Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Guidelines 2025-26
Castle Mead Academy

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy is effective for all schools within The Mead Educational Trust, the Teaching School, the SCITT and all other activities under the control of the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board, including apprentices.

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Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes:
4.0	04.10.2016	ARU	Addition of 'Sexting' or youth produced sexual imagery guidance.
5.0	13.10.2016	M Collins	Aligned with most recent updates from LA, including Early Help, Channel and Prevent.
6.0	September 2017	A Rutherford and M Collins	Addition of information relating to sexting, domestic violence (teen relationships), honour-based violence, abuse linked to faith, bullying and safeguarding and private fostering.
7.0	September 2018	M Collins	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 3rd September 2018
8.0	September 2019	M Collins	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 2nd September 2019
9.0	March 2020	M Oldman	Additional Appendix added to address the COVID 19 pandemic and revised guidance from the government.
10.0	September 2020	M Collins	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 1st September 2020
11.0	October 2020	M Collins	Additional Appendix added to address heightened risk of radicalisation during COVID 19 pandemic.
12.0	January 2021	M Oldman A Curran	Updated Appendix 6 to address new National Lockdown in place from 4th January 2021 Amendments made following EU exit – update KCSIE January 2021
13.0	September 2021	M Collins	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 1st September 2021 Removed appendix 6 relating to national lockdown procedures and replaced with appendix 6- Guidance on child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment and enhanced appendix 3 to include low level concerns
14.0	September 2022	A Curran	Additional information added in line with KCSIE 1st September 2022 Appendix 6 rewritten based on the Sexual Harassment Between Young People example policy created by the LA (Lesley Booth, Service Manager) Appendix 3 rewritten based on the Low-Level Concern policy created by the LA (Mohammed Patel and Julie Chapaneri)
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17.0	September 2025	A Curran	Updated in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) 2025. Reviewed and streamlined to remove duplication of statutory guidance

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1. Introduction

The Mead Educational Trust (TMET) recognises its vital role in protecting children and supporting pupils. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**, and all professionals must adopt a **child-centred approach**, always acting in the best interests of the child. We are committed to identifying concerns early, providing timely help, considering each child's lived experience, and preventing concerns from escalating.

This policy sets out how TMET schools and the Trust Board discharge their **statutory safeguarding duties**. Our aim is to promote pupils' welfare, safety, and health within an open, caring, and supportive environment.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in KCSIE 2025 as:
- Providing help and support at the earliest opportunity.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, both offline and online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is a core element of safeguarding. As defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*, it is action taken to protect children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm — including harm that happens online or outside the home.

Effective safeguarding requires practitioners to understand the impact of social, economic, and cultural factors on children's lives, and to work together, since no single professional can hold the full picture.

TMET believes that:
- All children have the right to protection from harm and to feel safe in school.
- Support must reflect individual needs, including for those who have experienced abuse.
- Children should be heard, respected, and encouraged to value one another.
- Emotional, social, and educational needs must be met, recognising that wellbeing underpins achievement.
- Schools play a central role in preventing abuse, exploitation, bullying, discrimination, and risk-taking behaviours.
- All staff and visitors share responsibility for safeguarding children.

TMET will fulfil local and national responsibilities and accepted best practice as laid out in the following documents:
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE Sept 2025)
- What To Do If You Are Worried a Child Is Being Abused (March 2015)
- Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 & Amended Regulations 2015
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2022 (Safer Recruitment consortium)
- Prevent Duty (guidance updated in 2023)
- Information sharing: Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people parents and carers (May 2024)
- Leicester Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (LSCPB)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Education Act 2002 s175/s157

- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Position of Trust offence)
- Voyeurism (Offences Act) 2019
- Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Female Genital mutilation Act 2003/Updated regulations July 2020
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Act 2006
- Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes (updated March 2024) – UK Council for Internet Safety
- Searching, screening and confiscation July 2022 (updated July 2023)
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance

The Trust Board fulfils its duty under **section 175 of the Education Act 2002** to safeguard and promote children's welfare, working with other agencies to ensure effective arrangements for identifying, assessing, and supporting those at risk of harm. We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of **all staff, trustees, academy councillors, and apprentices**, and that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Our schools are committed to providing a **safe, caring, and positive environment** that promotes pupils' social, physical, moral, and educational development.

In line with **KCSIE 2025 (Part 2)**, the Trust Board also provides active oversight of:
- Online safety, including filtering and monitoring arrangements;
- Safer recruitment and the Single Central Record; and
- The management of allegations and low-level concerns.

2. Overall aims

Our safeguarding aims are to:
- Provide early help and support when concerns first emerge, protecting children from maltreatment at home, in the community, or online.
- Support children's development to build security, confidence, resilience, and positive relationships.
- Ensure all pupils feel safe, valued, respected, and know how to seek adult help.
- Raise staff awareness of safeguarding duties, ensuring they identify and report concerns promptly.
- Monitor children at risk, including those persistently absent or missing from education, and contribute to assessments and support plans.
- Promote clear communication and a structured procedure for responding to suspected abuse.
- Work effectively with safeguarding partners and other agencies, including through Early Help and curriculum opportunities.
- Ensure robust safer recruitment and suitability checks for all adults working with or having access to children, including community users of school facilities.

3. Key Processes

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. Our procedures for safeguarding children are in line with the Leicester City Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (LSCPB), Multi Agency

Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedures ([Procedures (proceduresonline.com)](https://proceduresonline.com)) in addition to the documents listed in section 1 of this policy.

4. Expectations

All staff (including apprentices), and visitors will be familiar with this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy:

- Staff will read, understand, and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which forms part of induction
- Staff are recruited through Safer Recruitment processes with all required statutory checks
- Visitors and contractors (e.g. cleaners, caterers) are made aware of safeguarding procedures and how to report concerns.
- Staff remain alert to the signs of abuse and neglect, recognising that *harm* also includes witnessing harm to others, such as domestic abuse
- Any disclosure of abuse is managed in line with school procedures, reported immediately to the DSL, and recorded in writing without delay

All parents will be familiar with this safeguarding policy:

- Parents/carers can access the policy on the school website.
- Parents/carers are asked to inform the school if their child is a young carer. We recognise the stigma some may feel and will provide inclusive support to both the child and family.

The following statement is highlighted to parents on the school websites so that they are aware of the school's responsibilities:

Our school ensures children learn in a safe, caring and enriching environment. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, on and offline, to develop positive and healthy relationships and how to avoid situations where they might be at risk, including by being exploited.

Our school has a statutory responsibility *to share any concerns it might have about a child in need of protection with other agencies and in particular police, health and children's services. Schools are not able to investigate concerns but have a legal duty to refer them. In most instances, the school will be able to inform the parents/carers of its need to make a referral. However, sometimes the school is advised by Children's Social Care or the police that the parents/carers cannot be informed whilst they investigate the matter. We understand the anxiety parents/carers understandably feel when they are not told about any concerns from the outset. The school follows legislation that aims to act in the best interests of the child.*

5. Use of school premises for non-school activities

When the Trust hires or rents out premises, we ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place.

- If activities are delivered by school staff, our safeguarding procedures apply.
- If delivered by an external body, the Trust seeks written assurance of suitable safeguarding policies and procedures and checks these as needed. This applies whether or not the children are on the school roll (KCSIE 2025, Part 2).
- Where lettings are managed by a third party, TMET quality-assures safeguarding policies and documentation.

6. **Procedures**

The Mead Educational Trust will ensure that:
- The Trust Board understands and fulfils its safeguarding duties, and all members undergo the vetting checks required in KCSIE 2025 Part 3.

Each TMET school will ensure that:
- The Academy Council fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities.
- A DSL and at least one Deputy DSL are appointed, trained to the required standard, and refreshed every two years.
- All staff receive annual safeguarding training, including signs of abuse, and know how to respond to disclosures and concerns.
- Parents/carers are informed of the school's safeguarding duties via the published policy.
- Safer recruitment practices (KCSIE 2025 Part 3) are followed, including appropriate checks (with online searches considered), recorded on the Single Central Record (audited annually by the Trust and termly by the school DSL). At least one safer-recruitment-trained member will be on each panel.
- Concerns about staff suitability are referred to the DBS or relevant agency, with LADO advice.
- At least one SLT member has attended LADO training; procedures for managing allegations and low-level concerns follow KCSIE 2025 (Appendix 3).
- Procedures are reviewed annually.
- The names of the DSL and Deputies are clearly displayed, with procedures for reporting concerns.
- Induction includes:
  - ✓ Safeguarding and child protection policy (roles of DSLs, child-on-child abuse, allegations against staff).
  - ✓ Requirement to read KCSIE 2025 Part 1 and Annex B.
  - ✓ Behaviour, Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing, and Attendance policies (including response to children missing education).
  - ✓ Child protection training, including online safety and staff responsibilities for filtering and monitoring.

7. **Responsibilities**

- Staff recognise that children may be unable or unwilling to disclose abuse due to fear, embarrassment, vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, or language barriers. Staff therefore act as the **'eyes and ears'**, maintaining professional curiosity, recognising signs of harm, and building trusted relationships to support communication (KCSIE 2025, Part 1).
- Concerns must be shared **immediately** with the DSL or Deputy DSL. If a staff member is implicated, concerns are reported to the Principal; if the Principal is involved, to the CEO or another member of the TMET Executive Team.
- Staff must escalate safeguarding concerns if they feel progress is stalled or unresolved. Concerns must not be dismissed due to feeling stuck or unsure. Staff should discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), senior leaders, or the Chief Executive Officer if necessary. All concerns must be addressed, assessed, and resolved appropriately to ensure the safety and welfare of children.
- Where staff feel unable to raise concerns through normal routes, they must use the **whistleblowing procedure** (see TMET Whistleblowing Policy).
- All staff are trained and alert to the risks of **persistent absence or missing education** as potential indicators of abuse or neglect (KCSIE 2025, para 177). Procedures are outlined in the school's **Attendance Policy**.

8. **Leadership of Safeguarding – Roles and Responsibilities**

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Role and Responsibilities:
As required by KCSIE 2025, Annex C, the DSL (a member of the leadership team) has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety. Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard and ensure cover at all times.

Educational outcomes
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) works in partnership with the Principal and strategic leads to promote positive educational outcomes for vulnerable pupils. This includes maintaining oversight of children with a social worker, past or present, tracking their progress, and ensuring high aspirations are upheld. The DSL supports teaching staff to implement reasonable adjustments and targeted academic support, recognising that safeguarding concerns can have a lasting impact on attendance, engagement, and achievement, even after statutory intervention ends.

Managing referrals
- Refer suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation to children's social care or the police.
- Support staff making referrals, including to the Channel programme.
- Report staff allegations to the Principal and LADO, and to the DBS where required.
- Notify the police where a crime may have been committed.

Working with Others:
- Provide support, advice, and expertise to staff.
- Act as the key contact for safeguarding partners, the Principal, case managers, and the LADO.
- Liaise with the Principal on section 47 enquiries, police investigations, and Appropriate Adult requirements.
- Work with the mental health lead and Mental Health Support Team where safeguarding links to mental health.
- Engage parents/carers supportively, especially where families face challenges.
- Promote educational outcomes by:
- ✓ Tracking progress and maintaining high aspirations for children with a social worker.
- ✓ Supporting staff to provide targeted academic support and reasonable adjustments.

Training, Knowledge and Skills
- Safeguarding processes: Understand early help, statutory interventions, referral pathways, and child protection conferences.
- Partnership working: Share accurate, timely information with social care, safeguarding partners, and other agencies.
- Impact of adversity: Recognise how trauma and adverse experiences affect learning, behaviour, and wellbeing.
- Vulnerable groups: Remain alert to the needs of children in need, those with SEND, health conditions, or caring responsibilities.
- Prevent and online safety: Support compliance with the Prevent duty, address online risks, and ensure extra protection for children with SEND.
- Child-centred practice: Promote a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in safeguarding decisions.

DSLs' knowledge and skills are refreshed regularly to ensure they remain up to date with developments relevant to their role.

Raising Awareness:
- Ensure the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is understood and applied by all staff.
- Review the policy annually, publish it on the school website, and make parents aware that referrals may be made for suspected abuse or neglect.
- Maintain links with local safeguarding partners to ensure staff are informed about training opportunities and current local safeguarding arrangements.

Information holding, sharing and child protection files:
DSL(s) are responsible for maintaining up-to-date child protection files, stored securely and confidentially. Records must include:
- A clear, detailed summary of the concern.

- How the concern was followed up and resolved.
- Actions taken, decisions made with rationale, and outcomes. This includes whether referrals were made to other agencies (e.g. social care, Prevent).

Files are accessible only to those with a need to know and sharing follows government information-sharing guidance (KCSIE 2025). Files transfer securely to a new school/college within five school days for in-year moves or at the start of a new term, with receipt confirmed.

DSL(s) understand and apply data protection law, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

<u>Understanding the views of children:</u>
DSL(s) will be supported to:
- Promote a culture where staff listen to children and take account of their wishes and feelings in safeguarding decisions and protective measures.
- Recognise barriers that may prevent children from speaking to staff and foster trusted relationships that encourage open communication.

<u>Availability:</u>
During term time, the DSL (or deputy) will always be available on site. For out-of-hours or out-of-term activities and trips, the school will arrange appropriate cover. In exceptional circumstances, availability may be provided via phone or video call.

The Principal – Roles and Responsibilities:
Each Principal will work with the DSL to ensure Trust Board policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff. They must ensure that:
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and related policies, are updated regularly, ratified by the Trust Board, and published on the school website.
- All staff receive annual safeguarding training, appropriate online safety training, and regular safeguarding updates.
- DSLs and staff have sufficient time and resources to fulfil their responsibilities, including inter-agency meetings and child assessments.
- They understand LADO processes for staff allegations (harms and low-level concerns) and complete LADO training at least every three years.
- Safer recruitment training is up to date and applied in practice.
- Staff and volunteers can raise concerns about unsafe practice, which are addressed sensitively and promptly, supporting a whole-school, child-centred culture of vigilance.
- All staff know their responsibility to refer child protection concerns promptly through correct channels.
- DSLs undertake enhanced safeguarding and child protection training.
- All staff are informed of their right to whistleblow and the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

The Trust Board (Governing Body) – Roles and Responsibilities:
The Mead Educational Trust (TMET) Board holds strategic responsibility for safeguarding across all schools and must comply with legal duties at all times. The Board ensures each school's safeguarding policies, procedures and training are effective and compliant. The Safeguarding Trustee, Dave Riddick, champions safeguarding across the Trust and reports to the Board.

All Trustees and Academy Councillors receive safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction, updated regularly, to equip them to provide strategic challenge and assurance.

The Trust Board will ensure that:

- Every TMET school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, published on the school website (paper copies to be made available on request).
- All staff prioritise the best interests of children and maintain an attitude of *"it could happen here."*
- Clear, accessible systems enable children to report abuse and be confident their concerns will be taken seriously.
- A senior leader is designated as Lead DSL, with at least one trained deputy in place.
- The DSL and deputies complete required training, including refresher training every two years.
- Each Academy Council appoints a Safeguarding Councillor to champion safeguarding, liaise with the DSL, and report to the Council, with appropriate training provided.
- Procedures are in place for managing allegations against staff and volunteers, with thresholds (harms and low-level concerns) understood by all staff.
- The TMET Code of Conduct is up to date, maintained, and followed.
- Allegations against the Principal or central Trust staff are managed by the CEO (or another Executive member) in liaison with the LADO.
- Any safeguarding deficiencies are promptly rectified.
- Recruitment follows *safer recruitment* practice to deter, reject, or identify those unsuitable to work with children (KCSIE 2025, Part Three).
- The annual Safeguarding Return is submitted to the Local Authority.

9. Supporting Children

Some children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs, often linked to trauma or abuse, which can increase vulnerability and impact education. When notified by the Local Authority that a child has a social worker, the DSL(s) will use this information to guide decisions in the child's best interests and share it with relevant agencies where appropriate, to safeguard and promote physical and mental wellbeing.

In addition, we recognise that:
- Children who are abused, witness violence, or live in violent homes may feel helpless or humiliated, blame themselves, and struggle with self-worth.
- School may provide the only stability for children experiencing abuse or at risk of harm.
- A child's behaviour in these circumstances may appear typical, aggressive, or withdrawn.
- Children may need additional mental health support, which the school will provide, resource, or refer as appropriate.

Each TMET School will support all children by:
- Maintaining clear, accessible systems for children to report abuse, ensuring concerns are taken seriously and views safely expressed.
- Promoting self-esteem and resilience across school life, including through the curriculum.
- Identifying children needing extra mental health support and working with external agencies where required.
- Identifying and supporting Young Carers, with signposting to specialist services.
- Creating a caring, safe, and positive school environment.
- Teaching children to recognise risks and how to seek help.
- Liaising with support services and safeguarding agencies (including Social Care and Early Help).
- Notifying Children's Social Care immediately when significant concerns arise.
- Appointing a named teacher for Looked After Children and maintaining an up-to-date list of vulnerable children, regularly reviewed.
- Ensuring concerns and medical records for children with safeguarding issues transfer securely and promptly when they move schools.
- Working with partners to safeguard children across Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection, and Looked After Children.
- Teaching safeguarding, including online safety, within a broad, balanced, and tailored curriculum. This will reflect

the needs of vulnerable children (e.g. those with SEND, disabilities, or who are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation). Topics will include:

- ✓ **Respect and equality:** Understanding fairness, diversity, stereotyping, prejudice, and the importance of treating others equally.
- ✓ **Relationships:** Understanding friendships, family, trusted adults, respect, and consent from an early age, progressing to healthy relationships and boundaries.
- ✓ **Confidence and wellbeing:** Developing body confidence, self-esteem, and positive mental health.
- ✓ **Recognising unsafe situations:** Identifying when behaviour is unsafe, including bullying, peer pressure, or coercion, and knowing how to seek help.
- ✓ **Law and protection:** Teaching children and young people, in an age-appropriate way, about the law relating to consent, exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, and so-called honour-based violence (e.g. forced marriage, FGM), and where to access support.
- ✓ **Respectful behaviour:** Making clear that sexual harassment and sexual violence are always unacceptable.

10. Confidentiality

All matters relating to child protection are confidential, and the child's best interests must always come first. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent information sharing where it is needed to keep children safe. Fears about sharing must never stand in the way of safeguarding.

Staff may share information without consent if doing so protects a child, for example where consent cannot be obtained, it would be unreasonable to seek it, or seeking consent would place the child at risk.

The Principal or DSL will share pupil information with staff strictly on a need-to-know basis, where it enables them to better support the child or family.

All staff have a professional duty to share safeguarding information with other agencies. Staff must never promise confidentiality to a child where it could compromise safety.

Where possible, parents/carers will be informed before a referral to Children's Social Care. However, this may not happen if doing so could increase risk or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, the DSL will consult Children's Advice, Support and Prevention (CASP) in Leicester City or the First Response Duty Team in Leicestershire, depending on the child's residence.

11. Supporting Staff

All TMET staff receive annual safeguarding training each year to ensure they can identify signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and respond appropriately. Training includes recognising safeguarding risks (including online safety), understanding local procedures, the school's behaviour policy, managing allegations, and responding to child-on-child abuse and children missing education. Staff are also trained on specific issues such as FGM, extremism, exploitation, and forced marriage. Additional guidance is provided on supporting vulnerable groups including SEND pupils, looked-after children, and young carers. Staff are made aware of the TMET's filtering and monitoring systems and the importance of keeping children safe online.

We recognise that working with children at risk of harm can be stressful and upsetting. Staff in this situation will be supported through opportunities to discuss concerns with the DSL and, where needed, through further support from the Principal, Vivup, Occupational Health, external services, or a teacher/union representative.

All staff will have access to advice on appropriate professional behaviour. *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings* (Safer Recruitment Consortium, February 2022) provides advice on safe conduct and situations to avoid, helping to prevent allegations of abuse or abuse of trust.

DSLs will have access to support and to relevant workshops, courses, and networks provided by the Local Authority, TMET and other safeguarding partners.

12. Allegations Against Staff

All staff, including supply staff, must take care not to place themselves in vulnerable situations with children and must follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct and *Guidance for Safer Working Practice.*

As part of annual safeguarding training, staff will also receive online safety training and be reminded of acceptable use of IT systems, including digital communication with pupils, parents, and carers.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the Principal (or Vice Principal in their absence). Allegations against the Principal must be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO, Sarah Ridley) or another Trust Executive Team member. Concerns about central Trust staff should be reported to the CEO. Concerns about the CEO must be reported to the Chair of Trustees, Anthony Glover (chairoftrustees@tmet.uk).

All allegations, including low-level concerns, will be acted on immediately in line with Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures (see Appendix 3). This also applies to incidents arising from individuals or organisations using school premises for children's activities.

Staff and pupils may provide accounts of events, which will be securely stored in line with reporting procedures. These accounts may be used in the event of an allegation but must not be treated as formal statements, and the reporting person must not be questioned at the disclosure stage.

13. Whistleblowing

Children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff do not feel able to do so. All staff have a duty to raise concerns about the conduct or attitude of colleagues. Concerns may be reported to the Chief Executive Officer or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if appropriate.

Staff must follow the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy and are reminded they can also access the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline.

14. Our Role in the Prevention of Abuse

Our schools play a key role in preventing harm by fostering an ethos of safety and trust, ensuring pupils know they can approach adults for help, and embedding safeguarding themes across the curriculum (including PSHE, online safety, health, relationships, and wider subjects).

15. Safeguarding Children Susceptible to Radicalisation and Extremism

The Prevent Duty (Revised Guidance 2024) requires schools to safeguard children who may be *susceptible* to radicalisation or extremist influences. Extremist groups may attempt to exploit children, encouraging intolerance,

discrimination, or violence. Such exploitation and radicalisation are safeguarding concerns.

TMET schools value freedom of speech as a fundamental right but recognise it carries responsibilities. Free speech must never be used to justify violence, harm, or discrimination and is subject to laws on equality, human rights, and community safety.

Schools will protect children from extremist influences, whether linked to religious, political, far-right, nationalist, or other ideologies. DSLs remain alert to local and national risks, informed through Police Counter Terrorism Local Profile briefings. Current priorities in Leicestershire include AQ/IS-inspired terrorism, extreme right-wing terrorism, online extremism, and self-initiated terrorists.

Risk reduction: Principals and DSLs will assess and manage risk through the Prevent Risk Assessment, considering the curriculum (including RE and PSHE), SEND provision, assemblies, use of premises by external groups, integration, anti-bullying measures, and community context.

Staff awareness: All staff are trained to recognise potential indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation, such as identity or personal crises, isolation, grievances, or contact with extremist materials or recruiters. Staff must remain alert to these risks and act in line with Prevent training and LLR SCP guidance.

Staff responsibilities: All staff receive regular Prevent training and follow the *Notice–Check–Share* procedure. Concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation must be raised with the DSL, who will consider referral to the Channel programme if appropriate.

16. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is a form of child abuse where an individual or group exploits an imbalance of power to coerce, control or manipulate a child into criminal activity (KCSIE 2025). This may include drug running, theft, violence, or online activity.

Our approach:
- **Staff:** Stay alert to indicators (e.g. going missing, unexplained money/items, changes in wellbeing, association with older peers) and report concerns immediately to the DSL.
- **DSL:** Follows local safeguarding partnership procedures and, where appropriate, refers to Children's Social Care and the Police.
- **Education:** Curriculum and pastoral programmes build awareness of exploitation, refusal skills, and how to access safe exit routes and trusted support.
- **Parents/carers**: Offered signposting to resources to help them recognise risks and support children at home.

17. County Lines & Child Financial Abuse

County Lines and Child Financial Abuse (CFB) are forms of criminal exploitation. County Lines involves gangs or networks using children to move or sell drugs across areas, often through coercion or violence. CFB involves grooming children, often online, to open bank accounts or move money illegally ("money muling").

Our approach:
- **Staff:** Apply the Notice–Check–Share approach and report all concerns to the DSL.
- **DSL:** Follows local safeguarding and law enforcement protocols, including intelligence-sharing with the Police.
- **Education:** Online safety, PSHE and assemblies cover grooming, financial scams, and criminal exploitation.
- **Parents/carers:** Provided with trusted advice and guidance on recognising risks and preventing exploitation.

18. **Serious Violence, Gangs and Knife Crime**

Where risks of serious violence emerge on or off site (including online), staff inform the DSL immediately. The school responds swiftly to safeguard pupils and, where a crime may have been committed or there is immediate risk of harm, contacts the Police (999 in an emergency). The DSL records and assesses risk, consults local procedures (CASP/First Response) and **makes referrals to Children's Social Care where thresholds are met**, considering **Early Help** where they are not. Targeted education and pastoral support are provided; exclusions and attendance changes are monitored as trigger points. TMET schools work with the **Violence Reduction Network** to access advice, resources, and interventions.

19. **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of **child sexual abuse** (*KCSIE 2025*). It can involve physical or non-contact activity, occur online or offline, and victims may not recognise they are being exploited.

Our approach:
- **Staff:** Trained to recognise indicators and report all concerns to the DSL.
- **DSL:** Follows local safeguarding partnership procedures; considers referrals to Children's Social Care, Police and health services; ensures provision of care and support for the victim; records actions and decisions with rationale.
- **Education:** Curriculum teaches healthy relationships, consent, coercion, online safety and help-seeking, adapted for age and need (including SEND).

20. **Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking**

› Modern slavery and human trafficking are forms of child abuse and exploitation (KCSIE 2025). They may involve forced labour, servitude, exploitation, or the movement of children for the purpose of abuse.

› Our approach:
- **Staff**: Remain vigilant to potential indicators and report concerns immediately to the DSL.
- **DSL:** Follows local safeguarding partnership procedures, uses the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) where appropriate, and liaises with Children's Social Care and/or the Police.
- **Record-keeping**: All concerns, actions and decisions are recorded and stored securely in line with TMET policy.

21. **Child on Child Abuse & Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**

Child-on-child abuse can include bullying, physical abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), teenage relationship abuse and online abuse. TMET has a zero-tolerance approach; incidents are never dismissed as "banter," "part of growing up," or "just having a laugh."

Our approach:
- **Staff:** Remain vigilant, have a zero-tolerance approach do not downplay behaviours, and report all concerns to the DSL.
- **DSL:** Follows school procedures for HSB/sexual violence and harassment (see Appendix 5); ensures timely referrals to Children's Social Care/Police where required; records all actions and decisions.
- **Support & response:** Parents/carers are informed as appropriate, victims and perpetrators are supported, and proportionate sanctions applied, including risk assessments where necessary. Preventive education is delivered through curriculum and pastoral programmes.

22. **Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes**

Incidents of sharing nudes or semi-nudes (sometimes called "sexting") are managed as safeguarding matters.

Our approach:
- **Staff:** Do not view or forward images; follow the DSL pathway in line with UKCIS "Sharing nudes and semi-nudes" guidance.
- **DSL:** Assesses the risk, records decisions, and involves the Police and/or Children's Social Care where required. Devices and evidence are managed lawfully and proportionately.
- **Education:** Pupils are taught about consent, the law, digital safety, and the risks of image sharing.
- **Parents/carers:** Provided with information and signposting to help them support their children.

23. Children and the court system

Where a pupil is involved in criminal/family courts, staff **inform the DSL**. The school signposts families to official age-appropriate guides and provides pastoral support as needed.

24. Children with family members in prison

Staff remain non-judgemental and supportive towards the child and family, **informing the DSL** to coordinate support and external signposting. Attendance and wellbeing are monitored; curriculum/pastoral adjustments made as needed.

25. Homelessness

DSLs know local housing referral routes and **escalate concerns as early as possible**. Homelessness risk does **not replace** referrals to Children's Social Care where harm/risk of harm is present. Early Help is offered and recorded. Children experiencing homelessness will be highlighted and supported via the TMET Vulnerability Index.

26. Young Carers

Staff are trained to notice signs that a child may be a young carer, such as persistent tiredness, lateness, or difficulty completing homework. Where concerns are identified, staff notify the DSL, who will coordinate support within school, ensure reasonable adjustments are made (e.g. flexibility with homework, deadlines, or uniform expectations), and make referrals to specialist services when appropriate. The DSL will also liaise with external agencies, such as health or social care, to make sure the child's wider needs are met.

Parents/carers are encouraged to inform the school if a child has caring responsibilities so that help can be provided at the earliest opportunity. Early identification enables schools to provide timely support, reduce barriers to learning, and promote the child's wellbeing.

27. Domestic Violence and Abuse & Violence between young people (Teen relationships)

TMET schools use **Operation Encompass** and follow local safeguarding procedures. Staff must report any concerns to the DSL immediately. The DSL will assess risk, liaise with **CASP/First Response** and/or the **Police** as appropriate, and ensure information is shared securely with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

We recognise that domestic abuse can significantly impact children's safety, wellbeing, and learning. Abuse may occur within the home or in young people's own intimate relationships. Staff are alert to warning signs such as controlling behaviour, isolation, or unexplained absences.

Education across all phases promotes **healthy, respectful relationships, equality, and consent**, while targeted interventions and pastoral support are provided for affected pupils. Schools also work with parents/carers, where safe to do so, and make use of the **Early Help Offer** to reduce risk and provide ongoing support.

28. Children Missing Education (CME) & Persistent Absence

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. This includes children not being home educated appropriately and children who are not on any school roll. In addition to CME, some children are persistently absent from education or have unexplained absences.

Our staff understand the differences between CME and persistent absence and know the procedures to follow. They are aware that prolonged or repeated absence can be a vital warning sign of safeguarding issues, including neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, and particularly county lines. Our response to absence supports early identification of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming missing children in the future. This applies when problems are first emerging and when children are already known to the local authority.

Our approach is informed by the local Educational Welfare Policies, local safeguarding procedures for children missing education, and our Attendance Policy, which sets out day-to-day processes for pupil absence.

Should a pupil go missing from school during the day, the DSL and/or Senior Leader will be informed immediately to ensure the appropriate actions are taken swiftly to reduce the risk of harm. The DSL will consider further actions and ensure risks of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation, are assessed and responded to promptly.

If a child is removed from our school for elective home education, or due to moving away/extended absence, we will notify the Local Authority without delay, in line with statutory requirements. Where a child is missing in education, LA guidance will be followed by completing a Child Missing Education referral. We will make careful records of the actions taken, including informing any relevant partner agencies. Child files will be securely transferred to the appropriate person or new school as soon as this information is available.

29. Harmful Practices (including Honour Based Abuse, FGM, Forced Marriage and Abuse linked to faith or belief)

TMET schools recognise that harmful practices are safeguarding and criminal matters. They include so-called Honour-Based Abuse (HBA), **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, **forced marriage**, and abuse linked to faith, belief, or culture (e.g. spirit possession, witchcraft, or ritual abuse). These practices are never acceptable in any community.

- **FGM:** Staff receive training to recognise risks and signs. It is a **mandatory duty** for teachers to report directly to the Police any known case of FGM involving a girl under 18. All suspicions or concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- **Forced Marriage:** Since 2023, it is a crime to cause a child to marry before 18, even without threats or coercion. Concerns must be reported to the DSL, who may refer to Children's Social Care, the Police, and the Forced Marriage Unit.
- **Other abuse linked to faith or belief:** Includes harmful practices such as spirit possession, witchcraft, breast ironing, or ritual abuse. Staff must treat these as seriously as any other form of abuse and report to the DSL without delay.

All concerns relating to harmful practices must be reported immediately to the DSL, who will follow local safeguarding procedures and involve statutory agencies as appropriate.

30. Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement occurs when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) lives with someone other than a parent or close relative for 28 days or more, without Local Authority involvement. Close relatives are defined as parents, stepparents (if married or in a civil partnership), siblings, and grandparents. All other arrangements, including living with family friends, more distant relatives, or host families, may constitute private fostering.

It is a **legal duty under the Children Act 1989** for parents or private foster carers to notify the Local Authority at least six weeks before such an arrangement begins, or immediately if it is unplanned or already in place. This allows the Local Authority to assess the arrangement and provide support to keep the child safe.

Staff in TMET schools are aware of what constitutes private fostering and of their duty to notify the DSL if they become aware of such an arrangement. The DSL will then inform Children's Social Care in line with statutory requirements. We recognise the apprehension some carers may feel and will support both the carer and child to ensure the child's wellbeing is prioritised.

31. Mental Health

Staff are aware that mental health problems can sometimes be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Experiences of abuse, neglect, or other traumatic events can have a lasting impact on a child's mental health, behaviour, and learning throughout childhood and beyond.

Where staff have a mental health concern that is also a safeguarding concern, they must act immediately and report it to the DSL or deputy.

TMET schools provide support through pastoral systems, Early Help, and the school's graduated response. Staff and parents are signposted to additional specialist services where appropriate.

32. Bullying and Safeguarding

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally harms another person physically or emotionally. It can be carried out by children or adults and may take many forms, including cyberbullying. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice linked to protected characteristics (e.g. race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability) or other differences, real or perceived.

Some forms of bullying are criminal offences (e.g. violence, theft, harassment, hate crime) and may require Police involvement.

All TMET schools have a legal duty to maintain an Anti-Bullying Policy, accessible on the school website, setting out clear procedures for managing incidents. Staff and pupils are made aware of this policy, and anti-bullying education is delivered through assemblies, lessons, and pastoral programmes.

Where bullying presents a safeguarding concern, the DSL and Principal will assess the risk of significant harm and, where appropriate, seek advice from Children's Social Care or the Police.

33. Online safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from harmful and inappropriate online material. TMET schools take a **whole-school approach to online safety**, which protects and educates pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology, and establishes clear processes to identify, intervene, and escalate concerns where appropriate.

Online risks are categorised into four areas (KCSIE 2025):
- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content. This includes material such as pornography, radicalisation, extremist ideology, self-harm or suicide content, discriminatory or hateful content, and misleading or false information (misinformation and disinformation).
- **Contact** – harmful interactions online (e.g. peer pressure, grooming, exploitation, or adults posing as children).
- **Conduct** – harmful behaviours online (e.g. cyberbullying, sexting, sharing explicit images).
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, scams, phishing, or inappropriate advertising. Concerns should be reported to the **Anti-Phishing Working Group** (https://apwg.org/).

Filtering and monitoring:
- TMET uses **Smoothwall** to provide filtering and monitoring across all schools.
- The **Lead DSL** is responsible for ensuring that systems are understood, reviewed, and used effectively, and that staff receive appropriate training on their roles and responsibilities.
- In line with *KCSIE 2025* and the **DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards**, our schools will:
  - ✓ Identify and assign clear roles and responsibilities for filtering and monitoring.
  - ✓ Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
  - ✓ Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
  - ✓ Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet safeguarding needs.
- The **Trust Board**, via the Safeguarding Trustee, reviews provision and works with IT staff, the Trust Safeguarding Lead, and service providers to ensure standards are met.

Staff training and responsibilities:
- All staff receive safeguarding training, including online safety, at induction and through at least annual updates.
- This includes awareness of the school's filtering and monitoring systems, how to report concerns, and their role in supporting children's safe and responsible use of technology.
- Staff are expected to model safe online behaviours and to embed online safety within teaching, learning, and pastoral care.

Cybercrime:
Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers or the internet. It may be:
- **Cyber-enabled** – crimes that also occur offline but are amplified online (e.g. fraud).
- **Cyber-dependent** – crimes that can only be committed using computers, such as unauthorised access to systems (hacking), denial of service (DoS/DDoS) attacks, or creating and distributing malware.

Children with advanced computing skills may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. Where concerns arise, the DSL may refer into the **Cyber Choices programme** (a national police initiative supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency) to divert children into more positive use of their skills.

Cyber Choices does not cover cyber-enabled crimes such as online fraud, drug purchasing, child sexual abuse or exploitation, or online bullying. Where such cases arise and a crime may have been committed, schools will follow safeguarding procedures and involve the Police and other relevant agencies.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The rapid growth of AI technologies presents new online safety risks for children and young people. These include exposure to harmful or misleading AI-generated content (such as deepfakes, altered images, or disinformation), inappropriate or unsafe contact through AI-driven chatbots, and risks associated with children misusing generative tools (e.g. creating harmful content, breaching copyright, or sharing personal data). AI systems may also amplify discriminatory or biased material, or be exploited by offenders to groom, exploit, or deceive children. TMET schools recognise these emerging risks and ensure that filtering and monitoring systems remain responsive to developments in AI.

Staff training includes raising awareness of AI-related risks, equipping staff to identify and respond to concerns, and supporting pupils to develop critical digital literacy skills to navigate and question content safely. Schools provide parents and carers with guidance to reinforce safe, and responsible use of technology.

Education and parental engagement:

Online safety is embedded across the curriculum (Computing, RSE/PSHE, assemblies) and adapted for vulnerable children, including those with SEND.

Parents/carers are supported with guidance on online safety, including the use of parental controls, monitoring activity, and encouraging open conversations about online risks.

34. Remote Education

TMET recognises that the same safeguarding principles apply during remote education as in face-to-face teaching. All staff delivering online or remote learning must follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct, the school's Online Safety Policy, and safeguarding procedures.

When organising live or recorded lessons, staff must ensure:
- neutral or plain backgrounds are used where possible;
- appropriate privacy settings and controls are applied (e.g. managing microphones, cameras, and chat functions);
- lessons are password-protected and access details kept secure;
- expectations for behaviour and participation are clearly shared with pupils, parents, and carers.

Where online tuition or remote learning is used, staff remain vigilant to signs of abuse or neglect and must report concerns to the DSL in line with safeguarding procedures.

35. Early Help and Supporting Children and their Families

Early Help involves agencies working together to support children and families as soon as issues arise, from early years to adolescence. Trained staff and DSLs identify those who may benefit and coordinate support through the Early Help Single Assessment, led by a designated professional. This process ensures needs are identified and the right services are brought together through a Family Support Plan. Our school's Early Help offer is shared with families via our website.

If families decline support and concerns escalate, a referral to the Children's Social Care may be necessary. Where needs are complex or progress is limited, a step-up to Social Care may be appropriate, or a step-down may occur if a recent assessment is already in place.

36. **Local Priorities**

In Leicester and Leicestershire, the Local Authority and Safeguarding Children Partnership set priorities that reflect local risks. These include issues such as knife crime, gang involvement, radicalisation, county lines, criminal exploitation, antisocial behaviour, FGM, and wider contextual safeguarding concerns.

At Castle Mead Academy, we have identified the following priorities, in line with our local context:

- Mental Health & Self Harm
- Community Safety

Senior Leaders, DSLs and staff are kept aware of these priorities through training and knowledge of pupils and the community. Curriculum provision is tailored to ensure children are well-informed and learn how to keep themselves safe. Schools work closely with the Police, Social Care, and community partners to address these issues effectively.

37. **Alternative Provision**

Alternative Provision (AP) refers to education arranged outside mainstream or special schools for pupils who, for a range of reasons, cannot attend mainstream settings. Pupils in AP often have complex needs and may be at increased risk of harm. Governing bodies, proprietors, and school leaders must therefore be aware of the additional safeguarding risks (*KCSIE 2025*).

When our school places a pupil in AP, we:
- ✓ remain responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of that pupil at all times;
- ✓ ensure the placement is suitable, lawful, and meets the pupil's educational and welfare needs;
- ✓ satisfy ourselves that the provider has appropriate safeguarding policies and practices in place, including safer recruitment, staff training, and clear reporting procedures;
- ✓ maintain regular contact with both the provider and the pupil, reviewing the placement to ensure it continues to meet the child's needs.

We recognise that some AP providers may be unregistered. Where unregistered provision is used, we:
- ✓ check that the provider is not operating illegally and is compliant with the law on registration;
- ✓ use the TMET AP Toolkit to support decision-making, risk assessment, and ongoing monitoring;
- ✓ follow the latest DfE statutory guidance on Alternative Provision (2025) and our Local Authority arrangements, ensuring placements are safe and appropriate.

38. **Policy review**

The Trust Board will review the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy annually.

39. **Other Relevant Policies**
- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- TMET Staff Code of Conduct
- Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct
- IT Acceptable use agreements
- Physical Intervention
- SEND

- Supporting Pupils with medical conditions
- Health and safety
- Online safety
- Recruitment and Selection
- Whistleblowing
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation

The above list is not exhaustive and when undertaking development or planning of any kind, The Mead Educational Trust and its Trust Board will consider the best interest of our children and any implications for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

APPENDIX 1 - DEFINITION AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. It can involve inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm, and may occur in family, institutional, community, or online contexts. Abuse can be perpetrated by adults or by other children (*child-on-child abuse*).

The four main categories of abuse are:
- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse** (including child-on-child sexual violence and harassment)
- **Neglect**
-

Other safeguarding concerns such as exploitation (e.g. criminal or sexual exploitation), domestic abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, and risks linked to SEND and vulnerability are also covered in *KCSIE 2025*.

Indicators of abuse and neglect:
The detailed definitions and signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation are set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025** (Part One and Annex B).

All TMET staff are expected to be familiar with these, and the Trust provides induction and regular training to ensure staff can recognise and respond appropriately.

Staff must report any concerns about a child immediately to the DSL, in line with this policy.

APPENDIX 2 – RESPONDING TO CONCERNS, DISCLOSURES OR ALLEGATIONS

School staff are in a unique position to identify and support children at risk of harm. Concerns may arise through:
- a direct disclosure;
- information from a third party;
- changes in behaviour, or;
- visible signs of injury.

When a child makes a disclosure or staff have a concern, they must:
- **Listen** carefully and take the child seriously.
- **Reassure** the child they are right to share but never promise confidentiality.
- **Avoid** leading questions, investigation, or physical examination. Clarification should only use open prompts (e.g. *Tell me, Explain, Describe*).
- **Record** factually what was seen/heard, using the child's own words, with time/date/signature. Do not take photographs.
- **Report** immediately to the DSL (or deputy), following the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff must remember that it is **not their role to investigate**; only to observe, listen, record and report. Confidentiality must be maintained, and only those who need to know should be informed. Support is available for staff who find disclosures distressing.

Allegations or concerns about staff:

All staff, including supply staff, must take care not to place themselves in vulnerable situations with children and must follow the **TMET Staff Code of Conduct** and *Guidance for Safer Working Practice*.

As part of annual safeguarding training, staff also receive online safety training and are reminded of acceptable use of IT systems, including digital communication with pupils, parents, and carers.

- Allegations against a member of staff must be reported to the **Principal** (or Vice Principal in their absence).
- Allegations against the **Principal** must be reported to the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO, Sarah Ridley)** or another Trust Executive Team member.
- Concerns about central Trust staff should be reported to the CEO.
- Concerns about the **CEO** must be reported to the **Chair of Trustees (Anthony Glover)** at chairoftrustees@tmet.uk.

All allegations, including low-level concerns, will be acted on immediately in line with Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. This includes incidents arising from individuals or organisations using school premises for children's activities.

Staff and pupils may provide accounts of events, which will be securely stored in line with reporting procedures. These accounts may be used in the event of an allegation but must not be treated as formal statements, and the reporting person must not be questioned at the disclosure stage.

*For further guidance, staff should refer to **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025** and local safeguarding partnership procedures.*

APPENDIX 3 – GUIDANCE ON MANAGING ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ADULTS, INCLUDING LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

Scope
Applies to all adults working in or on behalf of the school (employees,

supply/agency staff, contractors, volunteers, governors, visitors, and organisations using school premises for activities with children).

Principles

We follow KCSIE 2025 Part 4 and Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LLR SCP) procedures. All concerns are acted on immediately. Staff must avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations and follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct and *Guidance for Safer Working Practice*.

A. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

An allegation meets the threshold where it is alleged a person has:

- harmed a child or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child; and/or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including behaviour outside school).

Reporting routes

- Concerns about staff/volunteers/contractors/supply staff → Principal (or Vice Principal in their absence).
- Concerns about the Principal → CEO (Sarah Ridley) or another Trust Executive Team member.
- Concerns about central Trust staff → CEO.
- Concerns about the CEO → Chair of Trustees (Anthony Glover) at chairoftrustees@tmet.uk.
- Whistleblowing routes remain available (see Whistleblowing Policy).

Immediate actions (case manager = Principal/CEO as applicable)

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm or a crime may have been committed → contact Police/Children's Social Care urgently.

- Take basic fact-finding only (do not investigate): was the person on site; potential contact with child; any witnesses/CCTV.
- Consult the LADO within one working day and follow advice on next steps (strategy discussion, risk assessment, information to the individual, etc.). Suspension is not automatic.
- Do not inform the individual until advised by the LADO
- If the allegation involves supply/contracted staff, also inform the employer/agency.

B. Concerns that do not meet the harms threshold (Low-Level Concerns)

A low-level concern is any concern about an adult's behaviour towards a child that does not meet the threshold above but is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct or causes unease ("nagging doubt").

Examples include:
- Over-familiarity/favouritism.
- Using personal devices/social media with pupils.
- One-to-one behind closed doors without safeguards.
- Inappropriate or sexualised language.

Expectations
- Report promptly to the Principal (or another member of the SLT)
- Where the concern relates to the Principal, report to the CEO; if about central Trust staff, report to the CEO; if about the CEO, report to the Chair of Trustees.
- Self-reporting is encouraged. Good-faith reporters are supported. Anonymity is respected as far as reasonably possible.
- Leaders will review the concern (and any pattern) and decide proportionate actions (guidance, supervision, training,

management action). Concerns that escalate or constitute a pattern may result in consulting the LADO.

C. Recording, confidentiality and references

- Keep a central, secure log of all allegations and low-level concerns.
- Record: a clear, comprehensive summary of the concern; how it was followed up and resolved; actions/decisions and outcome; who reported (anonymity noted where requested/reasonable).
- Store separately from personnel files unless:
  - o the concern meets the harms threshold (then keep in personnel file), or
  - o there are multiple low-level concerns indicating a pattern.
- Handle all information confidentially and in line with Data Protection.
- References: include substantiated safeguarding allegations as required by KCSIE. Do not include low-level concerns unless they evidence a pattern that has met the harms threshold.

D. Staff conduct & training

- All staff, including supply staff, must follow the TMET Staff Code of Conduct and safer working practice guidance;
- Staff receive annual safeguarding training, including online safety and reminders on acceptable use of IT and digital communication with pupils, parents and carers.

APPENDIX 4 - GUIDELINES FOR AVOIDING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE: FOR ALL STAFF MEMBERS

All staff, including supply, volunteers and contractors, must maintain professional boundaries at all times and follow the **TMET Staff Code of Conduct** and *Guidance for Safer Working Practice (2022)*. This protects both children and adults from risk of harm or false allegations.

Key principles

- **Physical contact**: May be appropriate in some contexts (e.g. comforting young or distressed children, supporting SEND pupils, providing first aid). Any contact must be necessary, proportionate, and age appropriate. Staff should avoid initiating unnecessary physical contact.

- **First aid/medication**: Only trained/authorised staff administer first aid or medication, in line with school policy. Records are kept of all interventions.

- **Use of reasonable force**: Where required to prevent injury to a child or others, staff must use the minimum reasonable force and report immediately to the Principal/DSL. Written records should be made, and witnesses involved wherever possible.

- **One-to-one situations**: Avoid being alone with a child where possible. Use rooms with visibility (windows/doors open) and ensure another adult knows the meeting is taking place. Peripatetic/1:1 staff must take extra care to follow these principles.

- **Conversations and support**: Staff should listen and provide reassurance but avoid over-involvement in personal issues. Concerns should be referred promptly to the DSL or appropriate professional.

- **Professional behaviour**: Staff must be alert to how their words, actions and use of technology may be perceived, and act in ways that uphold trust and confidence in the school.

Reminder
All staff receive annual safeguarding and safer working practice training, including guidance on avoiding situations which could give rise to allegations. Concerns about conduct must be reported in line with **Appendix 3 (Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns)**.

APPENDIX 5 –CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT & HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR (HSB)

Principles
All staff maintain an attitude of *"it could happen here"* and understand that addressing inappropriate behaviour early can prevent escalation. Sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable, are not "banter" or "part of growing up" and will not be tolerated.

Children who experience such abuse may be distressed, their education disrupted, and their wellbeing affected. All victims will be taken seriously, supported, and protected.

Vulnerable groups
Any child can be affected and all reports will be taken seriously, however we are aware that it is more likely girls will be the victims of sexual violence and harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Children with disabilities are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers (KCSIE 2025 paragraph 453).

Definitions
Sexual violence: offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent).

Sexual harassment: unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates dignity or creates a hostile, offensive, or sexualised environment (can be

online or offline).

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Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB): *developmentally inappropriate, abusive, or violent behaviour, occurring online or offline, between peers. DSLs are trained to use tools such as the Brook Traffic Light framework to support responses.*

Preventative Approach
We take a whole-school approach, embedding prevention into our safeguarding culture through:
- Curriculum (RSE/PSHE, online safety, healthy relationships, consent).
- Assemblies, student voice, and promotion of reporting routes.
- Training for staff to recognise, respond, and challenge inappropriate behaviours.
- Early Help where appropriate to address non-violent HSB.

Responding to Reports
Response will always be informed by KCSIE 2025 (Part five).

Staff must:
- Listen and reassure, never promise confidentiality.
- Record factually and report immediately to the DSL.
- Avoid viewing/sharing explicit material (follow UKCIS "Sharing nudes and semi-nudes" guidance).

The DSL will:
- Balance the wishes of the victim with safeguarding duties.
- Consider risk assessments, safety planning, and support for both victim and alleged perpetrator.
- Refer to Children's Social Care and/or Police where thresholds are met. Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes and will be reported.
- Keep victims and alleged perpetrators apart in school where necessary to ensure safety and wellbeing.
- Ensure ongoing review, pastoral support, and education

continuity.

Recording & Confidentiality:
- All concerns, decisions, and actions will be recorded securely and in accordance with TMET record keeping guidance.
- Anonymity will be protected as far as possible, particularly where Police investigations are ongoing.
- Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only.

Working with Parents/Carers
- Both victim's and alleged perpetrator's parents/carers will normally be engaged unless doing so would place a child at further risk.
- Support arrangements will be explained clearly and consistently