will make an immediate Risk and Needs Assessment for both the alleged victim and the perpetrator. The RAMP is to enable the DSL to use their critical thinking and consider what the needs of any child/ren are, analyse what are the risks and what measures can be put in place to protect children and keep them safe from further harm. Risk assessments will be recorded (paper or electronic) and kept under review.

The school risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of other expert specialist assessments, but the DSL will seek and share information from other agencies where required to inform the school's understanding from a multi-agency perspective so that a holistic approach in supporting and protecting children can be strengthened.

We are aware that children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will find the experience stressful and distressing, this can also impact on the family and can cause the child adverse effect on their educational attainment and can be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. The RAMP will take this into account and plan accordingly on the gravity of a situation on treat incidents on a case-by-case situation.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Five Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment provide statutory duty for schools and colleges.

The RAMP is the responsibility of <insert name of school> and leadership and management team, and it is critical that parents and cares place confidence and trust in our school by working with us and supporting the plan.

All schools and colleges are at liberty to adopt any form of risk management and safety planning protocols, at Watford Grammar School for Girls we use the following types of risk management to not only support children presenting with Harmful Sexual Behaviour but more commonly we experience a range of specific safeguarding issues that vulnerable children and young people are faced with, examples of these cited in Part one and Annex B KCSiE.

Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP) for Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

The RAMP framework provides DSLs in our school/college the means to:

- Assess the needs and risk of children and young people when they have presented with Harmful Sexual Behaviour (for age-appropriate exploratory sexual behaviours, use Safety and Support Plan framework).
- Guidance and evidenced based resources to support DSLs critical thinking and analysis using a multi-agency approach to identify risk and strengths.
- Template to support and manage risk by developing a day today plan to safeguard and promote the welfare of Children and Young People (CYP), monitor and review their progress.

Safety and Support Plan (S&SP) for all safeguarding issues and specific forms of abuse and harm

The S&SP framework provides DSLs in our school to:

1. Assess the needs and risk of children and young people when they have presented with vulnerabilities associated with themes set out part one and Annex B 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' this includes all forms of child-on-child abuse. (If CYP is presenting with high problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour use the RAMP framework).

2. Guidance and evidenced based resources to support DSLs critical thinking and analysis using a multi-agency approach to identify risk and strengths.

3. Template to manage risk by with a day today support plan therefore safeguard and promote the welfare of CYP, monitor and review their progress.

9. Online safety and filtering

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Watford Grammar School for Girls' Trustee Board ensures that our DSL takes lead responsibility for online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes we have in place, alongside their safeguarding and child protection duties.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and trustees
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following 4 categories of risk as identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025:

Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, misinformation, disinformation, including fake news, and conspiracy theories, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism

Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as pressure from another child(ren), commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will educate pupils about online safety as part of our PACE and Forum curriculum. For example:

- The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
- Keeping personal information private
- How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
- How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they're a witness rather than a victim

We will also:

- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required at least once each academic year
- Educate parents / carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
 - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
 - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.
- Make all pupils, parents / carers, staff, volunteers and trustees aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/ carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Review the child protection policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For full details about our school's policies in these areas, please refer to our online safety policy which can be found on our website: <https://www.watfordgrammarschoolforgirls.org.uk/about-us/policies-statutory-reports/>

10. Working with parents and carers

At Watford Grammar School for Girls where appropriate, we will discuss concerns about a child with their parents or carers. We know parents and carers know their child best and we will always value that often, when concerns emerge, these can easily be resolved with the support of school and parents / carers working together. To retain confidentiality within the school community other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL, Deputy DSL or Head of Year.

Although we will always want to be open and transparent with our parents and carers, there may be circumstances where the safety of a child overrides their liberty and rights for this to happen

immediately as consent may not be appropriate / required. For a small number of children, seeking parental consent would not be appropriate if:

- The child would be placed at increased risk of significant harm through the action of gaining this consent
- There would be an impact on a criminal investigation
- A delay in making the referral would impact on the immediate safety of the child.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the Local Authority Children's Social Care team to seek advice when it would be the right time to share information, so that we do not interrupt planned inquiries by Children's Services or the Police.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about other children involved, and when. We will work with the Police and/or Local Authority Children's Social Care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with other agencies if there is third party involvement (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what is being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what is being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) for any decision(s).

11. Family help

Keeping children safe, helping families thrive - GOV.UK underpins the Children and Wellbeing bill which is a key step towards delivering the government's 'Opportunity Mission' to break the link between young people's background and their future success. It will better put in place support to drive high and rising standards throughout our education and care systems so that every child can achieve and thrive. It outlines the government's commitment to keeping families together and children safe and support children to live in family settings where children cannot remain at home, including through kinship or foster care, rather than residential care.

In March 2025 the DfE published The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide this sets out how every child is to be kept safe and have the opportunity to succeed, children's social care is to be reformed and committed to supporting every child to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home, for most children this means growing up within their family and support through early help and family networks.

Family Help will take place at the heart of communities, bringing together local services under a combined, multi-disciplinary practice approach and service offer. The key principles that will inform the delivery of services will include:

- wrapping support around the whole-family at the earliest opportunity – using the expertise of multi-disciplinary practitioners;
- ensuring consistency of relationships between children, families, and their lead practitioner;
 - adopting one plan that will stay with families but adapt as needs change.

At Watford Grammar School for Girls we endorse these principles and will continue to work in partnership and collaboration with children and their families so that they are supported from an early stage by being a part of and leading the conversations about change and aims for their children. We are keen to support families in a strength and solution-based approach, encouraging motivation and confidence to improve their own agency to make safe and positive decisions for themselves and their children.

12. Managing allegations about staff, school's safeguarding policies and practice

Watford Grammar School for Girls' 'low-level concern and allegations policy' is compliant with:

- KCSiE, Part four
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual, Section 5.1.5 Managing Allegations Against People who work with Children and Young People
- Developing and implementing a low-level concerns policy (Farrer & Co), which provides detailed guidance and examples.

This section of our policy is a reflection and extension of Watford Grammar School for Girls' wider staff code of conduct.

All staff and volunteers at Watford Grammar School for Girls' hold positions of trust and are expected to uphold safe working practices outlined in our code of conduct

A 'position of trust' refers to any role where an adult holds power or influence over a child due to the nature of their work (either paid or voluntary). As defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Sections.16-24) and further clarified by the Crown Prosecution Service, it is a criminal offence for anyone in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child in their care – even if that child is aged 16 or 17 and legally considered to have reached the age of sexual consent (16); this includes both in-person and online interaction, within or outside of employed/voluntary hours.

A breach of trust occurs when an adult working or volunteering with children crosses established boundaries in their professional relationship with a child or young person through inappropriate behaviour that involves an abuse of their position or authority. The behaviour itself does not need to be illegal to constitute a breach of trust – even when the child or young person is over the age of consent (16).

These behaviours undermine professional integrity and breach safeguarding standards and WGGs code of conduct regardless of legal consent due to the imbalance of power and the professional duty of care.

Section 11 of the 2004 Children's Act states that schools and colleges should have clear policies aligned with HSCP Procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns or allegations against those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges in a paid or unpaid capacity, i.e. members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors. These policies must clearly distinguish between:

Allegations – a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically one made without proof. The *Harm Threshold* (see section *Managing Allegations*, below) for an allegation is when a person working or volunteering with children in a position of trust has or may have:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child/young person;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child/young person;
- Behaved toward a child/young person in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm;*
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children/young people;*

**These categories can include behaviour that may have happened outside of an organisation that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children/young people.*

Concerns about the quality of care/practice - is an accusation, not of a child protection nature, that the care/practice provided does not meet the expected standards. As with quality in other fields, it is an assessment of whether something is good enough and whether it is suitable for its purpose.

Complaints – an expression of dissatisfaction about actions or the lack thereof. Concerns may reflect a worry requiring reassurance, while complaints assert that something is unacceptable

Levels of Concern and Allegation

There are two levels of Concerns and Allegations relating to adults (in both paid and voluntary roles) working with children either directly and/or online:

1. Low-Level Concerns

These are behaviours by one or more adults (paid or voluntary) which are inconsistent with Watford Grammar School for Girls' code of conduct but *do not meet the Harm Threshold* (see above under definition of Allegations) and are referred to as 'Low-Level Concerns'. Examples include repeated breaches of Watford Grammar School for Girls' code of conduct in relation to safeguarding.

2. Allegations

These are behaviours by one or more adults (paid or voluntary) that *do meet or may meet the Harm Threshold* (see above under definition of Allegations). Such cases require referral within one working day to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and potentially other statutory bodies such as the police or children's social care.

Low-Level Concerns and Allegations may emerge as a result of either observed suspicions or direct disclosures made by a child. In assessing the potential harm and impact to a child or young person, DSLs will consider the four categories of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect – as well as any safeguarding elements related to exploitation. Detailed definitions of these terms can be found in Chapters 4 and 9 on this policy.

The Harm Test is explained in the Disclosure and Barring service Guidance: Making barring referrals to the DBS and Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002).

Managing Low-Level Concerns (those that DO NOT meet the Harm Threshold for Allegation)

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, we are committed to fostering an open and transparent culture where all concerns involving adults working in or on behalf of Watford Grammar

School for Girls (including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors) are addressed promptly and appropriately.

Creating an environment where all concerns can be shared responsibly, with the right person, recorded accurately, and handled with care is essential to keeping our children and young people safe.

We aim to:

- Enable all stake holders to identify inappropriate, problematic, or concerning behaviour early and encourage them to do so.
- Reduce the risk of abuse by acting preventatively.
- Ensure that all adults working/volunteering in or on behalf of our school understand and adhere to professional boundaries consistent with our ethos and values at WGGS

A 'Low-Level' Concern does not imply insignificance. It refers to any behaviour – however minor – that causes a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' about whether an adult's behaviour:

- Is inconsistent with Watford Grammar School for Girls' code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- Does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- Humiliating children.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

The role of the Case Manager for Low-Level Concerns

In our school/college, the Case Manager is a senior leader—for example, the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If concerns involve the Headteacher or Principal, the Chair of Trustees fulfils this role.

When a Low-Level Concern is raised (including third-party reports), the Case Manager or their nominated deputy will:

- Speak with the person who raised the concern (unless this was raised anonymously)

- Speak with the individual subject to the concern
- Identify and interview any other involved parties or witnesses

The information gathered will help us to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. This information will be recorded in writing along with the rationale for our decisions and action taken.

The Case Manager, a nominated deputy, or Chair of Trustees will respond to reports of Low-Level Concerns in-line with the schools' internal due processes for managing safe-staffing, our response may include the following:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of any alleged victim and all other pupils
- Share details only with those who need to know to maintain confidentiality
- Conduct further inquiries with relevant children, staff, parents, or witnesses
- If there are reasonable grounds, launch a formal internal investigation following the school's internal processes
- Consult Human Resources on possible breaches of the Watford Grammar School for Girls' code of conduct,, Teachers' Standards, or TA regulations to assess disciplinary thresholds
- Inform the subject of the concerns and outline available support during the inquiry
- Determine when to allow the subject to present their account
- Review all evidence and decide on an outcome
- If no risk of harm is found, consider additional training or monitoring for the staff member
- If new information raises serious risk or meets the harm threshold, refer the matter to the LADO

Watford Grammar School for Girls fosters a safeguarding culture where every staff member is professionally curious. We:

- Clarify expected staff behaviour and help them distinguish it from concerning conduct
- Encourage prompt reporting of Low-Level Concerns
- Address unprofessional behaviour early and support corrective measures
- Handle concerns sensitively and in proportion to their nature
- Use reported concerns to identify and address any weaknesses in our safeguarding systems

Record keeping for Concerns and Allegations

It is vital that our stakeholders know how to share information about concerns for professionals and volunteers working with children. To ensure safe working practice:

- All staff and volunteers must record the details of the Low-Level Concerns and submit them to the Headteacher/Principal

- Records are confidential, stored securely, and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- If a pattern of inappropriate behaviour emerges, the Case Manager will decide on disciplinary action, or if the Harm Threshold is reached, refer to the LADO (per KCSiE Part Four, Section One)
- We will review and revise relevant policies or training to address any school-culture factors that enabled the behaviour
- Records of concerns are retained by Watford Grammar School for Girls until the individual reaches retirement-age or for the next ten years, whichever period is longer

Managing Allegations (those that **DO MEET** the Harm Threshold for LADO)

When concerns/allegations meet the harm threshold Watford Grammar School for Girls is required to comply with both Part Four of KCSiE and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual Section 5.1.5 Managing Allegations Against Adults Who Work With Children and Young People

All staff and volunteers at Watford Grammar School for Girls are required to immediately report any level of concerns about behaviour and/or conduct of an adult working/volunteering with children towards a child to leadership and management. This includes reporting adults who are providing out of school activities/leasing Watford Grammar School for Girls’ facilities.

These are Watford Grammar School for Girls’ procedures for managing cases of concerns/allegations that meet the Harm Threshold and may indicate a person is a risk of harm to children if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children and young people. This is the process and the threshold criteria we apply if it is alleged that anyone working in our school or a college, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

<i>Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child/young person</i>	<i>Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child/young person</i>	<i>Behaved toward a child/young person in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm</i>	<i>Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children/young people</i>
Harm Threshold	Criminal Threshold	Suitability Threshold	Transferable Risk Threshold
<u>Examples:</u> Sexual abuse, including grooming, both directly or online Physical abuse Emotional abuse Neglect	<u>Examples:</u> Adult has been arrested / reported for downloading indecent images of a child	<u>Examples:</u> Adult has been the subject of criminal procedures Caused harm or possible harm to a child or adult at risk	<u>Examples:</u> Concerns about the adult’s ‘reckless’ behaviour and conduct in their personal and private life that could bring the school into disrepute

<p>Exploitation</p> <p>Any form of abuse and neglect that has caused a child significant harm (as defined in the Children Act 1989)</p>	<p>Any sexual act that meets a criminal threshold</p>	<p>Failed to understand or comply with the need for clear personal and professional boundaries in the workplace</p> <p>Conduct concerns or breach of policies that are more serious than Low-Level Concerns e.g. persistent, concerning behaviour</p>	<p>Criminal misuse of substances, alcohol, drugs</p> <p>Criminal acts of dishonesty or violence against another person</p> <p>Sexual violence and harassment towards another adult or child</p> <p>Internet crime</p>
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What happens when an allegation is made against staff or a volunteer?

Headteacher/Chair of Trustees may undertake initial inquiries to gather key information. They will assess whether the allegation meets the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) threshold, if it does, they will make a referral to LADO giving consideration to our school's staff code of conduct, managing allegations policy and 5.1.5 HSCP procedures. If necessary, they will complete a LADO referral within one working day.

If the allegation does not meet the harm threshold for LADO, our Headteacher/Chair of Trustees will follow the school's Low Level Concerns policy.

Role of the Local Authority Designated Officer

The LADO does not have a public facing role. They do not, for example, liaise directly with children and their families, nor do they directly investigate allegations. Their role is as follows:

- Case management - oversee the process and ensure it is working, not to investigate.
- Consultation - provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations.
- Monitoring - the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.
- Liaison - with the Police, Children's Services, and other partner agencies (managers of the subject of allegation).

Role of school's Case Manager for Allegations

This will be a staff member in a senior role e.g. Headteacher or Chair of Trustees, if the concerns are about our school's Headteacher, their remit is to:

- Clarify facts of the concerns/allegation (not investigate) before contacting the LADO.

- Take part in Strategy Meetings to liaise with other partner agencies.
- Undertake internal planned inquiries/fact finding.
- Take part to review the progress of the case in which there is a Police officer investigation.
- Operate a thorough disciplinary process when appropriate.
- Ensure a properly managed conclusion and outcome to process.

LADO Principles and Response

Schools/Colleges/Trust may want to adopt this for the LLC policy section above this is optional.

Timeliness - any allegation of abuse must be dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently in accordance with the safeguarding and child protection procedures, this is best practice to provide immediate safety for child/ren and make safe arrangements for the person who is the subject of the allegation. It is crucial that employers make a referral to LADO within one working day.

Objectivity - it is not permissible for a member of staff to conduct (though their involvement may still be required) an enquiry about suspicion or allegation of abuse with respect to a:

- relative
- friend
- colleague, supervisor/supervisee or someone who has worked with her/him previously in any of these capacities.

If, following the conclusion of child protection processes, further enquiries are pursued for the purpose of disciplinary, regulatory or complaint investigation, they should be arranged in a way that avoids the repeated interviewing of children or other vulnerable witnesses.

Confidentiality - information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- protect children
- facilitate enquiries
- avoid victimisation
- safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected
- manage disciplinary/complaints aspects
- A media strategy should be developed with no improper or inadvertent releases of information to the media, in accordance with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance (now known as The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) .

Support - parents/carers of a child(ren) involved should be:

- Informed of the allegation as soon as possible, provided provision of information and advice at that stage does not impede the enquiry, disciplinary or investigative processes, and may need to be told immediately, e.g. a child requires medical treatment.
- Helped to understand the process involved and kept informed about the progress of the case.
- Told that there has been an enquiry or disciplinary process (but no detail is to be provided in relation to any internal hr processes).
- When necessary, helped to understand the outcomes reached (but see above proviso in relation to the provision of advice).
- The employer should keep the subject of the allegation informed of progress in the case and arrange to provide appropriate support (via occupational health or equivalent). If the person is suspended, (s)he should be kept informed of development in the workplace and if a member of a trade's union or professional association.

Monitoring - the LADO should monitor the progress of cases either fortnightly or monthly depending on its complexity either via review Strategy Discussions or by liaising with Police and/or Children's Services colleagues, or employer as appropriate. The Designated Officer should keep records to ensure that every case is dealt with without undue delay.

If the Strategy Discussion/initial evaluation have decided that a Police investigation is required, the Police Joint Child Protection Investigation Team (JCPIT) should also set a target date for reviewing the progress of its investigation and consulting the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to consider whether to charge the individual/continue to investigate/close the investigation. Whenever possible that review should take place within four weeks of the decision to initiate a criminal investigation.

If the investigation is to continue, dates for subsequent reviews, ideally at fortnightly (at most monthly) intervals, should be set at the meeting.

Target Timescales - it is in everyone's interest for cases to be dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. Timescales (which are not performance indicators) will depend on nature, seriousness, and complexity of allegation(s) though in general (based upon data about allegations against education staff):

- 80% of cases should be resolved within one month
- 90% within three months.

All but the most exceptional should be completed within twelve months (it is unlikely cases requiring a criminal prosecution or complex Police investigation can be completed in less than three months).

Reporting Concerns and Allegations

Concern/Allegation about	Report to
<p>Member of staff (including volunteers, supply staff and contractors)</p>	<p>Headteacher (or other with leadership status)</p> <p>If the allegation is against supply staff or contractor, leadership, management will pass on report to the adult's employer at their agency/company.</p>
<p>Headteacher</p>	<p>Chair of Trustee Board</p> <p>Your school website or Child Protection policy will have details of your Chair/Vice Chair of Trustees.</p>
<p>Chair of Trustee Board</p>	<p>Local Authority Designated Officer LADO (<i>for staff only</i>) LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Report to the police on 101 or if urgent 999</p>
<p>If you are worried that the concerns raised have not been taken seriously or escalated.</p>	<p>Chair of Trustees</p> <p>Police 101</p> <p>Children Services 0300 123 4043</p> <p>NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline 0800 028 0285</p> <p>NSPCC Whistleblowing Email help@nspcc.org.uk</p>
<p>Concerns/Allegations relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation has used school premises for running activities for children e.g. community groups, sports and faith associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities)</p>	<p>Headteacher</p> <p>As with any safeguarding allegation, DSL will follow their school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.</p> <p>Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK</p>

Concern about the Quality of Care/Practice: If a stakeholder is concerned about a matter that is not of a child protection nature, but general queries about the perceived quality and standard of certain practice in our school and it is considered that something is not good enough or/suitable for its purpose.

Please speak to Headteacher/ DSL or our Chair of Trustees.

Complaints: if a stakeholder is unsatisfied with any aspects of how we implement and comply with safeguarding policies and procedures, to keep children and young people safe in our school.

Please refer to our *Complaints Procedures* which will advise as part of the stages, to share any initial queries and concerns with our schools Headteacher/DSL or our Chair of Trustees. Your feedback is important to us, and we would like to ensure to have an opportunity to reassure our stakeholders that any expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action' is a priority to understand so that we can find a solution and support a complainant.

Our Complaints Procedures can be found on our school website at:
<https://www.watfordgrammarschoolforgirls.org.uk/about-us/policies-statutory-reports/>

Allegations and concerns against adults in education settings

If you become aware that a member of staff/volunteer/supply/contractor or bank staff MAY have:

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

If you have any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- **is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and**
- **does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.**

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a scheduled area or behind a closed door; or,
- Humiliating pupils

Where a child also discloses abuse or neglect by a member of staff/volunteer/supply/contractor or bank staff:

- Listen; take their allegation seriously; reassure that you will take action to keep them safe
- Inform them what you are going to do next
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Do not question further or approach/inform the person/alleged abuser

Staff are encouraged, and should feel confident, to self-refer, where for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Report any concerns about staff immediately to: **Sylvia Tai (Headteacher)**

Any concern or allegation against the Headteacher will be reported to: **Camilla Woods (Chair of Governors)**. In the absence of the Chair of Governors, report to **Mike Lewis (Vice Chair of Governors)**

Unless there is clear evidence to prove that the allegation is incorrect, the headteacher **will decide on the nature of the allegation/concern:**

Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

If the behaviour towards the child may have met the harm threshold (KCSiE 2022, p.85), the Headteacher / nominated investigator will report the allegation within one working day to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO.) In deciding whether to refer, our staff code of conduct and **5.1.5 HSCP procedures** will be referred to.

- Seek advice from LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk or call **01992 555420** on whether the harm threshold has been met.
- Complete a LADO Referral Form where the harm threshold is likely to have been met.

Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns)

Refer to the allegation/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold, or ‘low level’ concerns addendum flowchart (below).

Allegation/concerns guidance for persons in charge

Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

KCSIE 2022 Part 4 Section 1



The LADO will:

1. Consider the relevant facts and concerns regarding the adult and child or children, including any previous history.
2. Decide on next course of action - usually straight away, sometimes after further consultation with other multi-agency parties such as the Police and HR.



If the allegation threshold is met:

- A strategy meeting will normally be held.
- Usually, a senior manager/safeguarding lead, the LADO, HR, Police, and social care are invited to attend.
- Relevant information is shared, risks to children are considered and appropriate action agreed e.g., child protection and other enquiries, disciplinary measures, or criminal proceedings.
- A record of the meeting will



If the allegation threshold is NOT met:

The LADO will agree an appropriate response, e.g., for the setting to undertake further enquiries or an internal investigation.

Refer to the low-level concerns procedures on the right-hand-side.



Allegations/concerns that do NOT meet the harm threshold ('low level' concerns)

KCSIE 2022 Part 4 Section 2



The headteacher will appoint a nominated investigator. They will:

- Report concerns about supply staff and contractors to their employers in writing.
- Collect information to help the headteacher categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken.
- If the concern has been raised via a third party, the nominated investigator should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:
 - directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously, and
 - to the individual involved and any witnesses.
- All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing on CPOMS Staff Safe and will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose along with the rationale for decisions and action taken.
- Records will be kept confidential and held securely; it is recommended that it is retained at least until the individual leaves their employment.
- Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
- Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school should decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO (as per Part 4, Section 1).
- Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the

Watford Grammar School for Girls



Recording allegations and low-level concerns

Any allegations and low-level concerns will be recorded on CPOMS StaffSafe and will be accessible only to the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers. These records are held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and the rationale for decisions and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted. For low-level concerns, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Low-level concern records will be reviewed half-termly by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the Headteacher will decide on a course of action, either through the Disciplinary Policy or where a pattern of behaviour moves from low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it will be referred to the LADO (as per KCSIE Part four, Section one). Consideration will also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate, policies could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again. Reviews of potential patterns in low-level concerns will be minuted in the Head and Deputies meeting minutes.

References

Part three of KCSIE 2025 is clear that schools should only provide substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations (including a group of low-level concerns about the individual) that meet the harm threshold in references. Low-level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which related exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor behaviour) should not be referred to in a reference.

Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition

As a provider Watford Grammar School for Girls have a legal duty of care to try to ensure our environment is safe for children who visit in addition to those who already attend our setting:

We may receive an allegation or concern relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation were using our school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). As with any safeguarding allegation, Watford Grammar School for Girls will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO where appropriate.

The governing body will ensure any organisation that hires the school premises is compliant with guidance set out in **After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)** . They will **therefore seek assurance that**

the provider concerned has the appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed) and will ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these activities are children on the school roll or not.

Whistleblowing

At Watford Grammar School for Girls we strive to create a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share any concerns they have about poor or unsafe practice, concerns or allegations against staff or the school's safeguarding practice and arrangements so they can be addressed appropriately.

Staff may raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and safeguarding policy and procedure using the Whistleblowing Policy which can be found on the school website:

<https://www.watfordgrammarschoolforgirls.org.uk/about-us/policies-statutory-reports/>

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer/through the whistleblowing procedure or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- . Whistleblowing directly to Children's Social Care on 0300 123 4043 and/or the Police 999
- . NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline 0800 028 0285 **help@nspcc.org.uk**

Other complaints

If any of our stakeholders are not satisfied with any aspects of how we manage and operate within our policy and procedures and also how we exercise our duty of care for children, please follow our school Complaints Procedures that you can find on our school website at: **<https://www.watfordgrammarschoolforgirls.org.uk/about-us/policies-statutory-reports/>**

13. Record keeping

Watford Grammar School for Girls will hold records confidentially, safely, securely and in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing on CPOMS. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved

- A note of any action taken, decisions reached (including rationale), and the outcome.

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child, on CPOMS.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to know/ access them.

Safeguarding records relating to an individual child will be retained for the student until they reach their 25th birthday or 31st birthday if there is an EHCP in place (Information Records Management Society 2022). [eBook: Ultimate Guide to Electronic Records Management | Laserfiche](#)

Safeguarding records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse were being retained for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). This has now concluded and the Home Office sent a letter to schools advising that files no longer needed to be kept indefinitely. However, the recommendations from the inquiry have stated:

Recommendation 17: Access to records The UK government should direct the Information Commissioner's Office to introduce a code of practice on keeping and accessing records which relate to child sexual abuse. The code should require records about child sexual abuse and allegations of child sexual abuse to be kept for 75 years, with appropriate review periods.

The school will follow recommendation 17.

Receiving in and transferring pupil records to other education provision

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their safeguarding information file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school / college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or
- **the first 5 days** of the start of a new term.

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and /or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the child.

Retention, archiving and destruction of records

For records that are not transferred to another school, for example the child leaves the country or is going to be home educated, we have:

- A clear retention policy
- Secure and appropriate system to archive with restricted access
- We have a written assurance from our providers of our electronic recording systems that all records are maintained securely which includes any archived records.

Storage, retention, and destruction of our child protection files is also made clear in our data management policy.

14. Safeguarding training and development

To fulfil our aim of continuous improvement in order to safeguard our pupils, we ensure that learning and development starts at induction. All staff, supply contractors, leadership and management, and governing body/ trustee board, undertake the minimum safeguarding training. We want reassurance for our children and families that all staff are aware of systems within our school and have the skills and knowledge to follow our schools procedures. At Watford Grammar School for Girls, we access training in line with our statutory requirements in Keeping Children Safe in Education, local expectations set out by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and recommendations of good practice by HCC's Child Protection School Liaison Service.

Induction

- Child Protection Policy - which should amongst other things include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse, low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing
- Behaviour Policy - which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods and
- Role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies)
- Copies of / given links to Part One KCSiE (What school and college staff should know and do)

Safeguarding children training for all staff and senior leadership

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with the quality and standards expected from our 3 safeguarding partners (Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership)
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards and code of conduct to support the expectation that all teachers and those that work with children in regulated activity can confidently:
 - Manage our pupils' behaviour effectively to ensure a positive and safe environment

- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, especially pupils with protected characteristics and those that are on any type of plan to support their needs.

In addition, all staff will have training that raises awareness of children susceptible to extra familial harm such as radicalisation which our school adopts the government's anti-radicalisation strategy and Prevent duty to enable us to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Our school's current safeguarding training schedule is as follows:

All staff, including DSL/ deputy(s) and whole school staff must attend safeguarding children training every 3 years

- Our school's DSL will also provide an annual update to all staff, which includes online safety
- Throughout a given academic year, our school's DSL provides for all staff relevant **updates** as changes occur to keep abreast of our whole school approach and thus supporting staff to fulfil their role as set out in Part One of KCSiE (for example, through **emails, e-bulletins** and **staff meetings**).
- **Contractors** who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training, and if not undertaken at our school we will ensure through their employer that they have the skills and knowledge to blend in with our school's policies and procedures.
- We value our school's **volunteer's** cohort; they play a very important part in our school to work alongside staff to support and protect our pupils. We anticipate that all volunteers share our whole school approach and are willing to receive appropriate training and support from our staff.

DSL and Deputy(s)

- The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years
- In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments)
- They will also undertake Prevent awareness
- It is desired that our DSL and deputy when capacity permits, undertakes multi-agency training, this provides opportunities to develop further their knowledge and skills to work with a wide range of safeguarding themes that our children and families can be affected by locally. The three safeguarding partners, HSCP provides a local offer of such training on their website. **HSAB and HSCP training and resources | Hertfordshire County Council**

Trustees

All trustees receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding
- As the Chair of Trustees may be required to act as the ‘case manager’ in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher, they receive training in **Managing Concerns and Allegations** for this purpose.

Headteacher

As Headteachers are ultimately responsible for safeguarding children from adults who work or volunteer with children and are either unsuitable or pose a risk to children, therefore it is highly recommended that **Managing Concerns and Allegations** training is undertaken in order to maintain an ongoing vigilance of safe practice and culture within the school.

Safer Recruitment – interview panels

At least 1 person conducting any interview for any post at the school will have undertaken **safer recruitment** training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

More information can be found in our Safer Recruitment Policy, which can be found on the school website: <https://www.watfordgrammarschoolforgirls.org.uk/about-us/policies-statutory-reports/>

15. Quality assurance, improvement, and practice

The purpose of auditing is to quality assure safeguarding arrangements and identify where they need to improve professional development and strengthen practice, it can also evidence the settings strengths and practice. Effective safeguarding should be part of a schools/college management shared approach and should be embedded in the vision, ethos, and strategic direction so that a ‘whole school approach’ is achieved as this is what ultimately creates a safe and secure environment for children and young people to learn and develop and feel safe.

Auditing is essential for management and leaders to be able to reassure stakeholders about how schools/colleges are complying with the contractual requirements for safeguarding arrangements are met.

Watford Grammar School for Girls endeavours at all times to provide an education and learning where children feel safe and are kept safe by all staff. One way we review and monitor our practice is through auditing: it is important that we are aware of the level of our school’s compliance to key guidance such as KSCiE. We want to be open, transparent and reassure all our stakeholders, including regulators, what we are proud of and what we need to strengthen

to meet our own ambitions for standards. It is therefore standard practice that we factor in on-going auditing schedule objectivity and scrutiny by our Governing Body / Board and all Senior Leadership, children, students and their parents and carers.

We also commission other scrutineers to help us seek reassurance of our practice e.g. Herts for Learning Education, School Effective Advisors and the Local Authority Child Protection School Liaison Service who act as the interface between education and Hertfordshire Social Care and provide support and advice when required.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by Chris Wilshaw, Deputy Headteacher and DSL. At every review, it will be approved by our full Governing Board/ Board of Trustees.

16. Additional associated safeguarding policies and procedures

See below additional associated safeguarding policies for Watford Grammar School for Girls

- Anti-bullying policy
- Attendance policy
- Behaviour policy
- Children Looked after policy
- Complaints policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Drugs and Alcohol policy
- Equality policy
- Gifts, Hospitality and Prizes Policy
- Health and Safety policy
- IT Policy, including e-safety, acceptable use and use of images
- Medical and First Aid policy
- Online Safety policy
- Privacy Notice for Pupils (accessed via the school website Data Protection page)
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Safer recruitment policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and Staff Disciplinary policy, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct.
- Staff Communication Policy
- Teachers' Standards
- Whistleblowing policy

APPENDIX 1: Declaration for whole school staff

Declaration for whole school staff to verify they have read and understood the school's Child Protection Policy and other key guidance. Watford Grammar School for Girls uses a Microsoft Form to collect this data for all staff who use a computer as a regular part of their role.

School: **Watford Grammar School for Girls**
2025/26

Academic Year:

All school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. The Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education, updated September 2025, provide this guidance. Please read both of these documents and confirm that you have done so using the Safeguarding Compliance MS Form which will be issued by the HR department.

I have read and am familiar with the contents of the following documents and agree that I understand my role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare as set out in these documents:

1. The School's **Child Protection Policy**
2. **Part 1 of KCSIE 2025:** [https://](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf)
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_c
hildren_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf)
3. **Annex B of KCSIE 2025** if you work directly with children: [https://](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_c_hildren_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf)
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_c
hildren_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_c_hildren_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf)
4. **Part 3 of KCSIE 2025** if you are involved in the recruitment of other staff, for example as a Head of Department

The documents and policies below can be found on the Staff Team.

I understand my role and responsibilities in relation to each of the following documents and policies which relate to safeguarding:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Attendance policy
- Children Looked after policy
- Complaints policy
- Drugs and Alcohol policy
- Medical policy
- Health and Safety policy
- IT Policy, including e-safety, acceptable use and use of images
- Behaviour policy
- Safer recruitment policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing policy
- Privacy Notice for Pupils (accessed via the school website Data Protection page)

I am aware that the DSLs are:

DSL Sam Moore ?

Deputy DSLs:

Binde Dodhia ?

Katie Holes ?

Bal Randhawa ?

Jacqui Paddick ?

If I need support or I am worried about the wellbeing and safety of a child(ren) or suspect they are being harmed, I have the means to report this and/or discuss any concerns with the DSL/DDSL team at WGGGS. ?

I know that further guidance, together with copies of the policies listed above can be found in the Staff Team. ?

I am aware that if I wish to make an allegation or report a low-level concern involving a member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) I should refer to the

Headteacher Sylvia Tai ?

And if I need to make an allegation or report a low-level concern regarding the Headmistress then I should refer to the

Chair of Trustees Camilla Woods ?

Or in the absence of the Chair, The Vice Chair of Trustees: Mike Lewis ?

In an emergency I can speak directly to Children's Services on 0300 123 4043 ?

Signed _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2: Safeguarding issues and specific forms of abuse

Children occupy all types of places and spaces when socialising, either directly with others or online. Some of these contextual environments away from their home can present additional risks of harm and exploitation that could impact on their welfare and wellbeing. Preventative safeguarding is about having arrangements in place so that whole school staff are made aware of these and know the signs that a child is suspectable or already being impacted on. The aim of your school safeguarding arrangements is to identify those children so that early help support for the child and, where applicable, their family can be offered early help support.

All staff play an important part in your whole school approach to report any concern to your school's DSL or deputies without delay.

Safeguarding Issues, Child-on-child abuse	Safeguarding descriptor, links for further learning
Bullying	<p>Including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.</p> <p>Cyber Aware - NCSC.GOV.UK Helping Children Deal with Bullying & Cyberbullying NSPCC cyberbullying_teachers.pdf (proceduresonline.com) 5.1.13 Bullying (proceduresonline.com) Cyberbullying Guidance Childnet</p>
Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children	<p>Sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'.</p> <p>Teenage Relationship Abuse The Children's Society (childrenssociety.org.uk) 2008 Expect Respect LeafletEDITED-2.pdf (womensaid.org.uk) Controlling-Behaviour-in-Relationships-talking-to-young-people-about-healthy-relationships.pdf (womensaid.org.uk)</p>
Physical abuse	<p>Such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).</p> <p>No place for bullying.doc (live.com) How to talk to your children about bullying UNICEF 5.1.7 Children Who Abuse Others (proceduresonline.com) safe_extended_bully.pdf (proceduresonline.com)</p>
Sexual violence	<p>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</p>

	<p>forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.</p> <p>Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) or peer-on-peer sexual abuse NSPCC Learning 5.3.10 Online Safety (proceduresonline.com) harmful-sexual-behaviour-pathway-2021.docx (live.com) brooks traffic light tool - Search (bing.com) harmful-sexual-behaviour-strategy-2021-23.docx (live.com) Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Overview Harmful sexual behaviour among children and young people Guidance NICE</p>
Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos	<p>Also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery.</p> <p>Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (overview) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
Upskirting	<p>This 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.</p> <p>Upskirting: know your rights - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
Initiation/ hazing type violence and rituals	<p>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.</p> <p>Who, what, why: Why is hazing so common? - BBC News</p>
	Please note: CSE, CCE, domestic violence, mental FGM, forced marriage, serious violence are set out below.

Specific Forms of Abuse in Annex B of KCSiE, 2025	Safeguarding descriptor and links for further learning
Child Abduction and community safety incidents	<p>Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.</p> <p>Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns also, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.</p>

	<p><u>Home - Action Against Abduction</u> <u>5.3.6 Safeguarding Children from Abroad (including Children who are Victims of Trafficking and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) (proceduresonline.com)</u></p>
<p>Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)</p>	<p>Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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.</p>
<p>Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)</p>	<p>CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transporting drugs or money through county lines • working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing • committing vehicle crime • threatening/ committing serious violence to others • become trapped by exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt • coerced into carrying weapons such as knives/ carry a knife for self-protection • children involved in CCE often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced • the experience of girls can be very different to that of boys and the indicators may not be the same, especially as they are at higher risk of CSE- girls are at risk of CCE too. <p><u>Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> <u>Child exploitation disruption toolkit - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> <u>Child sexual and criminal exploitation - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (thegrid.org.uk)</u> <u>Criminal exploitation and gangs NSPCC</u></p>
<p>Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)</p>	<p>CSE is a form of child sexual abuse and may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical contact, assault by penetration (rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing • non-contact activities like 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

	<p>internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can occur over time or be a one-off and may happen without the child’s immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media • includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited as they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. <p>CEOP Education (thinkuknow.co.uk) Child exploitation disruption toolkit - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) 5.3.4 Hertfordshire's Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation (proceduresonline.com)</p>
County Lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line” • This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required • Children are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims • Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes • Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. <p>See CCE resources above</p> <p>Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p>
Children and the Court System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed • Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children • The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information may be unusual for parents and carers. <p>Get help with child arrangements - Get help with child arrangements (justice.gov.uk) Cafcass resources for professionals</p>
Children who are absent from education	<p>All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and</p>

	<p>children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines • it may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, • risk of travelling to conflict zones • risk of female genital mutilation, so-called ‘honour’ based abuse or risk of forced marriage. <p>Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school’s or college’s unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.</p> <p><u>Children missing from education - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (thegrid.org.uk)</u></p>
<p>Children missing from home <i>(NB this is not in Annex B but to illustrate the separate processes)</i></p>	<p>Use school’s CP procedures to escalate to Children’s Services/ Police</p> <p>Operation Encompass for MISSING CYP is Hertfordshire’s system for sharing information quickly with schools to safeguard children following the success of supporting children who have witnessed Domestic Abuse</p> <p><u>ch yp who go missing.docx (live.com)</u></p>
<p>Children with family members in prison</p>	<p>Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health.</p> <p>The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.</p> <p><u>NICCO</u> <u>5.6.5 Children Visiting Prisons (proceduresonline.com)</u></p>
<p>Cybercrime</p>	<p>Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘cyber-enabled’ (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or • ‘cyber dependent’ (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). <p>Cyber-dependent crimes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unauthorised access to computers (illegal ‘hacking’), for example accessing a school’s computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Denial of Service’ (Dos or DDoS) attacks or ‘booting’. These are attempts to make a computer, network, or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and, • making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above. <p><u>Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> <u>Cyber Choices - National Crime Agency</u> <u>When to Call the Police: Guidance for Schools and Colleges - National Police Chiefs’ Council (February 2020) - Youth Justice Resource Hub (yjresourcehub.uk)</u></p>
Domestic Abuse (DA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DA encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents • Abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional • Children can be victims of DA abuse e.g. see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse) • DA can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. <p><u>Domestic abuse: recognise the signs - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> <u>Helplines briefing: The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people from the voices of parents and carers (nspcc.org.uk)</u> <u>5.1.9 Domestic Abuse (proceduresonline.com)</u></p>
Homelessness	<p>Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare. The DSL (and deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/ progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • household debt • rent arrears • domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour • the family being asked to leave a property. <p>This is also a safeguarding issue and DSL should seek advice from Children’s Social Care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.</p> <p><u>Homelessness - Citizens Advice</u> <u>Stats and facts Centrepont</u> <u>Professional Resources - Shelter England</u></p>

Mental Health	<p>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 impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance, and progress at school.</p> <p>Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering exploitation.</p> <p>Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a MH problem.</p> <p>Education staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviors that suggest they may be experiencing a MH problem or be at risk of developing one.</p> <p>Mental Health First Aid Kit Childline Introducing the Sandbox: New online mental health digital advice and guidance service for 10-25s - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (thegrid.org.uk)</p>
Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism	<p>Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual exploitation • forced labour, slavery and servitude • forced criminality • the removal of organs. <p>Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance</p> <p>Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (thegrid.org.uk) 5.3.6 Safeguarding Children from Abroad (including Children who are Victims of Trafficking and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) (proceduresonline.com)</p>
The Prevent duty/ Preventing Radicalisation and Channel	<p>Children may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces • Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups • Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/ people; causes serious damage to

	<p>property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system.</p> <p>Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools and colleges wider safeguarding obligations.</p> <p>Prevent duty guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Prevent in Education - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (thegrid.org.uk) 5.3.9 Prevent Guidance (proceduresonline.com) Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
<p>Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges</p>	<p>Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online • through a group of children sexually assaulting • sexually harassing a single child or group of children. <p>Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.</p> <p>Keeping children safe in education 202 (publishing.service.gov.uk) [Title] (publishing.service.gov.uk) brooks traffic light tool - Search (bing.com)</p>
<p>Serious Violence</p>	<p>Indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased absence from school • change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups • significant decline in performance • signs of self-harm • significant change in wellbeing • signs of assault or unexplained injuries • unexplained gifts or new possessions. <p>Anything which could also indicate they have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.</p>

	<p><u>Advice to schools and colleges on gangs and youth violence - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> <u>Hertfordshire Serious Violence Strategy & Delivery Plan</u></p>
<p>Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) <i>So-called ‘honour’ based abuse (includes both Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)</i></p>	<p>FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.</p> <p>Whilst all staff should speak to the DSL (or a deputy) any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers they must report this to the Police.</p> <p><u>Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> <u>Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief – National FGM Centre Female genital mutilation, honour based violence and forced marriage - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (thegrid.org.uk)</u></p>
<p>Forced Marriage</p>	<p>Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England. A forced marriage is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties • and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage • threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. <p>A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example).</p> <p>Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.</p> <p><u>Apply for a forced marriage protection order: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> <u>Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage (proceduresonline.com)</u> <u>Forced marriage Childline</u></p>

APPENDIX 3: SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Safeguarding Policy

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This policy adopted	March 2024
Next review date	March 2026
Committee Responsible	Curriculum
Statutory	No

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Purpose of the Policy

Safeguarding is ‘everyone’s responsibility’. This policy sets out Watford Grammar School for Girls responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

The Safeguarding Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school.

In particular this policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Complaints procedure
- Data Protection
- Educational Visits
- Emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures
- E Safety
- Health and Safety
- Medicines and medical policy, including first aid
- Safer Recruitment
- SEND
- Staff code of conduct
- Whistle-blowing

This policy is available on the school website and is included in the staff handbook.

1.2. Terminology

Safeguarding is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023, p7-8) as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development,
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network⁴ through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking actions to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families’ lives. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, p8)

2. Principles and Aims

Our Principles:

- The welfare of children, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carrying out school activities
- All children will have equal rights to support and protection irrespective of their race, age, academic achievement, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and culture
- All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of children and report any concerns immediately

We aim:

- To provide all staff and Governors (employed, contracted and visiting) with the necessary information / training to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children
- To provide parents carers and children with information about the schools arrangements to keep children safe
- To ensure safe and consistent best practice across the school
- To demonstrate the school’s commitment with regard to safeguarding children

3. Framework

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

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. Includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry, whether or not the forced marriage takes place).
- Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children

Partnership Interagency Procedures Manual

http://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_manage_alleg.html

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006. Statutory guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, independent schools, academies and free schools, DfE (February 2015) www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006
- Education Act 2002
Section 157 and the Education Regulations 2003 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) EU Regulation from 25th May 2018. Legislation which will determine how people's personal data is processed and kept safe, and the legal rights individuals have in relation to their own data
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, Safer Recruitment Consortium (February 2022)
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, DfE (July 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2023)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Sexual Offences Act, HM Government (2003)
- Section 26, The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (PREVENT duty)
- Teachers' Standards 2021, DfE (2021.) These standards set the minimum requirements for teachers' practice and conduct. Teachers, including Headteachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, DfE (March 2015.) Non statutory advice which helps everyone who works with children to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74 ,Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Serious Violence Strategy 2018

4. Safeguarding Themes

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Annexes A and B, includes further information on the following safeguarding themes:

- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Child-on-child abuse
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- County lines
- Children and the court system

- Children missing from education
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- Mental health
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Preventing radicalisation
- The Prevent duty
- Channel
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school and colleges
- Serious violence
- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023) is statutory guidance and as such Watford Grammar School for Girls follows this guidance. All staff who work directly with children are required to read Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education annually, and sign to say they have done so.

In addition to the above safeguarding themes, additional information is provided in this section on school and Hertfordshire specific approaches to safeguarding theme

4.1 Abuse of Position of Trust

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to behave in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the behavior is consensual.

4.2 Access to buildings

The school will take all reasonable efforts to control access to the buildings and grounds of the school to prevent unauthorised access to children and ensure the personal safety of staff. The access control procedures for the buildings are: Pin code access to all external gates and doors.

Visitors on site are required to sign in and be escorted by a member of school staff throughout their time on site between 8:00 and 16:30. This includes for school sports fixtures and performances and where parents attend as spectators.

4.3 Anti-Bullying

Watford Grammar School for Girls recognises the right of our children and young people to develop with confidence in an environment that is safe and free from the emotional and physical distress that can be experienced as a result of bullying. It is the responsibility of Watford Grammar School for Girls to ensure that procedures are in place that will monitor and address bullying issues. The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.

4.4 Anti-Radicalisation and Extremism

The school works to provide an environment promoting tolerance and respect for others' views and beliefs and the values of democracy. The Prevent duty is implemented and staff are aware of the threats and risks linked to radicalisation. Behaviour or language suggesting extremism is challenged and addressed. Any concerns will be referred through the appropriate channels in accordance with the Child Protection policy.

The named member of staff with responsibility for Prevent is: Bal Randhawa, Director of Key Stage 5 and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.5 Attendance

In accordance with the School's Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. The school, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, takes action to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME) and off-rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

In the very rare cases that a part-time timetable is required for a student, we follow Hertfordshire County Council procedures for implementing part-time timetables. This includes a risk assessment considering the additional risks that can occur as a result of not being in school fulltime and a checklist overseen by the Headteacher. Part-time timetables are uploaded to the Hertfordshire County Council Part-Time Timetable portal.

For further details please refer to the Attendance Policy.

4.6 Child Protection

There is a detailed Child Protection Policy operating within the school. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the school website. It is the Governing Body's duty to ensure the policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies within the policy addressed immediately.

All Child Protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual. A copy of these procedures can be found on the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Children's Services telephone number **0300 1234043** (including out of hours)

4.7 Child Sexual Exploitation

Senior leadership and governors in the school are committed to dealing with the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation, and will co-operate fully with outside agencies including the police and health and social care to enable potential situations of Child Sexual Exploitation to be identified rapidly. Effective partnership working will also enable a swift response to follow, in line with Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, so that clearly defined interventions can be put in place without delay. Interventions will include a robust multi-agency approach, based on an infrastructure of support around the young person and family. Support will be offered to the young person's peer group and their families, where appropriate.

The lead governor for CSE is: **James Hughes**

The lead CSE teacher is: **Sam Moore** the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The school, together with Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) is working to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation and help prevent it happening to young people in Hertfordshire. Concerns will be reported to: Children's Services (including out of hours) on 0300 123 4043, Herts Constabulary non-emergency **Tel:101**

Procedures for what to do is a young person is identified as at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation are found in Appendix 1.

If there is a fear a child is in immediate danger, call 999

4.8 Complaints

The school has a Complaints Policy available to parents, pupils and staff who wish to report concerns. This can be found on the school website. All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation or low level concern against a member of staff, supply teacher, contractor or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific procedures for Managing Allegations and Low Level Concerns Against Staff within the Child Protection Policy

4.9 Confidentiality

All staff will understand that safeguarding issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being

released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. The DSL will normally obtain consent from the child/parent to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so (e.g. to help to protect a child), the DSL may share information without consent and will record the reason for this. Safeguarding records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the GDPR, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. The School will retain this information on the pupil file and transfer to the next school/archive the information in line with The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, The Information and Records Management Society and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023.). The school will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil. Please see Hertfordshire's Pupil Safeguarding Records Guidance at http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas for further information.

4.10 Curriculum

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through PACE and Forum lessons and through all aspects of school life.

The school is committed to ensuring that children are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All children are taught that we have senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection and they are made aware of whom these persons are. We inform children of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Subjects such as Personal, Social and Health Education discuss relevant safeguarding issues with the children. Please see the Online Safety section of this policy for further details on this topic.

4.11 Digital images

The use of digital images in schools is a complex area. The school has a clear and sufficiently detailed policy which covers the taking and use of digital images and video of children and takes steps to ensure that it is understood and enforced.

Staff and children sign ICT Acceptable Use Agreements. For staff this includes a section on the use of digital images and clarification about the position regarding the use of personal mobile phones/cameras for taking pictures. Where volunteers are supporting school staff, they should abide by the same rules as school staff as far as is reasonable.

4.12 Health and Safety

The Health & Safety Policy and Educational Visits Policy demonstrate the consideration we give to minimising any risk to children when on the school premises and when undertaking

activities out of school under the supervision of our staff. At all times there must be appropriate staffing levels and when off-site, appropriate and agreed pupil/adult ratios are maintained. The lead adult always assesses visits/trips as to the level of risk and all trips are finally authorised by the Educational Visits Coordinator or Headteacher.

Our school has lone working risk assessments in place and procedures for staff where there is a security risk due to the need to work alone; staff at high risk will receive appropriate training.

A copy of the Health and Safety Policy and Educational Visits Policy are available on the school website.

4.13 Inclusion and Diversity

Some children may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

Our school ethos promotes and accepts the differences between all children and adults. In practice this is about ensuring inclusion of individuals and treating them fairly and equally, no matter the diversity of their race, sex, gender reassignment, age, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity or sexual orientation.

Promoting equality and diversity in education is essential for both teachers and children. The aim is to create a school environment where all children can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique and not 'different' in a negative way.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023), to ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will also give special consideration to additionally vulnerable groups (as outlined in our Child Protection Policy), for example children with disabilities or special educational needs. Special consideration is also given in the provision of safeguarding information and resources in accessible formats for children and adults with communication needs.

4.14 Managing Low Levels Concerns and Allegations made against and Concerns raised in relation to Staff, Supply Teachers, Contractors and Volunteers

In line with Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, allegations and concerns are categorised as either:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
2. Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold, also known as 'low level concerns'

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold are those where it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

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

Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold, also known as “low level concerns”

A ‘low level’ concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis or behind a closed door; or
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

If any member of staff has a concern about staff, volunteer, supply teacher or contractor behaviour, either that may meet the allegations threshold or a low level concern, this must be reported to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will ensure that concerns are recorded and dealt with appropriately in line with KCSIE Part 4 (2023.) If the allegation or concern relates to the Headteacher, this must be reported to the Chair of Governors or Deputy Chair of Governors.

The full procedure for dealing with allegations against staff are covered in the Child Protection Policy.

4.15 Online Safety

We have an E-safety policy which can be found on the school website.

Our policy includes how we teach children to stay safe when using the internet in and out of school- including the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying. Cyber-bullying by children, via texts, emails and social media, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

The School will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring standards are in place in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) to ensure that children are safe from all types of inappropriate and unacceptable materials, including terrorist and extremist material.

The School has in place appropriate monitoring software that identifies potentially harmful content from the key-strokes on devices on the school network or accessed through the school wi-fi. This includes alerts to the school where content is above a threshold level as identified by the providing company. When alerted to issues of concern, the DSL Team will take such action to investigate and ensure the safety of pupils as is proportionate to the concern raised. This will take place on the day when the concern is raised wherever possible.

4.16 Partnership with Other Services

Our school recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies that are partners of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

4.17 Partnership with Parents

Watford Grammar School for Girls is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. The School will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. We encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with Sam Moore (*Designated Safeguarding Lead; DSL*) B Dodhia, Katie Holes, Bal Randhawa (*Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads; DSLs*) or Jacqui Paddick (*Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.*)

4.20 Safer Recruitment and Selection

Our recruitment process selects, screens, trains and supervises staff and volunteers so that unsuitable people can be deterred and rejected from working with children.

A copy of the School's Safer Recruitment Policy is available on the school website.

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

Our school also adheres to the guidance issued by The Department for Education in 2015 regarding persons who are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006.

4.21 Safer Working Practice

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

The Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2021) are augmented by standards of personal and professional conduct e.g. ethics and behaviour, in and out of school. Teachers are expected to 'uphold public trust in the profession by showing tolerance and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values and ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability'.

All staff will be provided with a copy of our school's Staff Code of Conduct and handbook at induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

The link below will direct you to the current government approved guidance on safer working practice which we share with staff:

https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/_files/ugd/f576a8_0d079cbe69ea458e9e99fe462e447084.pdf

4.22 Site Security

The security measures put into place at Watford Girls balance the need to remain a welcoming environment whilst ensuring the safety of all our children and staff. A security risk assessment will be completed and reviewed annually (or earlier if deemed necessary).

4.23 Visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel

The control of visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel is a fundamental part of our site security policy for the safeguarding of both people and property.

Where the Governing Body transfers control or otherwise allows the use of school premises to external bodies (such as sports clubs) or service providers during or out of school hours, we

will ensure that these bodies or providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023) and in After-school clubs, community activities – safeguarding guidance for providers (DfE, 2023):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6509558022a783000d43e81f/After-school_clubs__community_activities_and_tuition_safeguarding_guidance_for_providers.pdf, and that there are arrangements in place to co-ordinate with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies or providers.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office InvEntry system and to display a visitors lanyard whilst on school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance and if they do not have a visitors lanyard must be returned immediately to Reception. The department who arrange for a visitor to attend must collect them from reception and return them to reception at the end of their visit. The visitor must be accompanied throughout their visit.

Visiting teams and groups from other schools, along with any spectators (e.g. sports teams, drama groups etc) will be required to sign in during the times when students are normally on site: 8:00am-4:30pm. They should then be collected from reception by the department who have arranged the visit or fixture and returned to reception once the visit has concluded.

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

4.24 Whistle blowing

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures are in place to enable concerns to be raised with the school's senior leadership team.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer/through the whistleblowing procedure or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- Children's Services 0300 123 4043
- NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk



APPENDIX 1: What To Do If A Young Person Is Identified As At-Risk Of Child Sexual Exploitation

Where a risk or concern is identified of Child Sexual Exploitation, the DSL Team will follow the guidance in 'Child Sexual Exploitation' (DfE, 2017):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f8e3640f0b62305b87dbc/CSE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf

APPENDIX 2: Steps to take in the Event of a disclosure of Forced Marriage

Where a risk or concern of Forced Marriage is identified, the DSL Team will follow the guidance in Section 5.3.1 (Forced Marriage) of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Manual

https://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_forced_marriage.html