

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Executive Summary of Key Principles

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- 1) The policy is consistent with statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2026 and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, 2026 (KCSiE), together with multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and procedures issued by the local safeguarding children partnerships.
- 2) All staff and volunteers are required to read and understand at least Part One of *KCSiE 2026*. Staff working directly with children should also be familiar with the safeguarding information contained within Annex A where relevant to their role. Staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities should additionally read Annex B, which sets out the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 3) All staff and volunteers must read the full *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, the *Staff Code of Conduct* and the school's *Behaviour Policy* before working with children. This document serves only as a brief reference point for staff, parents, governors and other stakeholders.
- 4) Every school in Community Academies Trust (CAT) has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a member of that school's Strategic Leadership Team and at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead who is trained to the same standard as the DSL. The Trust's Director of Safeguarding and Behaviour is Jo Howell.
- 5) The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers receive a robust induction into the school's safeguarding (including online safety) arrangements, which will include a requirement that they read the key statutory guidance and safeguarding-related policies referenced above. Induction will also ensure they understand expectations applicable to filtering and monitoring, including how this applies to the use of generative AI, and that they know the expected response to children who are absent from or missing from education before starting work with children.
- 6) All trustees, governors, school leaders, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to establish and maintain a culture of safeguarding so as to safeguard and promote the welfare of children effectively.
- 7) All staff and volunteers must have a full understanding of the DSL's and Deputy DSLs' roles, the safeguarding and child protection procedures and the definitions, impact and indicators of abuse, as detailed in the full *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, in order to safeguard children effectively. They will also have a clear understanding of the process for referrals to children's social care and other safeguarding agencies.
- 8) This school is committed to offering early help to those children who need it. Staff are trained to be approachable, promote children's trust, be vigilant, maintain professional curiosity about children and to record in writing and report all concerns and issues that indicate a child may require early help, or that there may be a safeguarding issue, to the DSL, without delay.
- 9) The DSL will consider all such concerns and issues and will make a judgement about whether to monitor the child's progress, discuss with parents/carers, provide pastoral care and support, offer early help or make appropriate referrals. The DSL will record actions, referrals, decisions taken, including the rationale for those decisions, and outcomes. If early help is appropriate, the DSL will keep the case under constant review, escalating where necessary.
- 10) Staff recognise that some children are particularly vulnerable and therefore more likely to require early help or safeguarding. Those children include children with special educational needs and disabilities; those who are in Local Authority care or who were previously in care or who have a social worker; those living in families experiencing adult substance abuse, adult mental ill health and/or domestic abuse; children showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour; children experiencing mental health difficulties and children exposed to serious violence. Some children are also vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality.
- 11) The school recognises that some children, including gender-questioning children, may experience additional vulnerability, distress, bullying or safeguarding concerns. Schools will provide appropriate support based on an assessment of individual need whilst also protecting the privacy, dignity, safety and welfare of all pupils, including through the lawful provision of single-sex facilities and accommodation.
- 12) This school recognises that children who run away, go missing from school or who are regularly absent from school are potentially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, offending and placing themselves in situations where they may suffer physical harm. The school will therefore work actively in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to understand and improve poor school attendance and to address issues of children running away and going missing from home.
- 13) The school follows Local Authority Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures, including local threshold guidance, referral processes, Operation Encompass arrangements and local professional challenge and escalation procedures where there are concerns that a child remains at risk or an appropriate safeguarding response has not been achieved.
- 14) The school has a duty to teach children about safeguarding and how to recognise risk, both online and offline, and the support available to them, as part of providing a 'broad and balanced curriculum.' Children are encouraged to report abuse or anything which causes them distress to a member of staff of their choosing.

- 15) The school maintains filtering and monitoring systems in line with Department for Education standards. All staff have a role in promoting online safety, understanding filtering and monitoring arrangements and responding appropriately to concerns identified through those systems.
- 16) The school recognises that artificial intelligence (AI) creates both opportunities and safeguarding risks. Staff and pupils are expected to use AI safely, responsibly and in accordance with policies. Concerns relating to AI-generated content, deepfakes, online exploitation, bullying or other safeguarding risks must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- 17) The school operates a mobile phone-free environment during the school day unless an authorised exception applies in accordance with the school's Mobile Phone Policy.
- 18) The *CAT Whistleblowing Policy* enables staff to raise concerns, including low-level concerns, or allegations, initially in confidence, and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.
- 19) Staff are expected to report all concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues to the headteacher. Concerns or complaints about the headteacher should be reported to the the Director of Safeguarding and Behaviour or the Deputy CEO. Staff can also contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who is responsible for the co-ordination of responses to allegations against people who work with children. For staff who do not feel able to raise concerns internally, relevant contact details for the LADO are available in the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, which can be accessed via the school website. The *NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line* can also be contacted on 0800 028 0285 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.
- 20) All staff, including the headteacher, volunteers and governors will receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety training, and at least annual updates to provide them with the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children.
- 21) All DSL/Deputy DSLs will attend appropriate safeguarding training for newly appointed DSLs and refresher training every two years. The DSL team will also update their knowledge and skills regularly to keep up with developments relevant to their role, including local and national safeguarding practice updates.
- 22) This school seeks to ensure best practice is adhered to when selecting and appointing staff and volunteers to work in our school by following the statutory guidance and the school's Safer Recruitment procedures and by embedding safeguarding in recruitment and induction processes and the ongoing management of staff and volunteers. At least one member of every interview panel will have completed nationally-accredited safer recruitment training, which is refreshed triennially.
- 23) In line with changes introduced through the Crime and Policing Act 2026, all volunteers will be subject to an enhanced DBS check before commencing their role. Where volunteers undertake regulated activity, the enhanced DBS check will also include a children's barred list check.
- 24) Child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality. Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. Although staff will professionally discuss day-to-day concerns about pupils with colleagues, they should report all child protection and safeguarding concerns to the DSL or Headteacher or – in the case of concerns about the Headteacher – to the most appropriate member of TEG, as detailed above. However, any member of staff can contact and/or make a referral to Children's Social Care if they believe that is the only effective way to safeguard a child.
- 25) All staff and volunteers must be mindful of specific requirements in relation to their own use of technology, social media and artificial intelligence, including online behaviour and the taking and storing of images of children. Staff must not enter confidential or personally identifiable information relating to children into unauthorised AI systems.
- 26) The DSL is responsible for ensuring that all staff and volunteers have a meaningful awareness of a range of specific safeguarding issues as defined in *KCSiE 2026*. In particular, staff need to understand issues and risks in relation to radicalisation, extremism (including misogyny, misinformation and disinformation); child sexual and criminal exploitation; child-on-child abuse; sexual violence and sexual harassment; children who display sexually harmful or inappropriate behaviour; the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes; AI-generated explicit imagery; extra-familial harm; serious violence; and so-called 'honour-based' abuse, including female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
- 27) Where police involvement relates to a pupil, the school will work with the police, Local Authority and other agencies to safeguard the child's welfare and ensure access to an Appropriate Adult where required.
- 28) Additional emergency support and advice is also available from Jo Howell at jhowell@catschools.uk or on 07484 515841.