Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

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1. Supporting Documents

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance documents Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026 update); along with Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This policy has also been created in accordance with the following key documents:

- SEND Code of Practice
- Regulatory Inspection Handbooks (Reviewed summer 2026)
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Working Together to improve school attendance (July 2026 update)
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2024 update)
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Keys Education policies:

- RSHE Policy (26/27)
- Behaviour Policy (26/27)
- Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy (26/27)
- Anti-Bullying Policy (26/27)
- Risk Assessment Policy (26/27)
- Supervision of Pupils Policy (26/27)
- Mobile Phone Policy (26/27)
- SEND Policy (26/27)
- First Aid Policy (26/27)
- Allergy Safety Policy (26/27)
- Medical Conditions and Medication Policy (26/27)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy (26/27)
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Policy (26/27)
- Alternative Provision Policy (26/27)
- Attendance Policy (26/27)

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- Children Missing Education Policy (26/27)
- Admissions Policy (26/27)
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy (26/27)
- Whistleblowing Policy (26/27)

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

The Acres is committed to creating a culture where:

- Children feel safe.
- Concerns around pupils' safety and/or welfare are identified early.
- Concerns are acted upon promptly.
- Children are listened to.
- Children know how to access support.
- Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Safeguarding is embedded throughout all school activities.
- The welfare of the child is always paramount to all members of our school community.

3. Equality Statement

At The Acres the welfare of the child is paramount at all times. All decisions made by school staff will place the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests at the centre of decision-making.

We also recognise that our pupils often have additional vulnerabilities due to their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – including communication needs, social, emotional and sensory needs and mental health needs. This can often sit alongside a history of trauma (including education-based trauma) and complex attachment profiles, and a range of adverse childhood experiences. These factors can increase both the risk of abuse taking place but also increase the barriers to recognising and reporting abuse.

All staff at The Acres are committed to anti-discriminatory practice including, homophobic or racial language and recognise our pupils diverse needs and circumstances inside and outside of the education provision. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

In addition to their SEND, we also give special consideration to pupils who may have additional vulnerabilities due to the following:

- Pupils who are young carers.
- Pupils who may face discrimination due to ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.
- Pupils and families where English is an additional language (EAL).
- Where pupils are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence.

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- Pupils who are at increased risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalization.
- Pupils who are refugees or asylum seekers.
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.
- Pupils with a family member in prison.
- Pupils who are looked after or previously looked after.
- Pupils who are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods or have a pattern of frequent absence.
- Pupils who have a chronic or life limiting illness.
- A pupil whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

4. Aim

The aim of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is to ensure that every pupil at The Acres is safe, valued, respected, and are able to learn and thrive within a secure environment that suits each child's needs. The policy provides a clear framework for preventing harm, identifying concerns at the earliest opportunity, and responding effectively to safeguard children and young people. It promotes a culture of vigilance, shared responsibility, and inclusive practice, ensuring that all staff, governors, volunteers, and partners work together to protect pupils' welfare, promote their wellbeing, and uphold their rights.

This policy is underpinned by the principles set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, which emphasises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. The Acres is committed to maintaining a culture of safeguarding where children are protected from harm, their voices are heard, concerns are acted upon promptly, and all professionals work collaboratively to ensure pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

5. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge at the early point, to prevent possible harm.
- Protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development including education and health.
- 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 and create life-long success.

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

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Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. It can include physical, sexual, emotional and neglectful elements. The are also the four recognised categories of abuse in line with policy and procedures.

Abuse can be perpetuated by adults or children; it can be carried out by individuals, groups and organized networks. Abuse may also include children causing harm to adults (sometimes called 'child to parent' or 'child to caregivers' abuse.)

Neglect is also a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or emotional needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Sharing inappropriate images including: nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams. This also includes pseudo-images which is commonly known as: Artificial Imagery or digitally manipulation' that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be photograph or video. These images can be shared numerous different ways including through social media platforms and online.

Children, including everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 safeguarding partners are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The Local Authority (LA).
- Integrated Care Boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA.
- The Chief Officer of Police for an area in the LA area.

'Victim' is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with. This is demonstrated through the regular collection and consideration of the child's voice, ensuring that pupils' views, wishes, and experiences remain central to planning and decision-making. However, it is recognised that many pupils attending our provision may not fully understand safeguarding terminology or specific concepts due to their individual needs and experiences. As a result, staff provide age-appropriate and needs-led explanations, support, and guidance to ensure that children can meaningfully engage with discussions, understand the context of concerns, and access the appropriate support available to them.

'Alleged perpetrator(s)' and 'perpetrator(s)' are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behavior can be harmful to the perpetrator too.

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We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

6. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important element of safeguarding practice; however, safeguarding concerns must never be kept secret. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), consent is not required to share information where there is a concern that a child is at risk of significant harm or in immediate danger, and professionals must act in the child's best interests to ensure their safety and welfare.

Effective safeguarding depends upon timely information sharing and all staff understand that fears about sharing information must never stand in the way of promoting the welfare and safety of children. At 'The Acres' we have a safeguarding culture of 'It could happen anywhere'. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis with professionals who have a legitimate safeguarding responsibility.

The school recognises that:

- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of safeguarding information where this is necessary to protect a child.
- Special category personal information may be shared without consent when safeguarding a child or vulnerable person.
- Staff must never promise confidentiality to a child who makes a disclosure.
- The wishes and feelings of the child will always be considered, but safeguarding responsibilities remain paramount to prevent harm or possible further harm.
- Parents/carers will be informed of safeguarding concerns unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm. This is in line with 'Working to Safeguarding Children 2026'.

Where allegations involve sexual violence or sexual harassment, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will carefully balance:

- The wishes of the child.
- The need to protect the child.
- The need to protect other children.
- Statutory reporting requirements.

The school follows the Government's Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners and the seven golden rules of information sharing. Which include:

1. Remember that data protection is not a barrier to sharing information where there are safeguarding concerns.
2. Be open and honest with individuals about why, what, how, and with whom information will be shared, unless doing so would place a child at increased risk.
3. Seek advice if you are unsure about sharing information, without unnecessarily disclosing the child's identity.
4. Share with consent where appropriate, but do not allow the absence of consent to prevent information sharing where there is a safeguarding concern.

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5. Consider safety and wellbeing and base information-sharing decisions on the welfare of the child.
6. Ensure information is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely, and secure.
7. Keep a record of decisions made and the reasons for sharing or not sharing information.

All safeguarding records are maintained securely on CPOMS and are only accessible to authorised personnel. Safeguarding records are retained and transferred in line with statutory guidance.

6.1 Information Sharing

The school recognises that safeguarding is a shared responsibility requiring effective partnership working.

We work closely with:

- Children's Social Care,
- Police,
- Health services,
- Virtual School Heads,
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships,
- Integrated Care Boards,
- Alternative Providers,
- Therapeutic and Clinical Services,
- Other education providers, including the EHCP Coordinators.

All staff understand their responsibility to:

- Report concerns promptly- Within Annex 2 there is an example of the protocol which staff follow with reporting concerns.
- Record concerns accurately.
- Share information with the DSL without delay following the protocol that is in place.
- Support multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Contribute to assessments and safeguarding plans when required.
- To create a 'whole family approach', with links to early intervention and Team around the family assessments.

Where a child transfers to another education setting, safeguarding records will be transferred securely and separately from the educational file through CPOMS or secure transfer systems within:

- Five working days for an in-year transfer; or
- The first five days of a new term.

Where concerns are complex, the DSL will speak directly with the DSL at the receiving school to ensure a clear handover of information.

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6.2 Whistleblowing

The school promotes a culture of openness, transparency and professional challenge. All staff have a duty to raise concerns where they believe:

- Safeguarding procedures are not being followed.
- A child may be at risk of harm.
- Poor or unsafe practice may place children at risk.
- A colleague's conduct is inconsistent with professional expectations.

A culture of openness and professional dialogue is established at The Acres however, in the event that this has not been appropriate or successful, or that colleagues have not felt able to use this approach then then the following routes are available:

Concerns should normally be raised with:

- The Headteacher and/or DSL (then)
- The Regional Director (then)
- The Education Director.

In the case of Safeguarding concerns however, staff can also contact:

- The Safeguarding Governor (Martin Keightley)
- The Director of Safeguarding (Julie Hamilton)
- The Chair of the Proprietary Board (David Manson)

Staff can also contact Human Resources.

Staff may also access external whistleblowing routes as detailed in the wider Keys whistleblowing policy available of RADAR or the Circle. This includes an anonymous whistleblowing service.

7. Child-on-child abuse

It is recognised that children may sometimes abuse other children. Such behavior will not be tolerated or dismissed as banter, humour, or part of growing up, as this could contribute to inappropriate behavior and an unsafe environment for pupils.

7.1 Allegations of abuse by a pupil against another pupil/s (known as child-on-child abuse)

Incidents where pupils harm others are typically addressed thoroughly and appropriately under the school's behavior policy. However, this policy will apply to cases involving behavior that is significant enough to be considered a safeguarding concern alongside a longstanding pattern of behaviors. Some of the reasons for this may include, but are not limited to:

- Abusive or violent behavior that may constitute a criminal offensive, where a referral to external services have been needed.
- Abusive or violent behavior may place pupils at an ongoing risk, whether this

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inside or outside of the home including education provisions.
- Discriminatory behaviour, including racism and faith targeted abuse.
- Behavior that was sustained, planned or promoted (advertised).
- Behavior that involved coercion or forcing children to use drugs or alcohol.
- Any involvement of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or harassment - including indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting, sharing of indecent images. (Including nudes and semi-nudes), or creating deep-fake explicit images.
- Abusive or violent behavior that has been filmed, shared online, or distributed by other means, including sharing through AI.
- Any behavior that is linked to any other concerning behavior including child on child abuse and bullying behaviors.

7.2 Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse

Allegations by a pupil against another pupil will follow established safeguarding procedures (see appendix 1 section A and B), reported to the DSL and recorded on CPOMS.

Ensure reporting to police is proactive and in line with guidance around children and the law (access to responsible adults and informing parents/carers).

If the incident involves a potential criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will cooperate with the police and other agencies as needed, while taking necessary measures regarding pupil safety and discipline.

7.3 Creating a supportive environment to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse

The importance of proactive action to reduce risks associated with child-on-child abuse and fostering a supportive reporting environment is acknowledged.

To support this, the school will:

- Address derogatory or sexualised language and inappropriate behavior between pupils through immediate intervention.
- Monitor issues that affect different genders or individuals who do not identify to have a 'gender'.
- Use the curriculum to educate pupils about appropriate, socially expected, and criminal behavior, with particular attention to pupils with SEN who may find these concepts challenging. The area's of curriculum include PSHE, The Golden Thread, whole school intervention and assembly.
- Ensure accessible reporting systems for all pupils.
- Remain alert to reports of violence or harassment, particularly those of a sexual or discriminatory nature, which may indicate broader issues. Identified issues will be handled through curriculum adaptation, staff training, policy updates, and, if suitable, collaboration with safeguarding partners and referrals.
- Provide support for pupils affected by or witnessing child-on-child abuse, ensuring that all parties involved are protected from bullying or harassment and ensure their well-being is also protected.

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- Train staff to recognise indicators of child-on-child abuse and to respond appropriately, maintaining an outlook that such abuse could occur even in the absence of reports.

Disciplinary measures may proceed alongside external investigations, such as those by law enforcement. The school will determine on a case-by-case basis whether disciplinary actions might affect ongoing investigations and will consult with appropriate authorities as needed. Consideration will also be given to circumstances where conducting an internal review may not be reasonable during an independent investigation.

7.4 Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (sexting)

Current guidance for educational settings (UK Council for Internet Safety, 2024) defines this as sending or posting 'nude or semi-nude image, video, or live stream' online by individuals under 18. Alternative terminology may include 'dick pics or Tit Pics' or 'pics'. Motivations behind sharing such imagery may not always be sexual or criminal.

This guidance does not apply to adults sharing images of individuals under 18. Such behaviour is categorised as child sexual abuse and must be reported to police immediately.

This includes where a pupil has reached the age of 18.

All staff are required to follow reporting and recording protocols as outlined in Appendix 1 Sections A and B.

Staff must not:

- Delete any image or instruct a pupil to do so.
- View, copy, print, share, store, or retain such imagery or ask a pupil to do so; doing so can constitute a criminal offence. If imagery is viewed inadvertently, staff must report this to the DSL in writing immediately.

In exceptional situations, the DSL (or equivalent) may view the image solely for safeguarding purposes, using professional judgement.

Referring to the police

Decisions to refer incidents to the police or social care will be made individually, considering all relevant context. Where referral is required, the DSL (or Headteacher) will contact the police via 101 and a record and log number will be applied to CPOMS along with the safeguarding concern.

8. Specific areas of concern and pupils with specific vulnerabilities

Mental Health (see also appendix 9 and 10)

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Where mental health concerns become safeguarding concerns, safeguarding procedures will take precedence, and referral pathways will be activated with consent from parent and child. School leaders will also consider use of safety plans (appendix 9 and 10) and these concerns will be reflected within their 'live' risk assessments and 'Mental Health Support Plans' (MHSP) which are child focused and reviewed regularly.

Our school, works closely with the clinical team to ensure all staff have a developed understanding of mental health needs and signs to look out for. We also have regular 'drop in' sessions with external services for those children who need immediate support but who are on a waiting list for this support.

Prejudiced based-harm or discrimination

All staff should recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination. Such experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, and willingness to seek help. Staff should be alert to the signs and impact of prejudice-based harm and ensure that concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.

Gender Identity and Social Transitioning

The school recognises that children who are questioning their gender may experience additional vulnerabilities including:

- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Social isolation
- Exploitation
- Poor mental health outcomes

All pupils will be treated with dignity, respect and compassion, and all adults will approach conversations with an empathetic professional curiosity, which is also child led. All conversations related to gender questioning and social transitioning should be logged on CPOMS and protocols and supportive risk assessments are to be followed.

The school will:

- Take a child-centred approach.
- Work closely with parents and carers, unless to do so would put the pupil at risk of harm*.
- Consider wider safeguarding vulnerabilities, and developmental, SEND profiles.
- Seek appropriate clinical guidance where required.
- Carefully assess any proposed social transition arrangements, and unless unsafe to do so, no school should consent to socially transition a pupil without consent or knowledge of parent/carers.
- Maintain detailed safeguarding records logging clearly all decisions made, actions taken and the rationale behind these.
- Ensure a pupil who has socially transitioned is treated with dignity and respect and given access to appropriate facilities to maintain this, to encourage and embed 'inclusive practice'.

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- Give consideration to children who are living in stealth (that is those who have socially transitioned pre-puberty, and whose biological sex may not be known to their peers or to a wider staff team) present a significant vulnerability. Staff will be especially aware of the risk as children in this category approach key milestones such as adolescence and puberty.

**Where a pupil requests social transition without parent/carer knowledge, the Headteacher, Education Director, Safeguarding Director and other relevant professionals will be consulted before decisions are made about what information should be shared in the child's best interests.*

Pupils with Special Educational Needs or Health Conditions

We acknowledge that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or certain health conditions may experience heightened safeguarding challenges and are statistically more susceptible to abuse than their peers.

Recognising abuse and neglect within this group can present additional complexities, such as: -

- Attributing indicators of possible abuse—including changes in behaviour, mood, or injury—solely to the child's needs or health condition without adequate investigation;
- The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities, or specific health conditions to be disproportionately affected by behaviours such as bullying, even if they do not display outward signs;
- Communication barriers and challenges in reporting or managing these concerns- including English as an Additional Language.

To address these issues, we provide targeted training for staff on specific safeguarding considerations related to pupils with SEN and health conditions.

Pupils with a Social Worker

Some pupils require the support of a Social Worker due to safeguarding or welfare concerns. We recognise that adverse experiences and trauma can increase a child's vulnerability to further harm and impact attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health. The DSL and all staff members collaborate closely with social workers to protect vulnerable children.

When it is known that a pupil has a Social Worker, the DSL always considers this information to ensure decisions prioritise the pupil's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. For instance, this may guide responses to:

- Unauthorised absences or missing education where safeguarding risks are identified;
- Provision of pastoral or academic support as appropriate.

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Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children

We are committed to ensuring that staff possess the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to safeguard looked-after and previously looked-after children. Specifically, we ensure that:

- Relevant staff members are informed about children's legal care status, contact arrangements with birth parents or individuals with parental responsibility, and current care provisions;
- The DSL maintains up-to-date details of each child's Social Worker and relevant Virtual School Headteachers.

The Headteacher is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children. As part of this role, the Headteacher will:

- Work in partnership with the DSL to ensure safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are addressed swiftly and effectively;
- Collaborate with virtual school heads to support and enhance the educational progress of these children.

9. Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor

If there are concerns regarding any individual employed in the school, whether directly or through a contract, who may pose a risk of harm to children, or if an allegation is made, all staff must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or the Headteacher immediately, and no later than the end of the working day. Should the concern or allegation pertain to the Headteacher, it is the responsibility of all staff members to notify the Chair of Governors (James Madine).

The Headteacher or the Chair of Governors will then proceed in accordance with the procedures outlined in appendix 1 and 5, where applicable.

If a conflict of interest exists in reporting a concern or allegation about any individual working within the school to the DSL or Headteacher, staff must report the matter directly to the Regional Executive Headteacher, (where one is in place) or the Regional Director in the first instance. They may also report their concern to the Chair of Governors if this is a preferred choice.

Low Level Concerns

A low-level concern refers to any issue, regardless of its significance, including those that may simply cause unease or a sense of 'nagging doubt'. Such concerns arise when an adult working in or on behalf of the school is perceived to have acted in a manner inconsistent with the Group's code of conduct—this encompasses inappropriate conduct outside of work—but does not meet the threshold for an allegation or warrant

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a referral to the local authority designated officer. **And will be recorded on the Schools Low Level Tracker in agreement with DSL and Head Teacher.**

Examples of low-level concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Demonstrating excessive familiarity with pupils, leading to blurred boundaries;
- Displaying favoritism or engaging with a pupil one-on-one in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- Using language that is inappropriate or offensive.
- Staff not following policy and procedure and code of conduct.

All staff are required to report low level concerns to the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity. Whenever feasible, this should be communicated via email; if reported verbally, the Headteacher will document the conversation in writing. **Head Teacher are responsible for maintaining comprehensive records of all low-level concerns and actions taken. Using the low-level tracker form.**

10. Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection are collective responsibilities. This policy is applicable to all staff, volunteers, and governors within the school and aligns with procedures set forth by the three safeguarding partners. The scope also extends to cover school and any off-site activities. It is our duty to ensure any alternative provision employed upholds robust and appropriate safeguarding measures. The practices described herein are consistent with the Non-Association Independent School Inspection Handbook, particularly concerning leadership and management, where safeguarding serves as a limiting judgement factor—as well as the standards set out in Independent School Standards. Clear accountability, escalation protocols, and demonstrable safeguarding practices directly contribute to positive inspection outcomes; thus, all staff must be fully conversant with their obligations.

All staff are required to:

- Read all of and understand Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* (KCSIE) review it annually and affirm their understanding via a signed declaration each academic year.
- Reinforce online safety when communicating with parents/carers, including guidance on children's online activities and their legal obligations to their safety.
- Provide safe spaces for LGBTQ+ pupils to express concerns and own personal views.

All staff will also be aware of and utilise:

- The school's safeguarding infrastructure (this policy, behaviour policy, online safety policy, medication and allergy policies), risk assessments, CPOMS,

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DSL/DDSLs, provide response protocols to any significant operational issues.

- Their role in early intervention (identifying emerging concerns, liaising with the DSL/DDSLs, and sharing information appropriately).
- Procedures for referring cases to children's social care and statutory assessments, and their potential involvement in these processes.
- Appropriate responses to child disclosures of abuse or neglect, including FGM, maintaining confidentiality, and collaborating with professionals.
- Indicators of abuse or neglect and specific issues such as peer-on-peer abuse, CSE, CCE, serious violence/county lines, radicalisation, and FGM.
- The importance of reassuring children that their concerns are taken seriously and support will be provided.
- Protocols around contextual safeguarding. Recognition that risks may arise both inside and outside the home, in school, or online.
- Policies and strategies promoting support for LGBTQ+ children, or those perceived as such, who may experience additional risks.
- Understanding that children with SEN are at greater risk and may face further vulnerabilities compared to their peers without SEN.
- Policies and strategies promoting supporting pupils with Mental Health as a Safeguarding concern and the pathway to follow, following a concern.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL holds primary responsibility for child protection and safeguarding, including online safety and filtering/monitoring.

DSL

- Keeps leaders informed.
- Liaise with the local authority, police, and safeguarding partners and services.
- Maintain awareness of local specialist support available for victims and alleged perpetrators.
- Ensure the presence of an "appropriate adult" during police involvement with pupils.
- If the DSL is off the premises, they will ensure that all staff are made aware of their absence and who they should report concerns to and in what manner. This is to be discussed within SLT meetings, daily briefings and with the safeguarding team.
- Inducting all staff and volunteers (including temporary personnel) into the school's safeguarding systems and procedures and ensuring adherence to referral processes.

Headteacher Responsibilities

The Headteacher is accountable for:

- Acting as the "case manager" for allegations concerning staff or volunteers and will liase with the LADO.
- Making determinations on low-level concerns (consulting the DSL as

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appropriate).
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers and ensuring publication on the school website.
- Providing the DSL with sufficient time, training, and resources.
- Ensuring that safeguarding data is effectively reported to Governors at least once a term to enable them to maintain sufficient strategic oversight of safeguarding compliance and any serious or significant events.

Governing Board Responsibilities

The Governing Board shall:

- Implement a whole-school approach to safeguarding, integrating it across all policies and processes.
- Approve and annually review this policy, ensure compliance, and hold the Headteacher accountable.
- Fulfil duties pertaining to the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, and local safeguarding arrangements.
- Appoint a senior board-level lead (Julie Hamilton, Group Safeguarding Director) independent of the DSL, to oversee the efficacy of safeguarding policies.
- Ensure mandatory safeguarding/child protection training for all staff, inclusive of online safety, with regular updates.
- Oversee the implementation of suitable filtering and monitoring systems, ensuring comprehension among staff and alignment with DfE standards.
- Grant the DSL the requisite authority, resources, and time necessary to execute their role.
- Ensure processes are established for managing low-level concerns and compliance with these procedures (see para 9.2).
- Appoint a Governor as “case manager” should there be allegations against the Headteacher.

Contextual Risk Assessment (also see appendix 6)

Contextual Risk Assessments identify risks to pupils beyond the home, including within the local community and physical risks in or near the school environment. These assessments must be completed at the beginning of the school year in accordance with KCSIE updates and reviewed at the start of each term by the DSL and Leadership Team. Templates should be completed comprehensively and updated with input from local intelligence sources (police, local authority safeguarding teams, and community partners). Reviews will be minuted, and outcomes communicated to staff as appropriate. Governors will review the updated assessments each term.

Oversight and Quality Assurance

Governors, the Education Director, and the Keys Safeguarding Compliance Team have explicit oversight functions, including regular analysis of safeguarding data, termly reviews of contextual safeguarding risk assessments, and clear escalation procedures in instances where risks or deficiencies are identified. This structure satisfies

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inspection criteria requiring governance to demonstrate strategic challenge and effective oversight. Further details can be found in the appendices.

Preventative Education Responsibilities

The school plays an integral part in preventative education, adopting a whole-school approach to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary for life in contemporary Britain. A zero-tolerance culture towards sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, sexual violence/harassment and any racism underpin this work, supported by our:

- Behaviour Policy.
- Pastoral support system.
- Regularly delivered, inclusive PSHE and RSHE curriculum encompassing:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships.
  - Boundaries and consent.
  - Stereotyping, prejudice, and equality.
  - Hate speech versus free speech.
  - Body confidence and self-esteem.
  - Recognition of abusive relationships, including coercive and controlling behaviours.
  - Laws relating to sexual consent, exploitation, abuse, grooming, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence, FGM, and access to support.
  - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and unequivocal condemnation of such behaviour.
  - Bullying and discrimination (including racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of prejudice).
  - Online safety (privacy, digital footprint, misinformation/disinformation, cyberbullying, gaming risks, AI/deepfake challenges).
  - Mental and physical health and self-care.
  - Diversity and inclusion (celebrating differences, disability awareness, LGBTQ+ inclusion).
  - Exploitation and broader contextual risks.
  - Economic wellbeing and online pressures (advertising, scams, gambling, financial decision-making).
  - Preparation for independence (safe travel, responsible decision-making, personal responsibility).
  - Our school is dedicated to tackling violence against women and girls. We will implement preventative education programmes that address this issue, promoting a culture of respect and safety for all pupils. Staff will be trained to recognise and respond to signs of violence and abuse, ensuring that appropriate support and interventions are provided.

11. Training

Staff and Governors should consult *Appendix 8: Checklist for Governors*, which outlines statutory duties and procedural requirements for induction and refresher

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training.

All staff

All staff participate in safeguarding and child protection training which is annually, as part of their induction, including training related to whistleblowing procedures and online safety, to ensure familiarity with the school's safeguarding systems and responsibilities, as well as recognition of potential indicators of abuse or neglect.

Training is updated regularly and designed to:

- Be embedded within the whole-school safeguarding policy, wider staff training, and curriculum planning.
- Align with the guidance provided by safeguarding partners.
- Address online safety expectations, roles, and responsibilities regarding filtering and monitoring.
- Reference Teachers' Standards, supporting expectations that all teachers:
    - Manage behavior appropriately to maintain a safe environment.
    - Understand the needs of all pupils.

All staff complete training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, *Prevent*, aimed at recognising children at risk of involvement in terrorism and addressing extremist ideas. Staff are also offered further CPD through the Gov.uk for further additional training.

Ongoing safeguarding and child protection updates, including topics on online safety, are provided as needed, and at least annually (for example, via emails, e-bulletins, or staff meetings). However, if any changes occur within the year, it is paramount that this information is shared as quickly as possible.

Volunteers receive relevant training where applicable.

The DSL and Deputy DSLs

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) will:

- undertake appropriate Level 3 child protection and safeguarding training at least every two years.
- Update Prevent training every two years as well as when guidance changes.

In addition, the DSL and DDSLs will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, and at least annually, in order to:

- Understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role;
- Maintain the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role effectively;
- Understand local safeguarding arrangements and referral pathways; and
- Remain aware of emerging safeguarding risks and national developments.

They also update their knowledge and skills regularly, at least annually, using

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resources such as e-bulletins, networking with other DSLs, attending Keys Education DSL events, or reviewing current safeguarding developments.

Governors

All governors complete Level 3 safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and Prevent training) during their induction. They complete regular updates in line with Keys compliance – usually every three years or when guidance changes. This ensures they:

- Possess the necessary knowledge and information to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, including providing strategic challenges.
- Can confirm that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective in delivering a comprehensive approach to safeguarding.

The Chair of Governors receives additional training in managing allegations, as they may need to act as the 'case manager' if an allegation is made against the Headteacher.

Recruitment – interview panels

At least one member of every interview panel completes safer recruitment training, which covers at minimum the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education and complies with local safeguarding procedures.

Staff who have contact with pupils and families

Staff working directly with children and families participate in supervision sessions with their line manager. These sessions offer support, coaching, training, promoting the interests of children, and provide opportunities for confidential discussions of sensitive

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12. Appendices:

Appendix 1: Procedures for Reporting and Recording

Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

All staff members, volunteers, and governors are required to adhere to the following procedures in the event of a safeguarding concern.

Please note: In this and subsequent sections, any reference to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) also applies to any Deputy DSL.

SECTION A: Immediate Actions if a Child is Suffering or Likely to Suffer Harm, or is in Immediate Danger

1. Report the concern to the DSL.

1a. If the DSL is unavailable, report to the Headteacher.

1b. If neither is available, you must immediately refer the matter to children's social care and/or the police if you believe a child is at risk of harm or in immediate danger. Any individual can make such a referral.

2. Document all details related to the concern and/or referral on CPOMS as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the working day.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026: Whilst Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) identifies the four main categories of abuse as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect, the guidance provides additional information on a range of safeguarding issues that children may experience. Many schools and alternative provisions group these into ten key safeguarding themes for policy and risk assessment purposes. These commonly include:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect
5. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
6. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), including County Lines
7. Domestic Abuse
8. Peer-on-Peer Abuse (Child-on-Child Abuse), including Sexual Violence and Harassment
9. Serious Violence
10. So-called Honour-Based Abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage

SECTIION B: Responding to a Disclosure of a Safeguarding Issue by a Child

1. Listen attentively and take the disclosure seriously, allowing the child sufficient time to express themselves without asking leading questions.
2. Remain calm and do not display shock or distress.
3. Acknowledge the child's decision to confide in you and refrain from

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suggesting they should have disclosed sooner.

4. Explain the next steps, clarifying that you are obligated to share this information. Do not promise confidentiality.
5. Record the conversation at the earliest opportunity on CPOMS, prior to the close of the working day. Ensure an objective account is provided, delineating direct quotations from the child using quotation marks.
6. Follow the reporting procedures outlined in Section A.

SECTION C: Addressing Concerns Not Based on Direct Disclosure

Be mindful that some children may:

- Not feel prepared or know how to disclose abuse, exploitation, or neglect.
- Fail to identify their experiences as harmful.
- Feel embarrassed, ashamed, or threatened. These feelings may arise due to vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, or language barriers.

These factors must not deter you from exercising professional curiosity. If you have concerns about a child, consult the DSL and ensure these concerns are recorded on CPOMS promptly. If necessary, follow the processes described in Section A.

SECTION D: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Any teacher who becomes aware of or has credible evidence that a child has been subjected to FGM, as defined below, is legally required to report this directly and immediately to the police. This statutory duty carries disciplinary consequences for non-compliance. The requirement does not apply in cases where a pupil is at risk of FGM or suspicion exists without confirmation. Staff must not physically examine pupils. If there is risk or suspicion, teachers should follow the procedures detailed in Section A.

Unless instructed otherwise, staff should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Definition of FGM:

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, FGM includes "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs."

FGM is illegal in the UK and constitutes a form of child abuse with serious, long-term consequences. It may also be referred to as 'female genital cutting,' 'circumcision,' or 'initiation.'

Any other staff member who discovers that FGM appears to have been performed on a pupil under 18 must inform the DSL and proceed according to Section A.

Any staff member who suspects a pupil is at risk of FGM or suspects FGM has occurred must speak to the DSL and observe local safeguarding protocols.

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SECTION E: Concerns Related to Radicalisation, Extremism, or Terrorist Activity

Initially, follow the procedures set out in Sections A and B. The Department for Education provides a dedicated helpline (020 7340 7264) for school staff and governors to report concerns regarding pupil extremism. Alternatively, concerns can be emailed to counter.extremism@education.gov.uk.

In emergencies, contact 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Believe any person is in immediate danger;
- Suspect someone is planning to travel to join an extremist group;
- Observe or hear anything potentially related to terrorism.

If any further or new information comes to light when a prevent referral is being assessed, this must be passed on to Police.

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Appendix 2: Recording and Storing Data

Record-keeping

Pupil protection and safeguarding records will be maintained using CPOMS.

All safeguarding concerns, related discussions, decisions, and the rationale for those decisions must be documented in writing. If there is uncertainty regarding whether to record specific information, staff should consult with the DSL for guidance.

Records shall include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of each concern.
- Details outline how the concern was addressed and resolved.
- Documentation of actions taken, decisions made, and outcome.
- Each pupil will have a dedicated child protection file.

Non-confidential records will remain readily accessible. Confidential documentation will be stored securely and made available only to individuals with a legitimate or professional need to access them.

Safeguarding records pertaining to individual children will be retained for an appropriate period following their departure from the school.

When a pupil with current or previous safeguarding concerns transfers to another institution, the DSL will ensure their child protection file is transferred promptly, securely, and separately from the main pupil file. Electronic transfer via CPOMS will be utilised.

To facilitate support for the child upon arrival at the new school or college, files should be transferred within:

- **5 days** for in-year transfers, or
- **The first 5 days** of the start of a new term

For cases involving significant or complex concerns, or where social services are involved, the DSL will directly communicate with the receiving school's DSL to provide pertinent information, allowing for necessary preparations to safeguard the child.

Where staff, volunteers, agency personnel, or visitors have a concern, it must be recorded on a paper form and submitted to the DSL for inclusion in CPOMS. The DSL will enter details from the written record and scan it into the pupil's CPOMS file.

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Please see the below for the Disclosure step by step protocol which staff complete when sharing information.

1. Safeguarding concern identified-

This is when a child or children have a concern when they or others are at immediate risk or harm. This could include injury, change in behaviours, online safety. As staff, you also can identify a safeguarding concern. This can include the 4 main areas of categories of abuse.

2. It is your duty to respond to the child using the below methods of response:

- Actively listen to the child (using PACE strategies)
- Stay calm (Don't show your own personal emotions)
- Reassure the child (Use emotion coaching)
- Take every disclosure seriously.
- **Do Not** promise that you will keep the information a secret. It is important that you are clear with the next steps. E.g. ' If I think that you or someone else is in danger or may be at risk of harm, then I will be sharing this with the schools DSL'.

3. As per the safeguarding policy and procedure, you are to contact the DSL as soon as possible. This is face to face. If the DSL is not available, then you need to speak to DDSL or Head teacher. You will discuss the concern with the lead professional and then you will be asked to place the concern on CPOMS.

4. The DSL will then ask you to report any concerns on the MIS system- CPOMS. This needs to be completed as soon as possible and not at the end of the working day (4pm). Within this recorded document you will need to add in :

- The child's direct words and state these in quotation marks
- Record facts not opinions
- Include date, time and finer details, including the questions you asked when using professional curiosity.
- Complete a body map if necessary.
- **ALL INFORMATION THAT IS SHARED WITHIN A DISCLOSURE IS BOUND BY CONFIDENTIALITY UNDER GDPR- THIS IS NOT TO BE DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN DSL AND HEAD TEACHER.**

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5. The report will be reviewed by DSL and Head Teacher and a decision will be made for further actions if there is immediate risk and harm towards child. DSL will then update the appropriate documents e.g. Risk assessments with information that is appropriate to be shared. Please be aware that you may not always be made aware of the actions taken place.

6. You will be offered support through a de-brief and further emotional support will be offered. You may be offered support through Key's counselling services, or general welfare checks. This may be completed within a supervision.

Appendix 3: Recruitment and Selection Process

To recruit individuals appropriately, all staff involved in recruitment and employment for positions working with children will be required to complete relevant safer recruitment training.

Application Forms

Application forms will:

- Include a statement indicating that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity with children, when applicable.

Shortlisting

The shortlisting process will:

- Review any inconsistencies, identify gaps in employment, and examine provided reasons.
- Assess potential concerns.
- Public online check.

Shortlisted candidates will be requested to:

- Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that may make them unsuitable to work with children, allowing for discussion during the interview stage.

The requested information will include:

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- Criminal history.
- Inclusion on the barred list.
- Prohibition from teaching.
- Criminal offences committed in any country in accordance with laws applicable in England and Wales.
- Any relevant overseas information.

Candidates will also sign a declaration confirming the accuracy of the information provided.

An online search will be conducted on shortlisted candidates to identify publicly available incidents or issues. Candidates will be notified that these checks are part of the standard due diligence process.

Seeking References and Checking Employment History

References will be obtained before interviews, with any concerns addressed with referees and discussed with the candidate during the interview.

Reference procedures will:

- Not accept open references.
- Involve direct communication with referees and verification of reference information.
- Ensure references originate from the candidate's current employer and are completed by a senior individual. If the referee is school-based, confirmation from the Headteacher regarding disciplinary investigation accuracy will be sought.
- Verify the most recent relevant period of employment if the candidate is not currently employed.
- Obtain a reference from the last employer where the candidate worked with children if they are not currently doing so.
- Compare application form details with reference information, resolving any inconsistencies with the candidate.
- Address and resolve all concerns prior to appointment confirmation.

Interview and Selection

During interviews, the following will occur:

- Inquiry into gaps in employment or frequent changes in employment/location, requesting candidates to provide explanations.
- Examination of potential areas of concern to assess suitability for work with children.
- Documentation of all the information considered and decisions made.

Pre-appointment Vetting Checks

All details regarding vetting procedures are recorded in the school's single central

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record (SCR), and relevant documentation is stored in individual personnel files. Procedures adhere to statutory requirements and best practices for document retention as outlined below.

New Staff

Employment offers are subject to satisfactory completion of all necessary pre-employment checks. When recruiting new staff, the following steps will be taken:

- Identity verification.
- Obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate via the applicant, including barred list information for those engaged in regulated activity (see definition below). The certificate will be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment, using the DBS update service if applicable. Copies of the certificate will not be retained for more than six months, though records of the check, its outcome, and the recruitment decision may be kept.
- Conducting a separate barred list checks if work in regulated activity commences prior to receipt of the DBS certificate.
- Verifying mental and physical fitness to undertake job responsibilities.
- Checking the right to work in the UK, with verification retained for the duration of employment and two years afterward.
- Confirming professional qualifications where relevant.
- Ensuring teachers are not subject to a prohibition order.
- For management positions, candidates must not be subject to a section 128 prohibition from management direction issued by the Secretary of State.
- Conducting additional checks for candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK, as appropriate. These may include:
    - Criminal record checks for overseas applicants for all staff, including teaching positions.
    - For teaching roles: obtaining confirmation from the relevant professional authority in the foreign country that no sanctions or restrictions have been imposed, and there is no reason to consider the individual unsuitable to teach.

Regulated Activity refers to individuals who:

- Regularly teach, train, instruct, care for, or supervise children in a school or college;
- Perform paid or unsupervised unpaid work regularly in settings where such work provides potential contact with children;
- Provide intimate or personal care, or participate in overnight activities, even on a one-time basis and regardless of supervision.

Existing Staff

Relevant checks may be conducted for existing staff under certain circumstances, treating them as new staff members, such as when:

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- Concerns arise regarding their suitability to work with children;
- Individuals transfer from a non-regulated to a regulated activity role;
- There is a break in service of twelve weeks or longer.

Referrals to the DBS will be made for anyone considered to have harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, where:

- There is belief the individual has engaged in relevant conduct;
- They have received a caution or conviction for an offence specified under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009;
- The 'harm test' is met (i.e., the individual may harm or place a child or vulnerable adult at risk);
- The individual is removed or would have been removed from regulated activity (paid or unpaid) had they not left.

Agency and Third-party Staff

Written notification will be obtained from any agency or third-party organisation confirming completion of the required safer recruitment checks equivalent to those conducted by the school. Identity verification of the individual presenting for work will also be undertaken to ensure consistency with the completed checks.

Contractors

Arrangements will be made to ensure that contractors or their employees working at the school have received an appropriate level of DBS check if unsupervised, as follows:

- Enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors involved in regulated activity.
- Enhanced DBS check (excluding barred list information) for other contractors not engaged in regulated activity but whose work involves regular contact with children.

Contractors without these checks will not be permitted to work unsupervised or participate in regulated activity. The identity of all contractors and their employees will be verified upon arrival at the school.

Trainee/Pupil Teachers

For salaried applicants for initial teacher training, all necessary checks will be carried out directly by the school. For fee-funded trainee teachers, written confirmation from the training provider will be obtained verifying that all required checks have been completed and the trainee has been deemed suitable to work with children.

Volunteers

Unchecked volunteers will not be left unsupervised. An enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be obtained for all volunteers new to regulated activity.

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Governors

All governors will receive an enhanced DBS check with barred list information. This check will also apply if a governor is involved in regulated activity. All governors are subject to a section 128 check, as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from holding a position as a maintained school governor. The chair of the board's DBS check will be countersigned by the Secretary of State.

All proprietors, trustees, local governors, and members will undergo the following checks:

- Section 128 check (to assess prohibition under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008).
- Identity verification.
- Right to work in the UK.
- Additional relevant checks if they have lived or worked outside the UK.

Staff Working in Alternative Provision Settings

When a pupil is placed with an alternative provision provider, we require written assurance from the provider confirming that they have conducted the necessary safeguarding checks on all individuals working there, in accordance with the standards we would apply ourselves. And the DSL or Headteacher will visit the provision to ensure its suitability and its safeguarding culture.

Adults Who Supervise Pupils on Work Experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm. We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity. We will also visit that workplace setting to ensure its suitability for the pupil and that appropriate safeguarding, health and safety, risk assessment, supervision and reporting arrangements are in place to protect children from harm.

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Appendix 4

The Acres Independent School
Newdown Road,
Scunthorpe DN17 2TX

KEYS DESIGNATED OFFICERS:	JAMES MADINE (Chair of Governors) JULIE HAMILTON (Safeguarding Governor/Director)	07773 474876 07789 996850
SCHOOL DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD	Jessica Howkins	01724 291509
SCHOOL DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS	Robyn Taylor Michelle Carless Lee-John Nicholson	01724 291509
SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPION	Lynne Newmarch and Leah- Jayne Dent	01724 291509
SCHOOL PREVENT LEAD	Jessica Howkins	01724 291509

Responsibilities of Safeguarding Champions include:

- Ensuring Keys full compliance with the standards set by the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) for managing allegations, as stipulated in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. This includes integrating LSCP procedures into Keys policies and practices.
- Guaranteeing that all staff members are informed of, and adhere to, protocols concerning allegations against adults working with or on behalf of children.
- Establishing robust systems within Keys to review cases, identify areas for improvement, and implement changes that enhance procedures and practices.
- Addressing and resolving any inter-agency challenges that may hinder the effective application of LSCP procedures.
- Ensuring that the designated roles are accurately incorporated within Keys policies and procedures.
- Maintaining effective arrangements for reporting and record-keeping across Keys.

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Appendix 5 - Reporting and Referring Contact Information

The Acres Independent School

For concerns relating to the Safeguarding of Children

Children Protection / Safeguarding Concerns – Not Involving Allegations Against Staff.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the designated contact at the local authority where the school is located. For this school the host local authority is North Lincolnshire. For out-of-hours situations, please notify the Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

The placing authority responsible for the affected child or children must also be informed. In out-of-hours cases, contact should be made with EDT.

For serious safeguarding incidents please escalate concerns using the Serious Incident Policy (HS/POL/045) available on RADAR.

Host Local Authority Children's Safeguarding Lead(s)name(s):	North Lincolnshire Children's Services. Kirsty Ireland is the head of children's safeguarding at North Lincolnshire's council
Safeguarding Team Telephone contact:	01724 296500- Single point of Contact
Safeguarding Team email contact:	imap@northlincs.gov.uk
Safeguarding Team Out of Hours Duty Desk contact number:	01724 296555

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For Allegations And Concerns Against Staff

All allegations involving a member of staff must be reported to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Designated Person, specifically, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). The name and contact information for your area's LADO are provided below.

In addition, the placing authority responsible for the child or children involved must be informed. If outside normal working hours, please notify the Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

For serious safeguarding incidents please escalate concerns using the Serious Incident Policy (HS/POL/045) available on RADAR.

Local Authority Name	North Lincolnshire
LADO Name(s)	Stacey Wilkinson
LADO Contact number (s)/email	01724 298293 lado@northlincs.gov.uk

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Appendix 6 – Contextual Safeguarding Information and Location Risk Assessment for The Acres

The local area context:

The Acres Independent School is situated within North Lincolnshire and serves pupils from Scunthorpe and the surrounding areas. When considering contextual safeguarding risks, particular attention is given to areas within Scunthorpe that have historically experienced higher levels of deprivation, anti-social behaviour, criminal activity, and safeguarding concerns, including Ashby, Riddings, Westcliff and Scunthorpe North. These communities can present increased vulnerabilities for young people who may already face significant social, emotional, mental health and educational challenges.

The school recognises that organised criminality, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, exploitation, and harmful peer influences continue to pose risks within some local communities. Vulnerable young people, particularly those with SEMH needs, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), ADHD, ASD, histories of trauma, adverse childhood experiences, or disrupted education, may be at greater risk of manipulation, grooming, and exploitation by individuals seeking to involve them in criminal or inappropriate activities. This can include Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), county lines activity, substance misuse, online exploitation, and association with individuals involved in criminal behaviour.

While all pupils attending The Acres Independent School are considered vulnerable due to their complex and often intersecting needs, some pupils may face additional risks as a result of their home circumstances, community context, peer associations, or previous experiences of exploitation, neglect, abuse, or family instability. Pupils who experience difficulties with communication, social understanding, emotional regulation, impulse control, or risk awareness, including those with diagnosed or emerging neurodivergent needs such as ADHD and ASD, may be particularly susceptible to coercion and undue influence from others.

The Acres Independent School adopts a proactive and trauma-informed approach to safeguarding, recognising the importance of understanding the wider environmental and community factors that can impact upon a young person's safety and wellbeing. Through robust safeguarding practices, contextual risk assessments, targeted interventions, strong multi-agency working, therapeutic support, and positive relationships with trusted adults, the school seeks to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen protective factors, and ensure that pupils are supported to make safe, informed decisions both within school and in the wider community.

Transport and Movement

The school is located close to several busy road networks, including Scotter Road and Burringham Road, which experience significant volumes of traffic, including large goods vehicles. Pupils leaving the school site without supervision may be exposed to an increased risk of harm due to road traffic and limited awareness of road safety during periods of dysregulation.

The local transport infrastructure provides access to wider areas of North Lincolnshire

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and beyond. Bus routes operating from nearby stops connect pupils to the town centre, neighbouring villages, and surrounding towns. Access to public transport can increase the risk of children travelling beyond the immediate locality if they abscond from education, potentially heightening vulnerability to exploitation, missing episodes, and other safeguarding concerns.

Crime and Contextual Safeguarding Considerations

As with many urban areas, some locations within Scunthorpe are associated with increased levels of anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, criminal activity, and exploitation risks. Certain areas of the town, including 'Ashby, and Westcliff' are identified hotspot locations, these may present additional safeguarding concerns for vulnerable children and young people.

Given the complex needs of many pupils attending The Acres, staff remain vigilant to the risks of child criminal exploitation, county lines activity, peer influence, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, and missing episodes. Contextual safeguarding forms a key part of our safeguarding framework and informs both our assessments and interventions.

Local public transport stations and stops nearby:

The local transport network surrounding The Acres Independent School provides pupils with access to both the immediate community and wider regional areas. Nearby bus services include Route 7, which provides direct access to Scunthorpe Bus Station; Route 60, connecting Whitton and Scunthorpe; Route 601, which links Scunthorpe and Gainsborough via Scotter Road; and Routes 1 and 1A, which serve local areas across Scunthorpe, including stops along Doncaster Road. These transport links increase accessibility but may also present additional safeguarding considerations for pupils who leave the school site without permission, as they enable travel beyond the immediate locality.

Scunthorpe Railway Station is situated approximately 2.4 miles from the school, with Althorpe Railway Station located approximately 3 miles away. These transport hubs provide access to destinations across Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, and the East Riding of Yorkshire, increasing the potential for children and young people to travel significant distances during missing or absconding episodes. As part of the school's contextual safeguarding approach, staff consider the accessibility of local transport networks when assessing risk and responding to incidents involving pupils leaving the school site.

Any known destinations, if children abscond:

Due to the location of The Acres Independent School, pupils who leave the school site without permission are most likely to remain within the immediate vicinity, particularly the South Park Industrial Estate and surrounding areas. Historically, pupils have been known to access local retail premises, including the nearby Asda store at the junction of Burringham Road and Scotter Road, often travelling on foot along Scotter Road.

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Greenacre Park, located approximately a quarter of a mile from the school and accessible via surrounding residential streets, has also been identified as a location where pupils have previously been found following absconding incidents.
A significant contextual safeguarding consideration for The Acres is that pupils attend from several different local authority areas. As a result, some children and young people may have limited knowledge of the local environment, transport routes, potential hazards, or safe places to seek help, increasing their vulnerability when missing from education. Particular attention is given to access routes leading to main roads, including Moorwell Road, which provides a direct link to wider transport networks and areas beyond the immediate locality. This can increase the risk of pupils becoming difficult to locate and may expose them to additional safeguarding concerns, including exploitation, involvement in anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, criminal activity, traffic-related harm, or contact with unknown adults. These factors are considered within individual risk assessments and inform the school's response to absconding and missing-from-education incidents.

Any information about known gangs (or unaffiliated groups of younger) operating around the school and potential disputes arising:
Due to the diverse geographical areas from which pupils attend The Acres Independent School, staff must remain mindful of a range of contextual safeguarding risks that may influence children's experiences, relationships, and vulnerabilities. In recent years, there has been an increase in concerns relating to gang affiliation, peer group influences, exploitation, and community-based conflict. Within the local area, there are known tensions between groups associated with different parts of Scunthorpe, including the Ashby, Westcliff, and Town Centre areas. Additionally, there have been concerns regarding links to individuals and peer networks from neighbouring regions, including North East Lincolnshire.

A small number of pupils have been identified as being vulnerable to, or associated with, gangs and criminal exploitation, including links to groups known locally. These associations can increase the risk of child criminal exploitation, substance misuse, violence, coercion, and involvement in criminal activity. The Acres adopts a proactive and multi-agency approach to reducing these risks through safeguarding interventions, contextual risk assessments, risk management meetings, targeted educational programmes, and close partnership working with parents, social care, youth justice services, police, and other relevant agencies. The school's focus is on early identification, prevention, education, and the provision of appropriate support to reduce vulnerability and promote positive outcomes for children and young people.

Any criminality hot spots in the area:
Within Scunthorpe, several areas are recognised by local services and safeguarding partners as presenting elevated risks in relation to criminality, substance misuse, exploitation, and anti-social behaviour. Areas including Westcliff and Ashby have historically been associated with concerns relating to drug-related activity, criminal exploitation, and the movement of illicit substances. In addition, parts of Scunthorpe Town Centre have been identified as locations where vulnerable individuals may be at

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risk of exploitation, including forms of cuckooing, peer group exploitation, and criminal association.
For pupils attending The Acres Independent School, these contextual risks are particularly significant due to their additional vulnerabilities, previous adverse experiences, and susceptibility to negative peer influence. Access to these areas, whether during missing-from-education episodes or within the wider community, may increase the likelihood of exposure to child criminal exploitation, substance misuse, gang affiliation, coercion, violence, and other harmful behaviours. As a result, these identified locations form part of the school's contextual safeguarding assessments and are considered within individual risk assessments, multi-agency planning, and preventative educational interventions designed to reduce vulnerability and promote positive outcomes.

Any known drug hot spots in the area:
Due to the location of the school and the local community context, several areas within Scunthorpe are recognised as locations where young people may be exposed to increased contextual safeguarding risks, including anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, criminal exploitation, negative peer associations, and community-based incidents. These locations are often attractive gathering places for young people due to accessibility, transport links, retail facilities, and reduced adult supervision. Local policing priorities have identified ongoing concerns relating to anti-social behaviour, shop theft, and youth-related disorder within the Ashby and Lakeside areas.
Areas of particular concern include:

- Iceland, Ashby High Street
- Miller & Carter and surrounding retail area
- McDonald's, Lakeside Retail Park
- Gallagher Retail Park
- Central Park
- Scunthorpe Town Centre and Bus Station
- Ashby High Street
- Lakeside Retail and Leisure Areas

These locations are known gathering points for young people and may present opportunities for exposure to inappropriate peer groups, smoking and vaping, substance misuse, criminal or anti-social behaviour, exploitation, and episodes of missing or absconding from education. Staff should maintain professional curiosity when young people are reported to be frequenting these areas and consider any associated safeguarding risks within the wider context of the child's lived experiences and vulnerabilities.
Regular information sharing with parents, carers, external agencies, and safeguarding professionals should be utilised where concerns arise regarding a young person's presence within these locations or their association with individuals known to pose a risk.

Any physical risks present in the school environment:
1. Road and Traffic Hazards

- High-volume traffic routes: The school is situated close to Scotter Road and

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Burringham Road, both of which experience significant traffic flow, including heavy goods vehicles associated with the surrounding industrial estate. Pupils who abscond from site may be at increased risk of road traffic collisions, particularly if attempting to cross roads without supervision.

- Unsafe crossing behaviours: Where designated crossing points are not immediately accessible, there is a heightened risk of pupils crossing roads at unsuitable locations, increasing the likelihood of injury.
- Commercial and industrial vehicle movement: The regular movement of lorries, delivery vehicles, and industrial machinery presents additional risks to pedestrians within the locality.

2. Industrial Estate Risks
   - Access to unsupervised locations: Industrial units, storage compounds, and vacant premises may attract pupils who abscond from education, creating safeguarding concerns and increasing the difficulty of locating them.
   - Exposure to hazardous environments: Industrial settings may contain machinery, chemicals, tools, or equipment that could pose a significant risk of injury if accessed without authorisation.
   - Reduced natural surveillance: Compared to residential areas, industrial estates often have fewer members of the public present, resulting in limited opportunities for concerns to be identified and reported promptly.
3. Retail and Commercial Areas
   - Potential destinations for absconding pupils: Retail outlets, supermarkets, cafés, and fast-food establishments are common locations that young people may gravitate towards when leaving site without permission.
   - Risk of criminal or anti-social behaviour: Pupils may become involved in incidents relating to theft, shoplifting, anti-social behaviour, or conflict with members of the public and security personnel.
   - Contextual safeguarding concerns: Busy public environments can increase exposure to unknown adults, negative peer influences, criminal exploitation, substance misuse, or other safeguarding risks.
4. Parks and Open Public Spaces
   - Difficulty locating young people: Open spaces, parks, and recreational areas provide opportunities for pupils to conceal their whereabouts, making supervision and retrieval more challenging.
   - Environmental hazards: Depending on the location, risks may include water features, wooded areas, uneven terrain, or other hazards that could contribute to accidents or injuries.
   - Association with anti-social behaviour: Public parks may be used as gathering places for older youths and adults and can be associated with smoking, vaping, substance misuse, or anti-social behaviour.
5. Wider Community and Neighbourhood Risks
   - Exposure to criminal activity: Pupils who leave site without authorisation may become exposed to criminal behaviour, public disorder, substance misuse, or other community-based risks.
   - Risk of exploitation: Vulnerable young people may be susceptible to inappropriate contact from adults or peers involved in criminal exploitation,

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including county lines activity and other forms of organised criminality.
- Reduced visibility in some locations: Areas with limited lighting, CCTV coverage, or public footfall may increase the risk of safeguarding incidents and reduce opportunities for immediate intervention.

These risks should be considered within the school's wider contextual safeguarding framework, particularly for pupils who are vulnerable to absconding, missing episodes, criminal exploitation, peer-on-peer harm, or engagement in risk-taking behaviours within the local community.

Protective Measures

To minimise these risks, The Acres Independent School has implemented a range of protective measures, including:

- Robust supervision arrangements and clear procedures for responding to missing or absconding pupils.
- Individual risk assessments and personalised safety planning.
- Regularly reviewed Location Risk Assessment
- Strong partnership working with parents, carers, external agencies, and local services.
- Ongoing liaison with police and safeguarding partners where required.
- Education for pupils regarding personal safety, exploitation, healthy relationships, online safety, substance misuse, and the risks associated with leaving education without permission- All in line with changes relating to Keeping Children safe in Education 2026 and other guidance.
- Secure site management, monitoring of access points, and regular review of safeguarding procedures.

Any other additional intelligence shared by fellow professionals that impacts on the safeguarding of pupils at the school:

Within The Acres Independent School, we utilise Operation Encompass as part of our safeguarding practice. This enables the school to receive timely information from the police regarding domestic abuse incidents where a child may have been present or affected. The information is shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure appropriate support, understanding, and intervention can be provided to meet the child's emotional and safeguarding needs, recognising the significant impact that domestic abuse can have on a young person's wellbeing, behaviour, and engagement in education.

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Appendix 7: Safeguarding Oversight and Information for Display

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the primary safeguarding officer for the school. Any additional staff trained to this level serve as deputies and provide cover in the DSL's absence.

It is essential that the DSL demonstrates comprehensive oversight of all safeguarding incidents occurring within the school. The DSL is responsible for being fully informed about every referral and for ensuring that all concerns are appropriately addressed and followed up.

Schools must provide a dedicated staff noticeboard and one or more pupil-friendly noticeboard(s), each clearly labelled and not used for any unrelated information.

Each noticeboard should include:

- The names and roles of the DSL, Deputy DSL(s), and mental health leads. Only one individual may serve as the lead DSL.
- Contact details for senior leaders overseeing safeguarding, including the Safeguarding Governor.
- Contact information for designated local authority safeguarding contacts, as well as details for Ofsted, the police, and Childline (for pupils).
- A copy of the school's safeguarding policy and any appendices.
- The latest version of KCSIE 2026.
- Information identifying relevant key policies such as:
  - Whistleblowing Policy
  - Grievance Policy

Safeguarding Training
All new staff members receive safeguarding training as part of their induction process. All staff participate in face-to-face safeguarding refresher training on an annual basis.

In addition, staff are required to complete mandatory online safeguarding modules covering:

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- County Lines.
- Child-on-Child Abuse.
- Neglect.
- Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage.
- Serious Youth Violence.
- Sexual Violence and Harassment.
- Online Abuse and Internet Safety.

The Prevent Duty

Completion of the Prevent Duty training course is mandatory for all staff members.

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Appendix 8: - Checklist for Staff and Governors

This checklist outlines essential responsibilities, protocols, and statutory references derived from the safeguarding policy. It is intended for use during staff induction and as part of ongoing refresher training.

Statutory References

- Ensure familiarity with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026'.
- Adhere to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)'.
- Understand obligations under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- Be cognisant of the Prevent Duty as stipulated by the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- Have knowledge of the Independent School Standards (Part 3).

Roles and Responsibilities

- All staff are required to read all of Part One of KCSIE, annually and provide a signed declaration of comprehension.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be a senior member of the leadership team, responsible for overseeing all aspects of safeguarding and child protection.
- Deputy DSLs are to support the DSL and act on their behalf when necessary.
- Governors are expected to appoint a designated safeguarding lead and oversee full implementation of safeguarding policies.
- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff receive appropriate training and that safeguarding policies are effectively communicated to parents and carers.
- The Education Director serves as an alternate DSL if required.
- Staff are to Ensure that no Pupil or Staff member has a mobile phone on in school, and visitors should be advised to have on silent or turned off, and not to use in areas that pupils are in.

Safeguarding Procedures

- All concerns must be promptly reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Safeguarding concerns should be recorded using CPOMS.
- Immediate referral to children's social care or the police is required if a child is at risk of harm.
- Follow established procedures for disclosures, FGM, extremism, and mental health issues.
- Adhere to guidance on managing low-level concerns and allegations.
- Conduct contextual safeguarding risk assessments as required.

Child-on-Child Abuse and Online Safety

- Proactively challenge inappropriate behaviour and language among pupils.
- Deliver education to pupils regarding consent, healthy relationships, and report any incidents of sexual harassment, violence, or sexting directly to the DSL.
- Maintain effective filtering and monitoring systems for online safety.
- Support both victims and alleged perpetrators through comprehensive

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risk assessments and intervention plans.

SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

- Offer additional pastoral support and assign key workers for pupils with SEND.
- Remain vigilant to barriers to disclosure and indicators of abuse within vulnerable groups.
- Implement tailored safeguarding adaptations in RSHE and tutorial programmes.
- Our school is committed to supporting gender questioning children. We recognise the importance of creating a safe and inclusive environment where all children feel respected and supported. Staff will receive training on how to support gender questioning children, ensuring that their needs are met, and they feel safe within the school community.

Training and Monitoring

- Complete mandatory induction and annual safeguarding training.
- Undertake Prevent awareness training as required.
- Governors must participate in safeguarding training upon induction and at regular intervals thereafter.
- The DSL and deputies are required to complete Level 3 safeguarding training biennially.

Review and update the safeguarding policy and associated procedures annually.

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Appendix 9: School Specific Mental Health Guidance (updated for 2026 in line with KCSIE 2026)

The Acres recognises that mental health concerns may quickly become safeguarding concerns and puts the following plans in place.
Staff receive training on how to remain alert to indicators such as children or young people displaying any of the following:

- self-injurious behaviour.
- suicidal thoughts (ideation).
- Hopelessness.
- Withdrawal.
- sleep difficulties.
- eating difficulties.
- significant behavioural change.
- risk taking behaviour (including use of drugs and/or alcohol).

The link person on site for any concerns regarding the above is: [staff name] (or in their absence: [staff name])
The mental health first aider at the school is [staff name]

Keys also have Specialist Advisors who have specific areas of expertise. These are:

- Self-injurious behaviour/suicide prevention – Helen Stewart,
- Substance Misuse – Fran Gracie,
- Harmful Sexualised Behaviour – Gayle Bradbury,
- Criminal exploitation – Katie Proudman,
- Police Liaison – Steve Challinor,

The Keys Education Clinical Team provide support in a number of areas related to mental health support including hopelessness, withdrawal, suicidal thoughts, sleep difficulties, behaviour change and other needs relating to low mood.

The clinical team for The Acres is Emma Stokes

Immediate Risk
Where a child is at immediate risk during the school day (and in school's care)

- Emergency services will be contacted
- Parents/carers informed (unless for any reason it is deemed unsafe to do in consultation with Regional Director/Education Director, so in which case social care contact will be made)
- DSL and Headteacher informed immediately
- Urgent medical intervention sought where appropriate

Where a child is at immediate risk (outside school hours):

- Emergency services will be contacted (if not already aware)

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- Parent Carer informed immediately (if not already aware)
- Social Care will be contacted and appropriate support for family sought immediately.

School-based mental health interventions

In line with KCSIE 2026, any mental health support provided by the school will be:

- Evidence-based, appropriate, safe and regularly reviewed.

All interventions provided by The Acres come from the pre-planned therapeutic curriculum strand in partnership with Keys Education Clinical Team. THE ACRES takes part in regular multi-disciplinary meetings and clinical reviews to ensure that ongoing support meets the above criteria.

At The Acres we recognise that Mental Health concerns may also quickly become safeguarding concerns, and that pupils with SEND, or those who have experienced trauma, are more likely to experience some mental health difficulties at some point in their lives. All children attending The Acres Independent School have experienced, or may continue to experience, a range of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). These experiences can have a significant impact on a young person's emotional wellbeing, mental health, behaviour, and ability to engage in education. The effects of trauma, whether historical or ongoing, can influence how children form relationships, regulate emotions, respond to stress, and access learning. As a trauma-informed provision, The Acres recognises the potential impact of ACEs and aims to provide consistent, nurturing support that promotes resilience, emotional safety, and positive outcomes for all pupils.

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Appendix 10

[Pupil Name] – Safety Plan Type of Risk/s:_____

Introduction:

[Include pupil name and why the safety plan is in place, below is an example]

Example: My name is [pupil name]. I am struggling with [needs and general risk, for example, my mental health/my This is my safety plan. I need you to read this plan and understand the best way to support me at school, especially when I am struggling.

My history:

[Include a brief overview of the contextual safeguarding history that the pupil feels comfortable with you sharing, below is an example]

Example: I have experienced a lot of ***school-based trauma*** *including being the victim of an assault by a teacher by when I was very young, multiple placement breakdowns, and* ***rejections*** *from staff and peers. As a result of this,* ***I find it hard to trust people.***

How I see the world – this might impact what I do or say:

[Include some key bullet points around that support the pupil's understanding of the world around them, below is an example]

- *[example] I have a strong sense of justice. I need to understand why decisions have been made not just about me, but about other people.*
- *[example] I am loyal to my friends and safe people, so I find it hard not to get involved if something involves them.*

What would I like adults to know about me?

[Work with the child to include 2 or 3 key points here, that they think are really important to know about this risk and how it impacts them, below is an example]

- [example] I don't like over reactions or under reactions.
- [example] I use negative behaviour to get access to safe people instead of asking.
- [example] I feel embarrassed when I've hurt someone. Even if you don't think I do.

Early signs that I am not doing okay:

[Work with the child to identify some keep indicators that their risk level is increasing, below is an example]

- [example] I start tapping my feet or my hands a lot and start pacing around

My 2,3,4 Safety Plan

TWO places I feel safe that I can go to, or you can take me to

1.
2.

THREE things that can people do to help me

1.
2.

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3.

FOUR people that I trust, who you can get or call on the phone to support me

1.
2.
3.
4.

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11.Version Control

This document can be found in Radar and on the school website. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The named owner for review at The Acres is the headteacher.

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