Child Protection Framework Policy for Schools

Revised September 2026

Brookmead School

This policy was adopted in Autumn 2026

The policy is to be reviewed in Autumn term 2027

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1. Contacts

Headteacher	Esther Taylor 01296 668543 safeguarding@brookmead.net
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Esther Taylor
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Aysha Clarke Liz Singer Kim Brooks Deborah Baker Claire Price 01296 668543
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Hilary Rossington
Chair of Governors	Gavin Sandmann
Designated Teacher for Children Looked After (DT for CLA)	Esther Taylor - Headteacher
Mental Health Lead	Kim Brooks / Liz Singer
Prevent Lead	Esther Taylor

Contacts in The Local Authority

Education Safeguarding Advisory Service ESAS offers support to education providers to assist them to deliver effectively on all aspects of their safeguarding responsibilities.	01296 387981 Secure-esasduty@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
First Response Team (aka MASH) (including Early Help, Channel) The First Response Team process all new referrals to social care, including children with disabilities. Referrals are assessed by the team to check the seriousness and urgency of the concerns and whether Section 17 and/or Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 apply. The First Response Team will ensure that the referral reaches the appropriate team for assistance in a quick and efficient manner.	01296 383962 Out of hours 0800 999 7677 Secure-cypfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) The Buckinghamshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for overseeing the management of all allegations against people in a position of trust who work with children in Buckinghamshire on either a paid or voluntary basis	01296 382070 Secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Bucks Family Information Service	01296 383293

Information for families on a range of issues including childcare, finances, parenting and education	
Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) Procedures, policies and practice guidelines	

Schools Web School bulletin, Safeguarding links, A-Z guide to information and services	
Thames Valley Police	101 (999 in case of emergency)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and other policies you feel it would be useful to refer to:

Anti-bullying
Attendance
Behaviour
Children Looked After
Compliments and Complaints
Equalities
GDPR
Lettings
SEN/Inclusion
Health & Safety (including managing children with medical needs) & First Aid
Online Safety (including use of mobile/electronic devices)
Staff Code of Conduct – Staff Handbook
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School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Framework

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
Keeping Children Safe in Education.

1. Ethos statement

We recognise the moral and statutory responsibility placed on all staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment in which children can learn, underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, are able to raise concerns and believe they are being listened to, and that appropriate action will be taken to keep them safe.

2. Introduction

The governing body recognises the need to ensure that it complies with its duties under legislation and this policy has regard to statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), Working Together to Safeguard Children and locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board.

This policy will be reviewed annually, as a minimum, and will be made available publicly via the school website or on request.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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 the 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

This policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers, supply staff and contractors and the wider school community. It forms part of the child protection and safeguarding arrangements for our school and is one of a suite of policies and procedures which encompass the safeguarding responsibilities of the schoo*l*. In particular, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct (otherwise known as Staff Handbook) /Online Safety Policy (including Acceptable Use of ICT), Safer Recruitment Policy, Online Safety Policy, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy, school's guidance on low-level concerns[1], Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and procedures, and Part Five of KCSiE, copies of which will be provided to all staff on induction.

The aims of this policy are to:

1

Provide staff with a framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people, and ensure that all staff understand and meet their statutory responsibilities;
Ensure consistent good practice across the school.

The governing body expects that all staff will have read and understand this child protection and safeguarding policy and their responsibility to implement it. Staff working in school **must**, as a minimum, have read and understand Part One of KCSiE and Part Five: Child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence. Governors/the proprietor will ensure that they and senior leaders have read and understand Parts One and Two of KCSiE.

The governing body will ensure that arrangements are in place for all staff members to receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. The governing body will ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online) at induction which is regularly updated.

Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Headteacher, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and named safeguarding governor.

3. Statutory framework

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (as amended) in the case of maintained schools and pupil referral units[2], Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 (as amended) and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 for independent schools (including academies and free schools), the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015, and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended) for post 16 education providers, place a statutory duty on governing bodies and proprietors to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are pupils of the school which must have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State.

In accordance with statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, local safeguarding arrangements must be established for every local authority area by the three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Police and Integrated Care Boards). All three partners have equal and joint duty for a range of roles and statutory functions including developing local safeguarding policy and procedures and scrutinising local arrangements. In Buckinghamshire, all schools have been named by the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) as relevant agencies, this means staff in schools must work in accordance with the multi-agency procedures developed by the BSCP which can be found on their website at: Home - Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

4. Key roles and responsibilities

Governing body

[2] Section 175, Education Act 2002 – for management committees of pupil referral units, this is by virtue of regulation 3 and paragraph 19A of Schedule 1 to the Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Application of Enactments) (England) Regulations 2007

The governing body has a strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. The governing body has a legal responsibility to make sure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place, which have regard to statutory guidance, in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare. The governing body will also ensure that the policy is made available to parents and carers by publishing this on the school website or in writing if requested.

The governing body will ensure they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. This means involving everyone in the school and ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development, and that all systems, processes and policies are transparent, clear and easy to understand and operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

The governing body will ensure that where there is a safeguarding concern school leaders will make sure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems will be in place that are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report any form of abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.

The governing body will ensure that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children and that the school's safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place.

The governing body will ensure that, as a minimum, the following policies are in place to enable appropriate action to be taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people as appropriate:

child-on-child abuse
Online safety,
behaviour, including measures to prevent bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
special educational needs and disability
supporting pupils in school with medical conditions
staff code of conduct/behaviour policy (called Staff Handbook at Brookmead, which should also include the procedures that will be followed to address low-level concerns and allegations made against staff, and acceptable use of IT, including the use of mobile devices and communications, including the use of social media.)
procedure for responding to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.
safer recruitment

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that staff and volunteers are properly vetted to make sure they are safe to work with the pupils who attend our school and that the school has procedures for appropriately managing safeguarding allegations made against, or low level concerns involving, members of staff (including the headteacher, supply teachers, contractors, and volunteer helpers).

The governing body will ensure that there is a named governor for safeguarding, a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a senior member of the leadership team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, and a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after, or previously looked after, and will ensure that these people have the appropriate training.

The governing body will have regard to their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty).[3]

The governing body will inform Buckinghamshire Council and the BSCP annually about the discharge of their safeguarding duties by completing the safeguarding self-assessment audit.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety including and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place). This will be made explicit in the role-holder's job description. (The broad areas of responsibility and activities related to the role of the DSL are set out in Annex C of KCSiE).

The DSL will have the appropriate status, authority, time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the duties of the post effectively.

The DSL and any Deputy DSLs will provide advice and support to staff in school and will liaise with the local authority and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

During term time, the DSL and/or an alternate should always be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL will make arrangements for adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term time activities.

The DSL will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills to carry out the role and is expected to update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals to allow them to keep up with developments relevant to their role.

The DSL (who at Brookmead is the Headteacher) will liaise with all other school DSLs to inform them of issues and in particular ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.[4]

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[3] Set out in paragraphs 85-93 of KCSiE

[4] See LA explanatory note on the requirements around children having an appropriate adult Schools-StopSearch-v2.3.pdf (squarespace.com)

Headteacher
The headteacher will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and that sufficient resources, time and training are provided to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities and contribute effectively to a whole school approach to safeguarding.

The headteacher will be responsible for ensuring a culture of safety and ongoing vigilance that fosters the belief that 'it could happen here'.

All staff
All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All staff must read and ensure they understand at least Part One and Part Five of KCSiE.

All staff must ensure they are familiar with the systems within school which support safeguarding, including the child protection and safeguarding policy, the code of conduct/ staff behaviour policy, the behaviour policy, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, and the role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any deputies). These will be explained to all staff on induction.

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff should maintain a belief that 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and if staff have any concerns about a child's welfare they must act on them immediately.

All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

All staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused, neglected or exploited, and/or is otherwise at risk of involvement in criminal activity, such as knife crime, or involved in county lines drug dealing.

All staff should be aware of the process for community-based Family Help assessments:

• the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to

Family Help support and services, provided at:

- Targeted early help level (under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004), and
- Statutory services delivered under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need, including how this applies for disabled children)

the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm)

Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (care and supervision orders), and

Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (duty to accommodate a child)

and clear procedures and processes for cases relating to:

- the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children
- children managed within the youth secure estate
- disabled children

All staff should be aware of, and understand their role within the Early Help services, at school/college and local authority level Early Help - Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. This includes providing support as soon as a problem emerges, via universal services and community-based early help. The DSL will when necessary, refer via the MASH for the targeted early help level of Family Help. The DSL will share information with other professionals in order to support early identification and assessment, focussing on providing interventions to avoid escalation of worries and needs (see Section 12: Information Sharing). In some cases, staff may be asked to act as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.

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

is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
has special educational needs (SEN) (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
has a mental health need
is a young carer
is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage.
is a privately fostered child

Knowing what to look out for is vital to the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL (or deputy). If in exceptional circumstances the DSL (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the DSL as soon as is practically possible. Details of the school's safeguarding team are on the front this policy.

Professional Curiosity, Respectful Challenge and Escalation

All staff and volunteers must maintain professional curiosity when working with children, families and other professionals, seeking to understand the lived experience of the child and not accepting information at face value where safeguarding concerns may exist. Staff are expected to ask questions, explore inconsistencies, consider alternative explanations, and remain alert to signs of harm, neglect, exploitation or disguised compliance. Where there are differences of professional opinion, concerns about the quality of decision-making, or a belief that a child is not receiving an appropriate safeguarding response, staff must provide respectful professional challenge and seek timely resolution in the best interests of the child. If concerns remain unresolved, staff must follow the school's safeguarding escalation procedures and relevant multi-agency dispute resolution processes. A culture of constructive challenge, professional accountability and evidence-informed decision-making is essential to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This approach reflects the expectations set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*, which emphasises professional curiosity, mutual challenge and effective escalation as key features of strong safeguarding practice.

5. Induction & Training

The governing body will ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety, which amongst other things includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable role and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the BCSP. In addition, all staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and up to date knowledge of emerging and evolving safeguarding issues to safeguard children effectively.

All new staff members will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. This will include training on the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, online safety, the code of conduct/staff behaviour policy (Staff Handbook), low-level concerns guidance, the behaviour policy, the safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, and the role of the designated safeguarding lead. Copies of the school's policies, procedures and Part One of KCSiE will be provided to new staff at induction.

The governing body will ensure that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.

The Headteacher will ensure that an accurate record of safeguarding training undertaken by all staff is maintained and updated regularly.

In considering safeguarding training arrangements the governing body will also have regard to the Teachers' Standards which set out the expectation that all teachers manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and require teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

6. Recognising concerns - signs and indicators of abuse.

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Staff should be aware that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of school, inside and outside of home and online. Staff should exercise **professional curiosity** and know what to look for as this is vital for the early identification of abuse or neglect.

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

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap. Risks to children include sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and recognise that children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL.

Indicators of abuse and neglect

Abuse is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

The following indicators listed under the categories of abuse are not an exhaustive list:

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

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

Sexual abuse: 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 physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in

education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

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

(Source Keeping Children Safe in Education)

7. Specific safeguarding issues

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and those safeguarding issues often overlap.

Behaviours linked to issues such as of drug taking and/or alcohol abuse, unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines) and consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/ or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes. Other safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include:

Child-on-child abuse
All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand, that even if there no reports in school it does not mean it's not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such, it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to the DSL (or deputy) and record these using the school/college's safeguarding system. SEE APPENDIX AT END OF THIS POLICY

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)

Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
Physical abuse 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)
Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
Consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes. Taking and sharing nude photographs (including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes) of those aged under 18 is a criminal offence. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (updated March 2024) - GOV.UK
Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

All staff should be clear about the school's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. *[cross reference or link to school policy]* *1

Early help

In line with managing internally, the school or college may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from early help.

Community-based Early Help assessment.

If children do not require the support of statutory children's services, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will liaise with other agencies as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in carrying out an assessment of need. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for Family Help can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse. Alternatively, qualified lead practitioners (i.e. not a social worker) who may lead assessments before statutory intervention can continue to lead work with families up to and including Section 17.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an 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. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. CCE and CSE 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. This may constitute modern slavery, and further information is available in the Modern Slavery statutory guidance. In accordance with this guidance, a relevant child protection and modern slavery referral should be completed where a potential victim of CCE or CSE is identified.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. Children who are criminally exploited should have their vulnerabilities recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and should be treated as victims. It is not possible for a child to give informed consent to engage in criminal or other exploitative activity, and they cannot give consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is 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”. Links to the Home Office’s County Lines advice is provided within the serious violence information on page 166. also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child’s immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. Some children do not realise they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine romantic

relationship. As with CCE, victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take whilst under coercion. This remains a significant concern, as professionals continue to encounter cases where children are manipulated, groomed, and exploited without fully understanding the abuse they are experiencing.

https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/preventing-child-sexual-exploitation

Domestic Abuse

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

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Whilst all staff should speak to the DSL (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers[5]. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

Mental Health

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise.
These could include:

- significant changes in behaviour
- ongoing difficulty sleeping
- withdrawing from social situations
- not wanting to do things they usually like, and
- physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

[5] Under section 5B(11) (a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, 'teacher' means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England)

Not every child who exhibits these behaviours is suicidal or has a mental health concern. However, education staff are well placed to identify these and other potential warning signs. In doing so they can identify children who may be struggling with their mental health and contemplating suicide and offer support and vital early intervention. If staff have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they should follow their child protection policy and speak to their designated safeguarding lead or deputy. If staff feel that a child is in danger, they should call 999 or take them to A&E immediately. If a child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

At Brookmead, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing through a nurturing, inclusive and relationship-based approach. Our Behaviour Policy recognises that behaviour is a form of communication, and we seek to understand and support the needs underlying children's behaviours. Nurture principles are embedded throughout the school, with dedicated nurture areas in every year group, a specialist nurture room, therapeutic support where appropriate, and targeted nurture group interventions for children requiring additional support. We also provide support for specific groups, including Young Carers, and offer Pets as Therapy sessions to promote emotional wellbeing, confidence and self-regulation. The Zones of Regulation framework is used across the school to help children recognise, understand and manage their emotions effectively.

As an OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) school, we recognise the significant positive impact that high-quality outdoor play has on children's physical health, emotional wellbeing and social development. Through rich play opportunities, children develop resilience, confidence, problem-solving skills and positive relationships, helping to create positive childhood experiences and support good mental health. Our qualified Nurture Lead works closely with staff, families and external agencies to ensure children receive appropriate support, and vulnerable pupils are provided with a trusted key adult who undertakes regular check-ins to promote belonging, emotional safety and positive outcomes. The school is committed to ensuring that every child feels valued, understood and supported to thrive both emotionally and academically.

Serious violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation. Staff should report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), who will assess the risk and take appropriate action. Where relevant this will include any action needed to de-escalate peer conflict. Schools play a key role in protecting children from violence, safeguarding victims, as well as those who may be at risk of, or are involved in violence (who may also be victims themselves). Staff should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of or involved in serious violence. These risks are higher for children with disrupted education (e.g. suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in alternative provision) or a history of offending. Schools should also try to be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example immediately after school). Early, evidence-based support for those considered at risk, as well as in 'teachable moments' when issues emerge is vital. This includes access to trusted

adults, social and emotional skill support, and, where available, targeted interventions such as mentoring or therapeutic support.

Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism (The Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty protects children, young people and adults from the risk of radicalisation — a process where a person becomes vulnerable to extremist influences or drawn into supporting terrorist ideologies. The school recognises its statutory responsibilities under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and is fully committed to fulfilling the Prevent Duty as part of its wider safeguarding responsibilities. The school will take proportionate and age-appropriate steps to identify, assess and respond to concerns that a pupil may be vulnerable to extremist ideologies or influences. Staff are expected to remain vigilant to indicators of radicalisation, promote fundamental British values, encourage critical thinking, and create an inclusive environment in which respectful debate can take place and extremist narratives are challenged. All staff will receive appropriate Prevent training to enable them to recognise potential signs of radicalisation and understand referral pathways. Where concerns arise, these will be acted upon in accordance with safeguarding procedures, including consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and, where appropriate, referral to external agencies, including Channel. The school will work in partnership with families, local authorities, safeguarding partners, police and other relevant agencies to ensure that children who may be susceptible to radicalisation receive timely support and protection, recognising that vulnerability to extremist influence should be addressed through the same child-centred safeguarding principles that apply to all forms of harm.

8. Children potentially at greater risk of harm

The governing body recognises that whilst all children should be protected there are some groups of children who are potentially at greater risk of harm and, in some cases, these children may find it difficult to communicate what is happening to them.

Alternative Provision

Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

The cohort of pupils in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, it is important that governing bodies and proprietors of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to. Schools should obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment (i.e. those checks that schools would otherwise perform on their own staff). This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

The management committee/proprietor will have regard to the following statutory guidance:

Alternative provision – DfE Statutory Guidance, and
Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school – DfE Statutory Guidance

Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

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

The governing body expects that the Local Authority will share the fact a child has a social worker, and the DSL will hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both LAs and school to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or to a child missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services.

Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils, and children missing education (CME) supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where a child is already known to local authority children's social care and needs a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

> The department's statutory guidance on school attendance Working together to improve school attendance https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance which sets out how schools must work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
> Information regarding schools' duties for CME, which can be found in the department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education This includes information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, along with how schools should be

supporting local authorities with joint reasonable enquiries to help identify and support children missing in education.
Further information for colleges providing education for a child of compulsory school age can be found in: Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/full-time-enrolment-of-14-to-16-year-olds-in-further-education-and-sixth-form-colleges
General information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's Missing Children and Adults Strategy. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children-and-adults-strategy

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

It is important that the school's procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education are followed, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to LA children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where absence from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. As such, all staff should be aware of the school's unauthorised absence procedures and children who are absent from education procedures [*cross-reference or include link to school procedures*]. This includes informing the LA if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the LA, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.
Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being absent, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

Further information and support includes:

schools' duties regarding children who are absent from education, including information schools must provide to the LA when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points can be found in the DfE's statutory guidance: Children who are absent from education.
General information and advice for schools can be found in the Government's Missing Children and Adults Strategy.
Further information for colleges providing education for a child of compulsory school age can be found in: Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges
Statutory guidance for schools concerning children who are absent from education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance
Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

Alternative Provision (AP)

The school recognises that pupils placed in Alternative Provision (AP) remain on the school roll and that the governing body and Headteacher retain overall responsibility for the pupil's education, welfare and safeguarding. In accordance with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and relevant Department for Education guidance, the school will ensure that any AP placement is suitable, safe, regularly reviewed and able to meet the pupil's educational, attendance, welfare and safeguarding needs. Prior to commissioning a placement, the school will undertake due diligence to assure itself that the provider has effective safeguarding policies, safer recruitment procedures, health and safety arrangements, staff training and robust systems for reporting concerns. The school will maintain active oversight of all pupils attending AP through regular review meetings, ongoing communication with providers, attendance monitoring, progress tracking and welfare checks. Daily or weekly attendance information will be obtained and scrutinised, and AP pupils will be considered within safeguarding and vulnerable pupil discussions where appropriate. Any concerns regarding attendance, missing education, exploitation, mental health, behaviour, welfare or the suitability of the placement will be acted upon promptly through the school's safeguarding procedures. The school will routinely evaluate the effectiveness of AP placements, challenge any concerns regarding provision quality or safeguarding practice, and work with parents, carers, local authorities and partner agencies to ensure that placements continue to meet the needs of the child and achieve positive outcomes.

Attendance as a Safeguarding Priority

The school recognises that attendance is a key safeguarding indicator and that frequent, prolonged or unexplained absence may be a sign of abuse, neglect, exploitation, poor mental health, family difficulties or other welfare concerns. Attendance is therefore monitored as an integral part of the school's safeguarding arrangements rather than solely

as an educational measure. Attendance data is reviewed routinely by school leaders, attendance staff and safeguarding personnel to identify emerging concerns, patterns and trends. Particular attention is given to pupils who are persistently absent (attendance below 90%) and severely absent (attendance below 50%), as these thresholds may indicate increased vulnerability and a need for additional support or intervention. Attendance information is considered alongside safeguarding records, behavioural concerns, welfare information and other indicators of vulnerability to ensure that risks are identified at the earliest opportunity. The school will investigate unexplained absence, repeated patterns of absence, children missing education, part-time or reduced timetables and any failure to return to school following a period of absence. Attendance concerns may result in pastoral support, attendance action plans, home visits, early help assessments, multi-agency working or safeguarding referrals where appropriate. Children with persistent or severe absence will be subject to enhanced monitoring and regular review to ensure barriers to attendance are understood and addressed. The school will work proactively with parents, carers, the local authority and partner agencies to secure improved attendance while maintaining a child-centred approach. Where attendance concerns suggest that a child may be suffering or at risk of harm, safeguarding procedures will take precedence and appropriate referrals will be made without delay.

Elective home education (EHE)

Many home educated children have a positive learning experience. We would expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not the case for all. Elective home education can mean that some children are not in receipt of suitable education and are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs. In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/made a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register. Where a parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove a child from school to educate them at home, schools and local authorities should, where appropriate and proportionate, seek opportunities to discuss the decision with parents/carers before arrangements are finalised. The aim is to ensure parents/carers are aware of the implications of elective home education and have considered what is in the best interests of their child. This may be particularly important where a child has special educational needs or disabilities, has a social worker, or is otherwise vulnerable. DfE guidance for local authorities on Elective Home Education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education sets out the role and responsibilities of local authorities and their powers to engage with parents. Although this is primarily aimed at local authorities, schools should also be familiar with this guidance.

Children requiring mental health support

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.

The governing body will ensure there is a clear system and process in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate, and a clear referral and accountability system. *[school systems and processes for identification and routes to escalation should be included in the Procedures section of your CP policy].*

Staff can access further advice in a DfE guidance documents Preventing and tackling bullying and mental health and behaviour in schools which set out how staff can help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing, which is tailored to the needs of pupils.

The school's senior mental health lead will be a member of, or be supported by, the senior leadership team. The SENDCo and the Nurture and Safety Lead lead mental health across the school.

Looked after children and previously looked after children.

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. The governing body will ensure staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe.

The governing body will ensure there are arrangements in place so that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.

Appropriate staff will also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child. The role of the virtual head has been extended to include responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. The governing body recognise that when dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

For children who are care leavers, the DSL should have details of the LA Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver and liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern.

Children with SEN and disabilities, or health issues can face additional safeguarding challenges, both online and offline.

Staff should avoid making assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury may relate to the child's disability or medical condition without further exploration.

Staff should also be aware that these children may be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. Similarly, staff should be aware of the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying without outwardly showing signs or being able to communicate how they are feeling.

Staff also need to be mindful of children's cognitive understanding, for example, whether they are able to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and the consequences of repeating the content/behaviours in school.

As such, any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL and SENCO.

Further information can be found in the DfE's:
SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, and from specialist organisations such as:

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. All local authorities have such a service: Find your local IAS service (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

- Mencap - Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and

information for people who work with children and young people

- NSPCC - Safeguarding children with special educational needs and

disabilities (SEND) and NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people

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

The governing body acknowledge A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

9. Opportunities to teach safeguarding

The governing body will ensure that children and young people are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The governing body recognise that effective education should be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with SEND.

Relevant topics will be included within Relationships Education *(primary schools)* and Relationships and Sex Education (also known as Sex and Relationship Education) *(secondary schools)* and through Health Education *(all pupils in state funded schools)*, having regard to statutory guidance.

Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares children and young people for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/ harassment. *4

*4 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance

The governing body expect that the school's values and standards should be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These will be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetables lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. This whole-school approach will be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate, and will tackle (in age-appropriate stages) issues such as:

Healthy and respectful relationships
Boundaries and consent
Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
Body confidence and self-esteem
How to recognise and 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, and
What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.

The school will ensure that there are appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to safeguard children and young people from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

10. Online safety and filtering and monitoring

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation and technology often provides the platform that facilitates such harm.

The governing body has had due regard to the additional information and support set out in KCSiE and ensures that the school has a whole school approach to online safety and has a clear policy on use of communications technology in school. Online safety will be a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing policies and procedures. This will

include considering how online safety is reflected in all relevant policies and whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role of the DSL and any parental engagement.

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The school adopts a whole school approach to online safety to protect and educate pupils and staff in their use of technology, and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns as appropriate.

Online safety issues can be categorised into four areas of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, or radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
Contact: being exposed to harmful online interaction with other users, for example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;
Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and
Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams. If staff feel that either they or pupils are at risk this should be reported to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (https://apwg.org/).

The governing body will ensure that an annual review is undertaken of the school's approach to online safety including the school's filtering and monitoring provision, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks pupils face online. Schools can use the department's 'plan technology for your school service to self-assess against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them

The review should include a member of the senior leadership team, the DSL, the IT service provider and a governor. The school should ensure they have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard their systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. Guidance on cyber security including considerations can be found at Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK Brookmead works with Bucks IT to conduct monitoring filtering through the use of Smoothwall.In addition, schools and colleges should consider taking appropriate action to meet the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges which were developed to help them improve their resilience against cyber-attacks.
Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

The school's online safety policy outlines the appropriate filtering and monitoring which take places on school devices and school networks. It also outlines the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation filtering and monitoring.

The school recognises that generative AI tools, such as Microsoft Copilot and ChatGPT, may support teaching, learning and administrative activities when used appropriately. Any use of AI must be safe, ethical, lawful and consistent with the school's safeguarding, data protection, acceptable use and assessment policies. Staff and pupils must not enter personal, confidential or sensitive information into AI tools and should critically evaluate AI-generated content, as it may be inaccurate, biased or incomplete. AI should be used to support, rather than replace, professional judgement, learning, creativity and independent thinking. The school will promote responsible AI use and ensure that any use of AI complies with Department for Education guidance and relevant statutory requirements. *5

School staff can access resources, information and support as set out in Annex B of KCSiE.

From 1st September Government guidance prohibits the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK Smart phones are banned at Brookmead for all children. Children in year 6 may bring in brick phones but must hand them in to a member of staff at the start of the school day and collect them when they leave school. See Brookmead Online Safety Policy.

The school recognises that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet through mobile phone networks, including 3G, 4G and 5G, outside of school. This means that some online risks may arise beyond the school's filtering and monitoring systems.
This access can enable children to experience or perpetrate harmful behaviours, including online bullying, sexual harassment, coercive or controlling behaviours, the consensual and non-consensual sharing of indecent images, and the accessing or sharing of pornography or other harmful content, often through social media platforms and group messaging services.
Brookmead School seeks to educate pupils about these risks through its curriculum, safeguarding procedures and pastoral support systems, enabling them to make safe and informed choices when using technology both in and beyond school

*5 artificial-intelligence-in-education

11. Procedures

In the event of a child disclosing abuse staff must:
Refer to the following guidance:
"What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused"
Stat guidance template (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Listen to the child, allowing the child to tell you what has happened in their own way and at their own pace. Staff must not interrupt a child who is freely recalling significant events. Remain calm. Be reassuring and supportive, endeavouring not to respond emotionally.

Do not ask leading questions. Staff are reminded to ask questions only when seeking clarification about something the child may have said or to gain sufficient information to

know that this is a safeguarding concern. Staff are trained to use TED; Tell, Explain, Describe.

Make an accurate record of what they have seen/heard using the school's record keeping processes, recording; times, dates or locations mentioned, using as many words and expressions used by the child, as possible. THIS MUST BE PUT ON TO CPOMS AND FLAGGED AS A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN. Staff must not substitute anatomically correct names for body part names used by the child.

Reassure the child that they did the right thing in telling someone.
Staff must explain to the child what will happen next and the need for the information to be shared with the DSL.
In the unlikely event the DSL and the deputy DSL are not available, staff are aware they must share their concerns with the most senior member of staff.

If there is immediate risk of harm to a child, staff will NOT DELAY and will ring 999.

The child will be monitored/accompanied at all times following a disclosure, until a plan is agreed as to how best they can be safeguarded.

Reporting systems for children:

At Brookmead School children are made to feel safe and secure to share any concerns that they may have and know the systems in place for making any such report.

Staff regularly talk about 'trusted adults' and the 'helping hand' which ensures children can name adults they trust to talk to. Children know that all they need to do is ask to speak with a trusted adult.

Following a report of concerns the DSL must:
Decide whether there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm, in which case a referral must be made to First Response and the police if it is appropriate, referring to the guidance, When To Call The Police:
NPCC Guidance for schools and colleges
The rationale for this decision should be recorded by the DSL.
School must try to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with parents/carers and, where possible, obtain informed consent before making a referral to First Response. However, in accordance with DfE guidance, this should only be done when it will not place the child at increased risk or could impact a police investigation. Where there are doubts or reservations about involving the child's family, the DSL should clarify with First Response or the police whether the parents/carers should be told about the referral and, if so, when and by whom. This is important in cases where the police may need to conduct a criminal investigation. The child's views must also be taken into account.
If there are grounds to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the DSL (or Deputy) must contact First Response by telephone immediately, in first instance and then complete the Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF).

If the child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the police and/or ambulance must be called, via 999. The DSL must notify First Response of the occurrence, what action has been taken and to take advice about informing parents/carers.

What to do if you are concerned.
If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, staff must:

Stay calm and listen carefully
Accept what is being said
Allow the child/young person to talk freely – do not interrupt or put words in the child/ young person's mouth
Only ask questions when necessary to clarify, do not investigate or ask leading questions, if required use TED questions (Tell Explain Describe)
Reassure the child, but don't make promises which it might not be possible to keep
Do not promise confidentiality
Emphasise that it was the right thing to tell someone
Reassure them that what has happened is not their fault
Do not criticise the perpetrator
Explain what must be done next and who has to be told
Make a written/online record, which should be signed and include the time, date and your position in school
Do not include your opinion without stating it is your opinion
Pass the information to the DSL or deputy DSL without delay
Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the DSL as dealing with a disclosure can be distressing.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, staff must immediately verbally report the concern to a DSL. They will also log this on CPOMS as a safeguarding concern. The DSL will assess the concern and, taking into account any other safeguarding information known about the child/young person, consider whether it suggests that the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm, has been reached or may be a child in need. If the DSL is unsure whether the threshold has been met, they will contact the MASH for advice and guidance.

Where a safeguarding concern does not meet the threshold for completion of a MASH Referral, the DSL should record how this decision has been reached and should consider whether additional needs of the child have been identified that might be met by a coordinated offer of early help including the school or college's local early help offer.

School staff might be required to contribute to multi-agency plans to provide additional support to children. This might include attendance at child protection conferences or core group meetings. The school is committed to providing as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible, including submitting reports for child protection conferences in advance of the meeting in accordance with BSCP procedures and timescales.

Where reasonably possible, the school is committed to obtaining more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

School staff must ensure that they are aware of the procedure to follow when a child goes missing from education. Refer a child missing education | Buckinghamshire Council

SEE CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY ATTACHED AS AN APPENDIX

12. Information sharing, record keeping and confidentiality

Information sharing is vital in safeguarding children by identifying and tacking all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes. Schools have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

As part of meeting a child's needs, the school understands that it is critical to recognise the importance of information sharing between professionals and local agencies and will contribute to multi-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, and to keep the information they hold safe and secure, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Staff will have regard to the Government guidance: Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers which supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL or a deputy.

DSLs must keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.

The school recognises that confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all matters relating to child protection. Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the DSL or alternate DSL with other relevant members of staff. This will be on a 'need to know' basis and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.
A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents/carers or pupils) or promise a child to keep a secret which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

As well as allowing for information sharing, in circumstances where it is warranted because it would put a child at risk of serious harm, the DPA 2018 and the UK GDPR allow schools to withhold information. This may be particularly relevant where a child is affected by

domestic abuse perpetuated by a parent or carer, is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harm tests is met.

Ordinarily, the school will always undertake to share its intention and seek informed consent to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation.

The General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 states that, the school has the authority to share information with the Local Authority "in the exercise of our official duties without seeking consent".
The "**public task basis**" as described in the legislation allows authorities to use data when they can demonstrate that the processing is to perform tasks that are set by national law. This means parental consent is not necessary for the obtaining and sharing of information "Between agencies when that information is for child protection or safeguarding purposes or for an assessment of a child or children's needs.
"Public task: the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law." GDPR Article 6

The school will have regard to the KCSiE Guidance on the Transfer of a Child Protection /or Safeguarding File to another Education Setting. Where a child leaves the school, the DSL will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible (within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term). The file will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

The data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Further details on information sharing can be found:

- in Working Together to Safeguard Children, which includes a myth-busting guide to information sharing.
- at Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers, the seven golden rules for sharing information will be especially useful.
- the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guide to sharing information to safeguard children and young people in the education sector in the UK which is intended to help practitioners to feel confident to share personal information for safeguarding purposes.
- in Data protection: toolkit for schools - Guidance to support schools with data protection activity, including compliance with the UK GDPR.

13. Managing allegations made against teachers, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors

The school will follow the BSCP LADO - Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership if a safeguarding concern or allegation is raised against an adult in a position of trust.

Here at Brookmead School, we have our own procedures for managing concerns and/or allegations against those working in school to include staff, supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.

There are levels of allegations:

1. allegations that may meet the harms threshold
2. Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold - referred to for the purpose of this guidance as 'low level concerns'.

All school staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors must take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents/carers to be conducted in view of other adults.

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff, member of supply staff, volunteer or contractor. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff notified of the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher or the most senior teacher if the Headteacher is not present. If the allegation is made against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors must be informed.
At Brookmead School, we recognise that an allegation may be made if a member of staff, a member of supply staff, a governor, a volunteer or a contractor has:

Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This includes behaviours both inside and outside of school.

The Headteacher/Senior Teacher/Chair of governors (where the allegation is in reference to the Head Teacher) on all such occasions must immediately discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
The Head Teacher/Senior Teacher/ Chair of Governors must:
Follow all advice given by the LADO throughout the investigation process, including how to manage the staff member, supply staff member, governor, volunteer or contractor against whom the allegation is made, as well as supporting other staff, supply staff members, governors, volunteers and contractors within the workplace.
Follow all advice given by the LADO relating to supporting the child making the allegation, as well as other children connected to the organisation.
Ensure feedback is provided to the LADO about the outcome of any internal investigations.
The school will follow the local safeguarding procedures for managing allegations against staff, supply staff, governors, volunteers and contractors. A copy of which can be requested from the chair of governors or the headteacher.
If the allegation is made against a member of staff supplied by an external agency, the agency will be kept fully informed and involved in any enquiries from the LADO.

Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration and, if necessary, we will consult with the LADO in making this decision. Guidance will also be sought from HR.
Our lettings agreement for other users requires that the organiser will follow the Buckinghamshire Council procedures for managing allegations against staff and where necessary, the suspension of adults from school premises.
Should an individual staff member, supply staff member, governor, volunteer or contractor be involved in child protection, other safeguarding procedures or Police investigations in relation to abuse or neglect, they must immediately inform the Head Teacher. In these circumstances, the school will need to assess whether there is any potential for risk of transfer to the workplace and the individual's own work with children.
Where there are low level concerns recorded against a member of staff, these should be reviewed regularly, and if they are considered significant, the processes for allegations should be followed.

Low-Level Concerns About Adults Working with Children

The school is committed to fostering a strong culture of safeguarding in which all concerns about the conduct, behaviour or actions of adults working with children are recognised, reported and addressed appropriately. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, professional standards, or expected safeguarding practices, even if it does not meet the harm threshold. All staff are encouraged, and expected, to share low-level concerns promptly with the Headteacher or appropriate safeguarding lead to ensure that situations are assessed, recorded and managed consistently. The school recognises that effective management of low-level concerns helps to identify patterns of behaviour, promotes professional accountability, reinforces appropriate boundaries, protects children from potential harm, and safeguards staff from misunderstandings or unfounded allegations. Concerns will be handled fairly, proportionately and sensitively, with clear regard for confidentiality and natural justice. By maintaining an open and transparent reporting culture, the school aims to minimise the risk of abuse, strengthen safeguarding practice, and ensure that the welfare of children remains paramount at all times.

14. Use of school premises for non-school activities

The governing body will ensure that where school facilities/premises are hired or rented out to organisations or individuals, sports associations or service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

The governing body will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures in place, including inspecting these as needed. Arrangements will also be put in place for the body hiring or renting the school facilities or premises to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

These arrangements will apply regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll.

Where a lease or hire agreement is entered into the governing body will ensure safeguarding requirements are included as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; this will make clear that any failure to comply would lead to termination of the agreement. The guidance on Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect these providers to have in place. The school has detailed documentation that hirers or external agencies must complete to be able to use the school premises.

15. Whistleblowing

The governing body recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider school community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example, pupils in the school or members of the public.

The governing body would wish for everyone in the school community to feel able to report any child protection/safeguarding concerns through existing procedures within school, including the whistleblowing procedure adopted by governors/proprietor where necessary (5.4 Whistleblowing – Buckinghamshire SCP MAPP Resource). However, for members of staff who do not feel able to raise such concerns internally, there is a NSPCC whistleblowing helpline. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (line available from 8.00am to 8.00pm, Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Appendix to Child Protection Policy

Brookmead School

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy 2026

Reviewed due Autumn 2026

(or earlier if legislation changes occur)

Statement of Intent

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that children can abuse other children and that child-on-child abuse may occur both inside and outside school, including online. Such abuse will never be tolerated, dismissed as banter, part of growing up, or accepted as normal behaviour.

Our approach is child-centred, trauma-informed and underpinned by the principles of dignity, respect, inclusion and protection. All children involved, including those who have experienced harm and those whose behaviour has caused concern, will be treated fairly and supported appropriately.

Legislative Framework

This policy should be read alongside:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
Children Act 1989 and 2004.
Education Act 2002.
Working Together to Safeguard Children.
Human Rights Act 1998.
Equality Act 2010.
Sexual Offences Act 2003.
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (where applicable).
The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and Online Safety Policy.

Definition

Child-on-child abuse is behaviour by a child that causes harm to another child. It can include:

Bullying, including cyberbullying.
Physical abuse.
Emotional abuse.
Prejudice-based or discriminatory behaviour.
Sexual harassment.
Sexual violence.
Online abuse.
Upskirting.
Initiation and hazing-type violence.
Abuse within intimate personal relationships.

Reporting Concerns

All staff have a responsibility to identify, respond to and report concerns.

Where a member of staff witnesses, suspects or receives a disclosure regarding child-on-child abuse they must:

Reassure the child that they have been heard.
Not promise confidentiality.
Take all allegations seriously.
Verbally inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL immediately.
Record the concern, disclosure, actions taken and outcomes on CPOMS as soon as possible and on the same day.

Verbal reporting to a DSL must always take place immediately and must not be delayed while completing written records.

Responding to Incidents

The welfare of the child who has experienced harm will always be the school's primary consideration.

The DSL will consider:

The nature and seriousness of the incident.
The wishes and feelings of those involved.
Whether a crime may have been committed.

The ongoing safety and welfare of all children.
The need for support from external agencies.

The school will work closely with parents, Children's Social Care, the Police, health professionals and other agencies where appropriate.

Supporting the Child Who Has Experienced Harm

The school will ensure that children who have experienced abuse feel safe, listened to and protected.

Support may include:

Regular safeguarding check-ins.
Pastoral and emotional support.
Access to counselling, therapeutic or nurture-based interventions.
Adjustments to routines, timetables or supervision arrangements.
Safety planning and protective measures.
Support from external professionals where required.

The wishes, feelings and voice of the child will be central to decision-making.

Supporting the Child Whose Behaviour Has Caused Concern

The school recognises that children displaying harmful behaviours may themselves be vulnerable or have experienced trauma.

While appropriate sanctions may be applied where necessary, support may also include:

Restorative approaches where safe and appropriate.
Therapeutic intervention.
Nurture provision.
Emotional regulation support.
Behaviour and risk management plans.
Early Help assessments.
Referrals to specialist agencies.

The school will seek to understand the factors contributing to the behaviour while ensuring accountability and the safety of others.

Safeguarding Risk Assessments

The DSL or deputy DSL will undertake a safeguarding risk assessment following incidents of child-on-child abuse where appropriate.

Risk assessments will consider:

- The safety and wellbeing of all children involved.
- Contact between pupils.
- Supervision arrangements.
- Classroom and social interactions.
- Transport arrangements.
- Online contact and communication.
- Protective measures and support strategies.

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and updated whenever circumstances change.

Education and Prevention

The school is committed to creating a culture where abuse is not tolerated and children know how to seek help.

Preventative work includes:

- A safeguarding curriculum delivered through PSHE, RSHE and assemblies.
- Teaching children about healthy relationships, consent, boundaries and respect.
- Online safety education.
- NSPCC PANTS programme and age-appropriate safeguarding education.
- Anti-bullying initiatives.
- Promoting positive behaviour, inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Opportunities for pupils to share concerns with trusted adults.

Children will be taught how to recognise unsafe situations, understand their rights, and seek support when worried about themselves or others.

Monitoring and Review

All incidents of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, monitored and reviewed by safeguarding leaders to identify patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and improve practice.

The Governing Body will receive safeguarding information through regular reporting and will monitor the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for preventing and responding to child-on-child abuse.

Low-Level Concerns and Allegations Policy 2026

1. Purpose and principles

Brookmead School is committed to creating a culture of openness, transparency and professional accountability, where all concerns about the conduct of adults working in or on behalf of the school are taken seriously and addressed promptly. The safety and welfare of children is paramount, and all adults must maintain the highest standards of professional behaviour, both inside and outside school where their conduct may impact on their suitability to work with children.

This policy follows *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE)*, particularly Part Two and Part Four, Sections One and Two. It applies to all employees, volunteers, governors, visitors, contractors, agency workers and supply staff, whether employed directly by the school or working on its behalf.

2. What is a low-level concern?

A low-level concern is any concern, however small, or even a sense of unease, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted inconsistently with the school's Staff Code of Conduct, but whose behaviour does not meet the harm threshold requiring referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples may include:

Being overly familiar or friendly with a pupil.
Showing favouritism towards particular pupils.
Communicating privately with pupils outside agreed school systems.
Using inappropriate language or humour.
Meeting a pupil in an unauthorised or secluded location.
Taking photographs or videos of pupils using a personal device.
Failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
Behaviour outside school that raises questions about professional suitability.

A concern may relate to behaviour that is inadvertent, thoughtless or potentially inappropriate in particular circumstances. It must not be dismissed simply because it appears minor.

3. Reporting concerns

All adults working in or visiting Brookmead School have a responsibility to report concerns about adult behaviour immediately.

Concerns must be reported directly to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, it must be reported directly to the Chair of Governors.
Where there is a conflict of interest, or the appropriate person cannot be approached safely, the concern must be referred directly to the LADO.

Concerns must not be dealt with informally, ignored or investigated independently by the person raising them.
Staff must not assume that somebody else has reported a concern.

Concerns may be raised verbally in the first instance but must be followed by a written record as soon as possible. The person reporting the concern should provide factual information, including what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved, any witnesses and any action already taken.

Adults are also encouraged to self-report where they recognise that their own behaviour may have fallen below the expected professional standard or could be misinterpreted.

4. How concerns will be managed and investigated

On receiving a concern, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher or SENDCo will:

1. **Acknowledge and record:** Ensure the concern is recorded promptly, accurately and factually, including the date received, the nature of the concern, the circumstances, the source of the information and any immediate action taken.

2. **Assess the concern:** Consider the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, the context, the age and vulnerability of any child involved, whether there is any immediate safeguarding risk and whether similar concerns have previously been raised.

3. **Determine the appropriate route:** Decide whether the matter is a low-level concern, an allegation meeting the harm threshold, a conduct or disciplinary matter, or whether further advice is required.

4. **Seek advice where necessary:** If there is any uncertainty about whether the harm threshold has been met, the LADO must be consulted. The school will not undertake an internal investigation into an allegation that should be referred to the LADO before receiving appropriate advice.

5. **Establish the facts:** Where appropriate and safe to do so, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will speak to the person raising the concern, the adult whose conduct is being questioned and any relevant witnesses. This will be conducted fairly, sensitively and confidentially. Where external agencies are involved, the school will follow their advice before taking any action that could compromise an investigation.

6. **Reach and record a decision:** The outcome, rationale and any action required will be documented. The school will consider whether the matter requires no further action, clarification, advice, training, supervision, changes to working arrangements or formal action under the school's disciplinary procedures.

7. **Monitor and review:** Any further concerns about the individual will be considered alongside previous records to identify patterns of behaviour.

The Headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of low-level concerns, with the Deputy Headteacher supporting the process where appropriate. Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will oversee the process and seek appropriate external advice.

5. Supporting and protecting pupils

Throughout the process, Brookmead School will prioritise the welfare and safety of any pupil involved.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors, as appropriate, will ensure that:

Any immediate risk to a child is assessed and appropriate protective action is taken.
The child is listened to, treated sensitively and supported in an age-appropriate manner.
The child is not required to repeat their account unnecessarily.
Information is shared only with those who need to know.
Parents or carers are informed where appropriate, unless doing so could place a child at further risk or compromise an investigation.
Any necessary safeguarding referrals are made without delay.

Where a concern indicates that a child may be suffering or at risk of significant harm, the school's normal child protection referral procedures will also be followed.

6. Allegations meeting the harm threshold

Not every concern is a low-level concern. An allegation must be treated under Part Four, Section One of KCSIE 2026 where an adult working in or on behalf of the school is alleged to have:

Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.
Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including conduct outside school.

Such allegations must be reported immediately to the Headteacher or, where the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will act as the case manager and contact the LADO immediately, following the local authority's procedures. The school will not conduct its own investigation or interview the person concerned before consulting the LADO where this could compromise the process.

The LADO will advise on the appropriate course of action, including any involvement from children's social care, the police or other agencies.

Suspension will not be automatic and will only be considered where necessary and appropriate following a risk assessment and consultation with the LADO. Alternative protective measures will be considered wherever possible.

The adult concerned will be treated fairly, kept appropriately informed and offered support throughout the process, subject to the requirements of any external investigation.

7. Recording, confidentiality and storage

Brookmead School will maintain accurate, factual and confidential records of all low-level concerns and allegations.

Records will include:

The name of the adult concerned and their role.
The date the concern arose and the date it was reported.
The details and circumstances of the concern.
The name of the person reporting the concern, unless anonymity has been requested.
Any relevant witness information or supporting evidence.
Details of the assessment, investigation and advice received.
Decisions made, the reasons for those decisions and any actions taken.
The outcome and any subsequent monitoring or review.

Storage of records

Records of low-level concerns will normally be retained on the individual's confidential personnel file, with access restricted to those with a legitimate safeguarding or management responsibility.
Where a low-level concern is established as malicious or false, the record will not be retained on the individual's personnel file. It will instead be held securely in a separate central confidential safeguarding record to protect the individual from unfair prejudice.

For allegations meeting the harm threshold, records will be managed in accordance with KCSIE 2026. Substantiated, unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations will be retained on the individual's confidential personnel file, with the outcome clearly recorded. Allegations established to be false or malicious will be removed from the individual's personnel file.

An allegation that is unsubstantiated or unfounded must not automatically be treated as false or malicious.

Records will be stored securely, in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's data retention procedures.

Records of low-level concerns will be retained at least until the individual leaves their employment, in line with KCSIE guidance. Records of formal allegations will be retained in accordance with the applicable KCSIE retention requirements and the school's retention schedule (10 years).

Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know, except where disclosure is required for safeguarding or legal purposes.

The Headteacher will ensure that the low level concern log and records are reviewed periodically to identify patterns of behaviour, repeated concerns or circumstances requiring further action.

8. Patterns of concerns and further action

The Headteacher will periodically review low-level concern records to identify any emerging patterns, repeated behaviours or potential escalation.

Where several low-level concerns relate to the same individual, they will be considered collectively. A series of concerns which individually appear minor may indicate a wider pattern of behaviour that requires further investigation or may meet the harm threshold.

Depending on the circumstances, the school may:

Provide additional supervision, guidance or safeguarding training.
Arrange a formal management discussion.
Set clear expectations for future professional conduct.
Implement a monitoring or review period.
Commence formal disciplinary procedures.
Refer the matter to the LADO if the cumulative concerns meet the harm threshold.

The school will also consider whether any wider organisational or cultural issues have contributed to the concern and whether improvements to policies, procedures or staff training are required.

9. Visitors, governors, contractors and agency staff

This policy applies equally to anyone working in, visiting or providing services to Brookmead School.

Where a concern relates to a visitor, governor, contractor, volunteer, supply teacher or agency worker, the same reporting, assessment and recording procedures will apply.

Where the individual is employed by an external organisation or agency, Brookmead School will notify the relevant employer or agency of any low-level concern, in accordance with KCSIE 2026, so that concerns and potential patterns across different placements can be identified.

Where an allegation meets the harm threshold, the school will follow the LADO process and liaise with the relevant employer or agency as appropriate.

10. Staff support and fairness

Brookmead School recognises that concerns and allegations can be distressing for everyone involved. The school will ensure that:

All concerns are treated seriously but not automatically assumed to be substantiated.
Individuals are treated fairly, respectfully and without prejudice.
Confidentiality is maintained wherever possible.

Adults subject to concerns are given an appropriate opportunity to respond, unless external agencies advise otherwise.
Appropriate support is offered throughout any investigation.
No individual is disadvantaged simply because a concern has been raised against them.
Malicious or deliberately false allegations are treated seriously and may result in appropriate action.

Staff must also be aware that deliberately making a false or malicious allegation may constitute misconduct.

11. Governance and monitoring

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and reviewed regularly.

The Headteacher will monitor the implementation of the policy, review records for emerging patterns and report safeguarding themes to governors through appropriate confidential arrangements.

The policy will be reviewed annually, and sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance or local safeguarding procedures.

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