



## **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**

**2023-24**

### **Creating a Culture of Safeguarding**

Victoria School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its students and believes that all students, regardless of age, special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation have the right to be protected from all types of harm and abuse. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy forms a fundamental part of our approach to providing excellent pastoral care to all students.

Victoria School recognises and acts upon the legal duties set out in the relevant statutes, regulations and guidance, to protect its students (and staff) from harm, and to co-operate with other agencies in carrying out those duties and responding to abuse.

This Policy is addressed to all members of staff at Victoria School. Adherence to this Policy is mandatory for all staff and its use is not subject to discretion. This Policy applies whenever staff are working with students including where this is away from the School, for example at another institution, school visits and trips, sporting and cultural activities.

This Policy is available to all staff on the Victoria School website. A paper copy of this policy is also available to parents upon request to the School office.

Victoria School recognises that safeguarding covers much more than child protection, especially due to the nature of the cohorts we work with, the underlying needs of our students and the potential trauma that they have experienced throughout their lives; this policy will operate in conjunction with other related policies and procedures.

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## 1.0 Rationale

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act, 1989, the Education Act, 2002 and the statutory guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education, (KSCIE) 2023.

'Safeguarding' is a term which is broader than 'child protection'. As well as protecting students from harm, 'safeguarding' widens the responsibility to preventing harm and promoting the well-being of students. Victoria School takes these responsibilities very seriously. As well as ensuring its policies and procedures support its safeguarding responsibilities, Victoria School will work with students, their families, Social Services Departments and other relevant agencies to ensure the risk of harm to students is minimised.

There are three main elements to the child protection and safeguarding policy:

- **PREVENTION** through the teaching and pastoral support offered to students and the creation and maintenance of a whole school protective ethos.
- **PROTECTION** by following agreed procedures for identifying, monitoring and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse; protecting children from unsuitable people.
- **SUPPORT** to victims of abuse and to staff in identifying signs and symptoms of abuse.

Victoria School is committed to working in partnership with parents, Social Services Departments and diverse communities, to continuously develop and improve the safeguarding culture within our school.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

## Aims

- Create an environment in Victoria School which is safe and secure for all students.
- Encourage our students to establish satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults.
- Encourage students to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all students.

## 2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; every member of staff and members of the Management Committee who may assist the School should:

- Protect students from abuse
- Be aware of the School child protection procedures
- Know how to access and implement those procedures
- Follow those procedures at all times
- Know the identity of the School Designated Safeguarding Lead and to whom one should speak in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Report all safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Keep a record of any significant safeguarding concern, conversation or incident
- Undertake appropriate training including refresher training every year

Staff who have day-to-day contact with students are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse such as changes in behaviour or developmental concerns. Staff working with our students are required to read at least Part 1 of KCSIE (about specific safeguarding issues).

All staff receive training in safeguarding students as part of their induction policy. All staff receive updated safeguarding training every year. All School staff are alert to signs of abuse and neglect and all staff should know to whom they should report concerns or suspicions. All School staff keep themselves updated on safeguarding issues and child protection procedures by accessing advice, guidance and training as appropriate to their role.

### Designated Safeguarding Lead

Victoria School has appointed **Nikki Nabney (Lead Nurse)** as the Designated Safeguarding Lead across the School. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is absent then contact should be made with the Deputy Safeguarding Leads – **Ed Potterton (Acting Headteacher)**, **Sean Mogg (Head of Student Services)**, **Donna Brown (Family Liaison Officer)** or **Gemma Mallett (Deputy Head of Student Services)**. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a member of the School's Senior Leadership Team with the necessary status and authority to take responsibility for child protection matters.

#### The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Be responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual child protection concerns are investigated and managed in accordance with guidance and regulations.
- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the local Social Services Department as appropriate and in accordance with BCP Local Authority procedures.
- Ensure that he/she is aware of the latest national and local guidance and requirements and will keep staff informed as appropriate.
- Receive appropriate training in child protection matters, to include both national and local bodies, at least every two years.

- Ensure that staff have access to and understand their role as appropriate in the child protection procedures, including but not limited to part-time staff, supply staff, peripatetic staff, newly appointed staff, catering staff, cleaning staff and premises / maintenance staff.
- Act as a source of advice and support within the School and co-ordinate action regarding referrals in relation to both students and allegations against staff.
- Ensure that all policies and procedures adopted by the Management Committee are fully implemented, and followed by the staff.
- Work towards establishing and maintaining a culture in school where all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children. These concerns will be treated sensitively and proactively in line with the school's Whistle-blowing policy.
- Ensure that all relevant training for all staff is up-to-date and reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff have received 'Section 1' and 'Annexe B' of Keeping Children Safe in Education and have signed to acknowledge they have read and understood its contents.

### **3.0 Child protection**

Child Protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. Safeguarding, in addition to child protection, encompasses issues such as pupil health and safety, bullying/cyber-bullying, appropriate medical provision.

At Victoria School we fully recognise our responsibilities for child protection and strive to achieve an environment where children feel secure, supported and valued within and beyond the school gate.

We recognise that some children are the victims of neglect and/or physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Staff at school, by virtue of their day-to-day contact with and knowledge of the children in their care, are well placed to identify such abuse and to offer support to children in need.

All child protection concerns and referrals will be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child. A child protection concern may come to the attention of School staff in a variety of ways, such as student disclosure, third party disclosure or staff suspicion. Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported on CPOMS or to a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is absent then concerns must be reported to a Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Sean Mogg, Nicky Nabney, Donna Brown or Gemma Mallett. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school. It is not the responsibility of the School to investigate suspected or alleged abuse; this is the role of the Police and Social Services.

The Children's Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and require discussion with the statutory agencies. All staff, including volunteers have

a statutory obligation to report to the DSL if there is suspicion of abuse/neglect of a child or if a child discloses abuse or allegations of abuse.

### **3.1 Recognising Abuse**

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect:

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

The definitions in this document are drawn from Working Together to Safeguard Students. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm in the following four categories:

#### **Physical abuse**

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

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to students that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on students. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing students frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of students. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is

happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving students in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging students to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other students.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

[\(Definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children\)](#)

### **3.2 Indicators of abuse and what you might see**

The following may help staff be aware of possible signs of abuse but these do not necessarily mean that the child has been abused:

#### **Physical abuse**

- Physical Signs - cuts, bruises, burns, broken bones, bite marks, torn frenulum. Injury should be consistent with explanation
- Behavioural Signs - tearful, clingy, withdrawn clusters of behaviours or aggressive, angry, in your face cluster of behaviours. Behaviour which is out of ordinary compared to peers. Change in established patterns of behaviour
- Parental and other factors - Relationship, Housing, immigration, racism, mental health, substance misuse problems
- History and Stressors

#### **Emotional abuse**

- Physical Signs - Few physical signs include alopecia, nervous tics and exacerbation of existing physical conditions.



- Behavioural Signs -tearful, clingy, withdrawn clusters of behaviours or aggressive, angry, cluster of behaviours, 'failure to thrive'. Behaviour which is out of ordinary compared to peers. Change in established patterns of behaviour.
- Parental and other factors - Research points to: - unrealistic expectations, valuing a child only in so far as they meet a parental expectation, scapegoating, creating cognitive distortions. NB- Cumulative effect, drip/drip/drip, under-reported.
- Constant hunger, tiredness and/or poor personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Social isolation
- Poor self-esteem and/or relationship with peers
- Excessive rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking

### **Sexual abuse**

- Physical Signs - any injury to genital area, STD's, pregnancy.
- Behavioural Signs - withdrawn or angry clusters of behaviour, sexual knowledge beyond age or understanding, neglect of personal appearance, no signs - as before.
- Parental and other factors-prevalence, research (correlation with psychosomatic headaches and stomach aches, eating disorders, risk-taking behaviours and fire-setting) grooming behaviours, disassociation, characteristic family patterns.
- History and stressors

### **Additional potential indicators (Including possible sexual exploitation):**

- Showing signs of sexual activity/abuse, including STDs, terminations and pregnancy scares
- Going missing frequently / or from a young age
- Bullying in or out of School
- Previous and sometimes current sexual abuse, neglect and physical abuse, and domestic violence within family
- Family involvement in sexual exploitation, drugs or alcohol
- Drug and alcohol misuse use themselves
- Emotional symptoms, including eating disorders, mood swings and self-harm (sometimes very extreme, e.g. genital cutting)
- Involvement in theft, shoplifting, etc. often organised by person exploiting them
- Preoccupation with mobile phone suggesting they are being 'controlled' (e.g. possession of multiple phones, extreme distress when one is lost or not working)
- Having an older "boyfriend"- in some cases "boyfriend" drives them about
- Having limited freedom of movement
- Possession of money and goods not accounted for
- Sexual offences

### 3.3 Responding to Disclosures of Abuse

For staff to be able to identify and respond appropriately to possible abuse and/or neglect, they must at all times follow the four stages below:

1. Be alert
2. Question behaviours
3. Ask for help
4. Refer

Students are more likely to be abused by someone they know and trust than by a stranger. Staff should make themselves available to listen and demonstrate to the student that what they are saying is being taken seriously and without criticism and should respond in a supportive, calm manner and avoid asking detailed questions. The role of the member of staff is to listen, record and report; not to investigate.

If a student reports abuse from another student or students, staff should follow the procedures in this section. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with local agencies in relation to handling any such cases which arise.

### 3.4 If you suspect a child is at risk of harm

There will be occasions when staff suspect that a child may be at serious risk, but they have no 'real' evidence. The child's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre or other physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will always try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs noticed may be due to a variety of factors and it is wholly appropriate to ask the child if they are alright or if they can help in any way.

If the child does begin to reveal that they are being harmed staff should follow the advice in the section 'If a child discloses to you'. If, following the conversation, they remain concerned, they should discuss your concerns with the DSL.

### 3.5 If a child discloses information to you

#### Immediate Response

If a disclosure is made, the **member of staff should:**

- Allow the pace of the conversation to be dictated by the student.
- Ask neutral questions which encourage the student to talk such as "can you tell me what happened?"
- Accept what the student says and do not ask for further detail.

- Acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you.
- Note carefully any clearly visible external signs of possible injury or neglect.
- Reassure the student that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and why.

The member of staff **should not:**

- Burden the student with guilt by asking questions such as "why didn't you tell me before?"
- Interrogate or pressure the student to provide information.
- Ask any potentially leading questions such as those that start with the words, how, what, when, where and why.
- Undress the child or examine clothed parts of the child's body in an attempt to determine the nature of any such injuries/ neglect.
- Criticise the perpetrator; this may be someone they love.
- Promise confidentiality.
- Make promises that they cannot keep such as "I'll stay with you all the time" or "it will be alright now".

If a student confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, staff **must not make promises about confidentiality**. Staff must tell the student sensitively that they have a responsibility to tell the named Designated Safeguarding Lead so that the child can be helped to stay safe and feel better.

In every case, the member of staff should consider whether the student is able to provide consent for the information to be shared and if so, seek to obtain that consent. If the student does not consent, the staff member should explain that they need to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and reassure them that the information will only be disclosed to other people who need to know.

Victoria School recognises that a child who is abused may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We recognise that Victoria School may provide the only stability in the lives of students who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

Victoria School will provide continuing support to a student who has disclosed abuse through promoting a caring and safe environment within the School and encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum and through relationships. In doing so, Victoria School will act in accordance with guidance from the relevant authorities to ensure that, for example, legal proceedings are not compromised.

## **Recording Information**

**Victoria School uses the CPOMS system.**

### **Staff should:**

- Make brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards, which record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, and what has actually been said, not assumption or interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated.
- Clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.
- Record observed injuries and bruises on a body map.
- Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the student (do not translate into "proper terms").
- Complete a Disclosure Form, attach the original notes and pass them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Appreciate that their records may be used in criminal proceedings or disciplinary investigations.

## **Reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Any concerns about students must be discussed with or referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and at latest by the end of the School day.

Where the disclosure relates to actual abuse or the suspicion of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will report the disclosure to Children's Social Care within 24 hours.

### **3.6 Notifying parents**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from Children's Social Care.

### **3.7 Referral to Children's Social Care.**

The decision to make a referral which could activate a child protection investigation, and the issue of gaining parental consent, are serious matters and require careful judgement. These decisions must only be taken by the Headteacher or by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will liaise with the Headteacher as appropriate, following consultation as appropriate with Children's Social Care.

Subject to the above, the consent of parents should be obtained before making a formal referral, unless to do so could place the child at risk of significant harm. Where the disclosure relates to actual abuse or the suspicion of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will report the disclosure Children's Social Care **within 24 hours**.

In the event of Victoria School making a referral to Children's Social Care, they should agree with the recipient of the referral what exactly the child and parents will be told, by whom and when. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should ask to be kept informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between Children's Social Care and the police, which will decide whether and how to investigate. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion.

Children's Social Care are required to acknowledge written referrals within one working day. If the School has not heard from Children's Social Care after two working days we will contact Children's Social Care again. A record of each contact with Children's Social Care, including the name of the officer with whom the College has spoken should be kept.

### **3.8 Confidentiality and sharing information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL/Headteacher, Deputy DSL or Safeguarding Trustee (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2018 principles. Information is:

- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure

Record of referral forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals. Every effort should be made to prevent unauthorised access and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items should also be kept in locked storage. Child protection information will be stored

separately from the child's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of GDPR, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they should refer the request to the head teacher.

GDPR principles do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. When information is shared, the reason for doing so as well as the reasons why consent may not have been sought, will be clearly documented within the child protection records.

When a child leaves the School, their Child Protection files will be copied with the copies archived and stored securely for 7 years and the original securely packaged and transferred by hand to the new school. A signed document acknowledging receipt of the record will be requested from the new school/provision.

### **3.9 Team Around the Family (TAF)**

Victoria School follows the Pan Dorset Continuum of Need threshold guidance document which informs agencies in BCP on how to assess and identify a child's level of need and how to access the right level support.

The threshold guidance is divided into four levels:

- Tier 1 – Universal – Children with no additional needs
- Tier 2 – Universal Plus – Children with additional needs
- Tier 3 - Universal Partnership Plus – Children with a high level or complex additional needs
- Tier 4 – Specialist/Statutory

The thresholds for intervention in BCP are based upon provides descriptors for four levels of need. When there are children with additional needs, who may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; their needs are not clear, this is the threshold for a multi-agency early help assessment to begin – Tier 2/Level 2, Early Help/Early Support.

These are children who require a lead professional for a co-ordinated approach to the provision of additional services such as family support services, parenting programmes and children's centres. These will be provided within universal or targeted services provision and do not include services from Children's Social Care and will normally be facilitated by arranging a TAF meeting with the relevant professionals.

Parents/carers will always be contacted to discuss our concerns prior to making a decision to hold a TAF and their consent will be sought. However, if consent is not given and we maintain that there remain unmet needs of the child which are safeguarding concerns of any nature, then advice will be sought from the Children's First Response hub.

During the TAF, an Early Help Assessment (EHA) will be completed, this will enable a clear decision to be made about any help/support that may be needed and the next steps that should be taken. As part of the TAF process, the EHA will be revisited in six-weekly cycles as a very minimum, although if the needs change, this may happen sooner. At each meeting, a decision will be made as to the current needs for the child/family and how these are best met, including making decisions whether more intervention is needed or whether the current support can be stepped down.

### **3.10 BCP First Response Referral process: Reporting directly to Childrens social care.**

Referrals to Children's Social Care are only made for children with needs at Level 3 or 4 of the Continuum of Need. This is determined where children are identified as requiring specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their mental and/or physical health and development and/or who are disabled.

They may require longer term intervention from specialist services. In some cases these children's needs may be secondary to the adults needs. This is the threshold for an assessment led by children's social care under Section 17, Children Act 1989 although the assessments and services required may come from a range of provision outside of children's social care.

Staff with concerns should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy.

However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- The situation is an emergency and the DSL/Deputy DSL/ Headteacher or the Safeguarding Trustee (for allegations against the Headteacher) are all unavailable
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety.

As advised in KCSIE 2023 the DSL (including any deputies) should liaise with the three safeguarding partners in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children and NSPCC – 'When to call the Police'.

#### **Making a referral through the First Response Hub**

If, as a professional, staff have safeguarding concerns or are requesting additional targeted early help, they can use the Interagency referral form (IAR)

Please note that residents and other members of the public can still make referrals online or over the phone.

All requests that come through the MASH will be triaged by the multi-agency team and staff may be contacted by a professional representing the school to discuss the request.

#### **Before staff make a request**

The following information will help to determine if it is necessary to fill in an Interagency referral form.

- Pan Dorset Continuum of need will help to assess the level of support needed or risks present. Professionals should refer to this guidance before completing an IAR. This, along with some brief guidance, can be found on the <https://pdscp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Pan-Dorset-Continuum-of-Need-2019-V1.0-1.pdf>
- If staff believe a child and their family need some additional support this should be discussed with the family first and agree who is best placed to provide that support. An

Early Help Assessment can help to get a full picture of the family's situation and plan how to meet that need.

- If it is believed a child or family has needs at the targeted level, which are not being met by services currently involved with the family, the IAR can be completed with consent from the parents.
- If there is any worry that a child is at risk of significant harm through abuse or neglect, staff should call the Childrens First Response immediately on 01202 123334 to discuss their concerns and follow this discussion up in writing by completing an IAR

Before making a referral to the First Response Hub, professionals should consider if the needs identified can be met within their own agency, or by other professionals already involved with the family. This is usually relevant for children who have universal or additional needs, this is often referred to as Level 1 or 2 support as demonstrated in the Thresholds Guidance.

Professionals should seek to discuss any concerns they have with the parents/carers who have parental responsibility, are caring for the child by way of private fostering arrangements (or under a statutory regulation) and gain consent to make a referral to the First Response Hub.

When new safeguarding concerns arise, or no change is affected within existing plans. This should only be done where such discussions will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm or cause any significant delay

Childrens First Response

T. 01202 123334

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.15pm

Friday: 8.30am to 4.45pm

E. [childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

**For urgent referrals in relation to child protection:**

**In an emergency**, or if you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm, call the police on 999.

**Out of Hours** - [The Children's Social Care Out of Hour's service](#) is the emergency response service for any child who is in crisis, needs urgent help or is at serious risk of significant harm. Hours of operation are 5.00pm to 9.00am from Monday to Friday, all day Saturdays and Sundays and all bank holidays, including Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Their phone number is 01202 738256 or email [childrensoohs@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:childrensoohs@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

### **3.11 Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

At Victoria School we believe that all our students should be kept safe from harm. FGM affects girls particularly from North African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone. It is illegal in the United Kingdom to allow girls to undergo female genital mutilation either in this country or abroad. People guilty of allowing FGM to take place are punished by fines and up to fourteen years in prison.



At Victoria School we have a duty to report concerns we have about girls at risk of FGM to the police and social services. FGM occurs mainly in Africa and to a lesser extent, in the Middle East and Asia. Although it is believed by many to be a religious issue, it is a cultural practice. There are no health benefits.

Communities particularly affected by FGM in the UK include girls from:

Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea, Yemen, Indonesia and Afghanistan.

In the UK, FGM tends to occur in areas with larger populations of communities who practice FGM, such as first-generation immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. These areas include: London, Cardiff, Manchester, Sheffield, Northampton, Birmingham, Oxford, Crawley, Reading, Slough and Milton Keynes. In England and Wales, 23,000 girls under 15 could be at risk of FGM.

#### Key Points:

- Not a religious practice
- Occurs mostly to girls aged from 5 – 8 years old; but up to around 15
- Criminal offence in UK since 1985
- Offence since 2003 to take girls abroad
- Criminal penalties include up to 14 years in prison

#### Reasons for this cultural practice include:

- Cultural identity – An initiation into womanhood
- Gender Identity – Moving from girl to woman – enhancing femininity
- Sexual control – reduce the woman's desire for sex
- Hygiene/cleanliness – un mutilated women are regarded as unclean

#### Risk Factors include:

- Low level of integration into UK society
- Mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- A visiting female elder from the country of origin
- Being taken on a long holiday to the family's country of origin
- Talk about a 'special' event or procedure to 'become a woman'

#### High Risk Time

This procedure often takes place in the summer, as the recovery period after FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. Schools should be alert to the possibility of FGM as a reason why a girl in a high risk group is absent from school or where the family request an 'authorised absence' for just before or just after the summer school holidays.

Although, it is difficult to identify girls before FGM takes place, where girls from these high risk groups return from a long period of absence with symptoms of FGM, advice should be sought from the police or social services.

Post-FGM Symptoms include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- Unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- Asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Longer Term problems include:

- Difficulties urinating or incontinence
- Frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- Menstrual problems
- Kidney damage and possible failure
- Cysts and abscesses
- Pain when having sex
- Infertility
- Complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- Emotional and mental health problems.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. In schools, this will usually come from a disclosure.

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out; and discuss any such cases with the safeguarding lead and children's social care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

At Victoria School if we have concerns about FGM, we will discuss these with parents/carers where appropriate, and the young person concerned, before taking any further action. In cases where it is deemed likely that discussing preliminary concerns with the family may put a child(ren) at risk of any kind, we may not discuss this with parents/carers before reporting to the relevant authorities.

### **3.12 Forced Marriage/Honour Based Abuse**

A child who is being forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Significant harm is defined as a situation where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, a degree of physical, sexual and / or emotional harm (through abuse or neglect), which is so harmful that there needs to be compulsory intervention by child protection agencies into the life of the child and their family.

The reasons given by parents who force their children to marry include protecting their children, building stronger families, strengthening family links, protecting family honour (e.g. promiscuity or homosexuality), retaining or acquiring wealth, appeasement etc.

Suspicious that a child may be forced into marriage may arise in a number of ways, including:

- A family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early;
- Depressive behaviour including self-harming and attempted suicide;
- Unreasonable restrictions such as being kept at home by their parents ('house arrest') or being unable to complete their education;
- A child being in conflict with their parents;
- A child going missing / running away;
- A child always being accompanied including to school and doctors' appointments;
- A child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about, fears that they will be taken out of education and kept abroad; or
- A child directly disclosing that they are worried s/he will be forced to marry.

Information about a forced marriage may come from one of the child's peer group, a relative or member of the child's local community, from another professional or when other family issues are addressed, such as domestic violence between parents.

Situations where a child fears being forced into marriage have similarities with both domestic violence and honour based abuse. Forced marriage may involve the child being taken out of the country (trafficked) for the ceremony, is likely to involve non-consensual and/or underage sex, and refusal to go through with a forced marriage has sometimes been linked to so-called 'honour killing'.

Professionals should respond in a similar way to forced marriage as with domestic violence and honour based abuse (i.e. in facilitating disclosure, developing individual safety plans, ensuring the child's safety by according them confidentiality in relation to the rest of the family, completing individual risk assessments etc.)

### **3.13 Domestic Violence (DV)**

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

In extreme cases this could include murder.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

### **3.13.1 Children and young people witnessing domestic abuse**

Witnessing domestic abuse is really distressing and scary for a child, and causes serious harm. Children living in a home where domestic abuse is happening are at risk of other types of abuse too. Children can experience domestic abuse or violence in lots of different ways.

They might:

- See the abuse
- Hear the abuse from another room
- See a parent's injuries or distress afterwards
- Be hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse

### **3.13.2 Teenagers experiencing domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship, and it affects young people too.

They may not realise that what's happening is abuse. Even if they do, they might not tell anyone about it because they're scared of what will happen, or ashamed about what people will think.

It's often difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening, because it usually takes place in the family home and abusers can act very differently when other people are around.

Children who witness domestic abuse may:

- Become aggressive
- Display anti-social behaviour
- Suffer from depression or anxiety
- Not do as well at school - due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges.
- 

Where potential cases of Domestic Violence are identified, the school will conduct an assessment using the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) Risk Indicator Checklist. If a case causes enough concern following this assessment, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will make the necessary referral(s) on to other appropriate agencies.

### 3.13.3 Operation Encompass

At Victoria School we are working in partnership with BCP to identify and provide appropriate support to students who have experienced domestic violence in their household; this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

The purpose of Operation Encompass is to safeguard and support children and young people who have been involved in or witness to a domestic abuse incident. Domestic abuse impacts on children in a number of ways. Children are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident or because they attempt to intervene. Even when not directly injured, children are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent.

Encompass has been created to address this situation. It is the implementation of key partnership working between the police and schools. The aim of sharing information with local schools is to allow 'Key Adults' the opportunity of engaging with the child and to provide access to support that allows them to remain in a safe but secure familiar environment.

In order to achieve this, BCP will share police information of all domestic incidents where one of our students has been present, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DSL). On receipt of any information, the DSL will decide on the appropriate support the child requires, this could be silent or overt dependent on the needs and wishes of the child. All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the MASH team and BCP. We will record this information and store this information in accordance with the record keeping procedures outlined in this policy.

The purpose and procedures in Operation Encompass have been shared with all parents and governors, is detailed as part of the school's Safeguarding Policy and published on our school website. At Victoria School our Key Adult is: **Nikki Nabney – Designated Safeguarding Lead**

### 3.14 Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends

- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

The [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) states the age of consent for sex is **16** in England and Wales.

Legislation is not intended to be used to prosecute **mutually consenting sexual activity between under 16s, unless it involves abuse or exploitation**. Students **under 13 can never legally give consent**, so any sexual activity with a child aged 12 or under will be subject to the maximum penalties.

Legislation gives extra protection to 16 and 17-year-olds. It is illegal to take, show or distribute indecent photographs, pay for or arrange sexual services, or for a person in a **position of trust** (e.g. teachers, care workers and sports coaches) to engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.

Staff should be aware of the key indicators of children being sexually exploited which can include:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late;
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education;
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections;
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing;
- Drug and alcohol misuse; and
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

Staff should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.

There are two main types of child sexual exploitation:

#### **Inappropriate relationships:**

Usually involves just one abuser who has inappropriate power – physical, emotional or financial – or control over a young person. The young person may believe they have a genuine friendship or loving relationship with their abuser.

#### **Boyfriend/Girlfriend:**

Abuser grooms victim by striking up a normal relationship with them, giving them gifts and meeting in cafés or shopping centres. A seemingly consensual sexual relationship develops but later turns abusive. Victims may be required to attend parties and sleep with multiple men/women and threatened with violence if they try to seek help.

If colleagues have concerns about any students at risk of CSE, they should ensure that their concerns are passed promptly on to the DSL.

### **3.15 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- The financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- Through violence or the threat of violence

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. If colleagues have concerns regarding any students at risk of CCE, they should ensure that their concerns are passed promptly on to the DSL.

### **3.16 County Lines**

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move (and store) drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations.

Staff should be aware of some of the key indicators of children who are involved in county lines, including:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late;
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education;
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Associating with other young people involved in county lines;
- Having older friends
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing; and
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse

If colleagues have concerns about any students at risk of county lines, they should ensure that their concerns are passed promptly to the DSL.

### **3.17 Organised exploitation and trafficking**

Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude across international borders and within countries.

Victims are trafficked through criminal networks – often between towns and cities – and forced or coerced into sex with multiple men. They may also be used to recruit new victims. This serious organised activity can involve the buying and selling of young people.

Also, modern slavery encompasses human trafficking, as defined in the UN Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe Convention and as made illegal in UK legislation under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004. It also includes cases of slavery and servitude as made illegal in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, which criminalises holding a person in slavery or servitude or requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour. When referring to modern slavery, it encompasses all of the forms of human trafficking, slavery and servitude that have been defined in national and international laws and agreements. Signs that a child has been trafficked may not be obvious but you might notice unusual behaviour or events. These include a child who:

- Spends a lot of time doing household chores
- Rarely leaves their house, has no freedom of movement and no time for playing
- Is orphaned or living apart from their family, often in unregulated private foster care
- Lives in substandard accommodation
- Isn't sure which country, city or town they're in
- Is unable or reluctant to give details of accommodation or personal details
- Might not be registered with a school or a GP practice
- Has no documents or has falsified documents
- Has no access to their parents or guardians
- Is seen in inappropriate places such as brothels or factories
- Possesses unaccounted for money or goods
- Is permanently deprived of a large part of their earnings, required to earn a minimum amount of money every day or pay off an exorbitant debt.
- Has injuries from workplace accidents
- Gives a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children.

Our procedures for responding to concerns about students at risk of or victims of modern slavery are informed by the statutory DfE guidance 'Care of unaccompanied migrant child and child victims of modern slavery, published in November 2017. All concerns about students who may be being trafficked should be passed straight to the DSL on our standard concerns form.



### **3.18 Child on Child abuse including 'sexting' and children displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviours**

Child on child abuse can take many forms including physical (including hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling etc.), sexual (e.g. inappropriate touching) and emotional abuse (including bullying & cyberbullying). Department for Education (DfE).

September 2023: Keeping children safe in education; statutory guidance for schools and colleges, makes it clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or part of 'growing up'. The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act.

A key provision was a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. This requires the school/college to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Child on child abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they abuse to defend themselves. This imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or social (e.g. isolating or excluding someone). It could also include issues such as revenge porn or what are often gender issues (e.g. girls being touched or boys being involved in initiation activities).

At Victoria School we believe that all children have the right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a child's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

Child Protection issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil

- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- Raises risk factors for other students in the school
- Indicates that other students may have been affected by this student
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. KCSIE 2023 defines a form of child on child abuse described as “upskirting”, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm”.

At Victoria School we will support the victims of child on child abuse by following DfE guidance ‘Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’, first published in December 2017. We will also use the raft of strategies as part of our Wellbeing Policy.

### **Sexting**

In cases of ‘sexting’ we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) published in August 2016: ‘Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents, and safeguarding young people’.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/562876/Guidance\\_for\\_School\\_Governors\\_-\\_Question\\_list.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562876/Guidance_for_School_Governors_-_Question_list.pdf)

## **3.19 Preventing Radicalisation**

### **‘Channel’ and ‘Prevent’**

Terrorism is defined in KCSIE 2023 as “an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause”.

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to ‘prevent people being drawn into terrorism’. This has become known as the ‘Prevent Duty’. Channel, a key element of the Home Office's “Prevent” strategy, is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation. As a school, we will work with the local authority, local law enforcement, and religious and community leaders, to identify children vulnerable to radicalisation, and to stamp out extremism if it arises. This includes identifying students:

- Displaying feelings of grievance and injustice
- Feeling under threat
- Searching for identity, meaning and belonging
- Who have a desire for status amongst their peers

- Shows empathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence, especially other faiths or cultures
- Who have a desire for excitement and adventure
- Displaying a need to dominate and control others
- Who have a susceptibility to indoctrination
- Displaying a radical desire for political or moral change
- Who are susceptible to opportunistic involvement
- Who have family or friends involved in extremism
- Susceptible to being influenced or controlled by a group
- With relevant mental health issues
- Secretive behaviour
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups

We will always take allegations and concerns of radicalisation and/or terrorism seriously. We will help students channel their desire for excitement and adventure into suitable and healthy activities. Radicalisation and extremism can be wider than religious beliefs and linked affiliations and can include radicalisation around far right groups and also by criminal groups connected with gang activity.

We will work with local religious and cultural organisations to instil a strong sense of identity in our students, as well as a clear place and purpose within the school. We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

We will establish appropriate filters to protect children from terrorist and extremist material online. Victoria School is stronger thanks to our open, multi-cultural and multi-faith community. We will always aim to integrate and engage every child within the school community, and in the wider community. We will celebrate a range of different religious and cultural festivals across the year, giving every child the opportunity to take part. We will monitor and assess incidents which suggest students are engaging, or are at risk of engaging in, extremist activity and/or radicalisation.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised in any way, they should discuss this with the DSL.

#### **4.0 Safer Working Practice**

##### **4.1 Safer Recruitment**

Victoria School recognises that sometimes people who want to cause harm to children actively seek employment that provides them access to young people. Victoria School will protect our students from having to come into contact with people with the propensity to cause harm by thorough and rigorous scrutiny of all applications. We will:

- Verify applicant's identity
- Check applicants qualifications/experience/ employment/history
- Obtain professional and character references

- Check applicant's health and physical capacity to undertake the job
- Hold a face-to-face interview for all candidates with at least one member of the panel who has attended safer recruitment training.
- Ensure all adults in regulated activity with the children have been DBS checked and barred list checked.
- Make staff aware of their contractual, legal, administrative and pastoral responsibilities. A key document to support staff's understanding in this area is 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023) which will be made available to all staff.

In recruiting and appointing staff, the Headteacher and the School's Management Committee have key responsibilities to create a culture of safe recruitment and, as part of that, adopt recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children.

#### **4.2 Employees: Advertising / Shortlisting / Interviews**

We ensure that the advertisement makes clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All job descriptions make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All person specifications include specific reference to suitability to work with children.

We ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete. If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, we will check with the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

We will always seek at least two references to obtain objective and factual information to support our appointment decisions. These will be scrutinised and any concerns need to be resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment can be confirmed.

We endeavour to seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones, before interview, so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview. We will always request references directly from the referee and employers and will not rely on open references, for example in the form of 'to whom it may concern' testimonials.

On receipt, references will be checked by the Head Teacher to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate: for example if the answers are vague. They should also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the candidate.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post; including information obtained from records held

on the Database of Qualified Teachers (DQT). The DQT is maintained by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) which is an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE).

We verify that the successful applicant has all the academic or vocational qualifications claimed. We check his or her previous employment history and experience. We conduct a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as his or her suitability for the post. We verify the successful applicant's identity, when they arrive for an interview.

#### **4.3 Offer of appointment**

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of our pre-employment checks.

Before new staff are appointed, we will:

- Verify a candidate's identity from current photographic ID and proof of address;
- Obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity;
- Obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available;
- Check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the NCTL Teacher Service Portal (formerly known as the Employer Access Online service);
- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. This is done through the council's occupational health services;
- Verify professional qualifications, as appropriate

#### **4.4 Additional checks on individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK**

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff. In addition, we will make any further checks we think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

We will verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, we will follow the council's guidance and the advice on the GOV.UK website.

All schools have a statutory duty under the new Home Office guidance issued on 6 April 2017, which states that:

"All Tier 2 (General) visa applicants who want to work in specified health, education or social care sectors must provide a criminal record certificate and so for all new appointments, schools must consider additional checks, including obtaining a Certificate of Good Conduct, where staff have ever lived or worked abroad".

The requirement is applicable to all \*Tier 2 (General) staff from any country (excluding the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland), where an individual has lived or worked for more than 12 months+ either in total or continuously as well as within the previous 10 years.

In BCP local authority, all new employees who declare that they have ever lived or worked outside the UK for more than 12 months+ either in total or continuously since the age of 18 years, will be risk assessed before making a decision as to whether further checks are appropriate in accordance with statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

It is not a legal requirement for existing staff who have ever lived or worked abroad for 12 months+ in total or continuously since the age of 18 years, but the governing body and senior leadership at Victoria School have made the decision that we will/will not risk assess existing staff to make a decision whether or not we will pursue overseas criminal records checks for existing members of staff, volunteers or governors.

#### **4.5 Single Central Record (SCR)**

We keep a SCR for the school. Generally, the information to be recorded is whether or not the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which the checks were completed and by whom:

- An identity check
- A barred list check
- An enhanced DBS check
- A prohibition from teaching check
- Further checks on people living or working outside the UK
- A check of professional qualifications
- A check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.

The SCR will cover the following people:

- All staff (including supply staff) who work at the school
- All others who work in regular contact with children in the school including volunteers.
- Management Committee

In order to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, we will not retain a copy of the individual's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate. However, copies of other documents used to verify the successful candidates identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept on their personnel file.

#### **4.6 Visiting Professionals/Agency Workers/Third Party Staff**

We only use supply agencies that are able to provide full written vetting information about their staff prior to them starting work at the school.

The vetting information must contain the following:

- Photograph
- ID Evidence
- Teaching Agency Check
- DfE and Welsh Assembly Number
- Qualification Evidence
- Medical Check
- Barred List Check and Date
- Valid DBS Date
- Enhanced DBS number
- Further Disclosure Information, if necessary
- Right to work in the UK Check
- Overseas Checks/Risk Assessment
- References Check
- CV History Check
- Confirmation of Level 1 safeguarding training within the last 12 months

We ask supply agencies to email the vetting information to the School Business Manager as well as to the school receptionist. The school's admin checks this evidence on arrival, checking that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Any discrepancies will be reported to the Business Manager immediately and the agency staff will not be able to start their work until satisfactory checks have been concluded.

Safer recruitment records of regular agency workers are included in the school's SCR. We provide an induction for supply staff, which includes safeguarding and a briefing on any vulnerable children they will be working with.

#### **4.7 Trainee/Student Teachers**

Initial Teacher Training Students, e.g. Schools Direct Students, who are salaried by the school, have to undergo the same safer recruitment checks as regular staff, before they can start working for the school.

Safer Recruitment records for Initial Teacher Training Students, e.g. Schools Direct Students, who are salaried by the school, are included in the school's Single Central Record.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the Training Provider to carry out the necessary checks.

#### **4.8 Regulated Activity**

A person will be considered to be in 'regulated activity' if as a result of their work they:

- Will be responsible, on a regular basis, in any setting for the care or supervision of children; or
- Will regularly work in a school or college at times when children are on school or college premises (where the person's work requires interaction with children, whether or not the work is paid (unless they are a supervised volunteer), or whether the person is directly employed or employed by a contractor).

Any member of staff, volunteer or governor that will be working in regulated activity will have a barred list check carried out. In addition:

- All visiting professionals e.g. PE coaches, Music teachers, Health Professionals and LA advisors have to provide the school with their valid enhanced DBS details.
- All kitchen staff have to provide the school with their valid enhanced DBS details. It is the responsibility of the Catering Contractor to carry out the necessary checks.
- All kitchen staff's safer recruitment records are included in the school's SCR.
- All cleaning staff have to provide the school with their valid enhanced DBS details. It is the responsibility of the Cleaning Contractor to carry out the necessary checks.
- All cleaning staff's safer recruitment records are included in the school's SCR.
- All After School Club Personnel have to provide the school with their valid enhanced DBS details. It is the responsibility of the Extended School providers to carry out the necessary checks.
- All Extended School personnel's safer recruitment records are included in the school's SCR.
- It is the responsibility of the Business Manager to make sure all enhanced DBS checks are current and recorded.

#### **4.9 Volunteers E.g. Parents/Carers**

As per the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, all volunteers will be risk assessed to determine whether they require a DBS and whether or not this will need to include a barred list check should their role require them to be in regulated activity. Under no circumstances should a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

We will obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list check for all volunteers in regulated activity who will regularly teach or look after children on an unsupervised basis or provide personal care on a one-off basis.

According to the DfE guidelines there is no requirement to request an enhanced DBS check for new or existing volunteers not in regulated activity. However, Victoria School may still choose to request one as they judge necessary but may not request a check of the barred list.

If a volunteer is not engaging in regulated activity and is therefore supervised at all times, e.g. a parent accompanying their child(ren) on a school trip, the school will undertake a risk assessment



and use their professional judgement and experience, when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check. A barred list check is legally not allowed under these circumstances.

#### **4.10 School Management Committee**

Management Committee's must apply for an enhanced criminal records certificate for any Management Committee member who does not already hold one. They must do this by 1 September 2016 where a governor was elected before 1 April 2016 and within 21 days of appointment or election if a governor is elected or appointed after 1 April 2016.

All new governors will be asked to declare their overseas history and where necessary, complete a risk assessment. Existing governors will also/will not be required to complete an overseas criminal history risk assessment in line with our agreed school procedures.

All governors must also undergo an s128 check to confirm any directions which may have been made against them by the Secretary of State. This check will be carried out using the NCTL Teacher Service Portal (formerly known as the Employer Access Online service).

#### **4.11 Contractors**

The Receptionist and /or a member of the Maintenance Team will always check the identity of contractors upon their arrival in the school. Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken will be supervised by a member of the Maintenance Team, if they will have contact with children.

If a self-employed contractor is working at the school and will have unsupervised contact with children, the school will obtain an DBS check and/or barred list check as appropriate, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account.

#### **4.12 General Visitors to the School**

We will not request DBS checks and barred list checks, or ask to see DBS certificates, for general visitors, e.g. children's relatives attending events in the school, etc. All visitors must sign in using our sign in system.

### **5.0 Staff Conduct**

#### **5.1 Training**

Staff will be supported to recognise the signs and symptoms of neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. New/temporary staff will receive training as part of their induction process. Every member of staff will receive a copy of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy as well as the Staff Code of Conduct, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) – Part One and will need to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the documents.

All staff will receive child protection training at least annually with a particular focus on recognising signs of abuse, managing a disclosure as well as recapping monitoring and reporting procedures

of abuse and suspected abuse. In addition, staff will receive regular training updates about safeguarding related issues.

The safeguarding training of third party staff/contractors will be verified and if necessary, further training may be given as part of the induction process. Third party colleagues will also sign the Staff Code of Conduct. Should a child or a member of staff be concerned about another member of staff's conduct in relation to child protection then procedures are in place. All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. They should strictly adhere to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidelines on teachers' behaviour and the school's policies.

## **5.2 Safer Working Practice**

We make use of the Safer Recruitment Consortium document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings.' May 2019 as the basis for our Code of Conduct. All staff are expected to follow the Victoria School Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for adults working with individual children to do so in view of other adults. If staff anticipate being in a situation that could be open to misinterpretation they should alert a senior manager in advance and inform the child's parent or carer.

Staff should escort children of the same sex to the toilet but are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has an additional need that has been brought to their attention by the parent/guardian and a strategy agreed in writing. We recognise that physical touch between adults and children in relation to the activity being provided is acceptable in public places, however this will be carefully risk assessed and agreed with SLT.

## **5.3 Managing Allegations Against Staff**

We understand that a parent/pupil/another staff member may make an allegation against a member of staff (including volunteers and supply staff). If such an allegation is made:

- The member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher or the most senior DSL who must be part of the senior Leadership team if the Headteacher is not present.
- The Headteacher or the senior teacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Child Protection. If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult as above, without notifying the Headteacher first.

- The School will follow the BCP Local Authority procedures in the LADO protocol, updated in May 2018, for managing allegations against staff, and statutory guidance 'Keeping Children safe in Education.' (2023)
- Individuals who are the subject of allegations should be informed of these as soon as possible, as should the parents and carers of any children involved. However, every effort must be taken to maintain confidentiality, in order to comply with the reporting restrictions in the Education Act 2011.
- Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration, and we will consult the LADO for Child Protection, or the ~~Lewisham~~ HR Officer.

The name of any member of staff considered not suitable to work with children will be given to the Department for Education Misconduct Team, with the advice and support of Education Personnel and in accordance with the Barring Regulations.

Any child making such an allegation will be treated sensitively and made to feel safe and listened to. If there are any immediate concerns of safety action must be taken to remove the child from harm. Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible, if they do not already know of it.

#### **5.4 Whistleblowing**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues in relation to children. If necessary, they should speak to the Designated Child Protection Governor (Chair of Governors) or the BCP Designated Child Protection Officer (LADO) via the DSL, if they are not the same person – see Whistleblowing Policy.

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the Home Office, the number is 0808 800 5000.

### **6.0 General Safeguarding**

#### **6.1 Health and Safety**

Our Health and Safety policy, set out in a separate document, is reviewed annually by the governing body. It reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

#### **6.2 Attendance**

Our policy on attendance is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by the governing body. Victoria School recognises that poor attendance can be an indicator that a child is experiencing abuse. The attendance officer (Gemma Mallett) and senior leadership team monitor attendance weekly and report concerns to the Attendance & Welfare Officer at regular meetings.

### **6.3 E-Safety and Digital Safeguarding**

We ensure pupils at Victoria School are protected while using digital technologies at the school. The school is committed to including digital technologies, in particular, internet use, in our curriculum. In so doing we recognise the inherent risks posed by this useful learning tool. Full compliance with the school Digital Safeguarding policy will mitigate these risks and help to ensure pupils are safe online.

### **6.4 Anti-Bullying Policy**

Our policies on anti-bullying and cyber-bullying are set out in separate documents and are reviewed annually by the governing body. We expect staff to acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying, constitutes a lack of duty of care, which may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Both policies are written in line with advice and statutory guidelines set out in the DfE guidance Preventing Bullying, in July 2017 and Approaches to Preventing and Tackling Bullying, June 2018.

### **6.5 School Visits**

We have clear protocols in place to ensure the safety of children whilst on school trips (see visits and trips policy). These include:

- Visit procedures to be documented by staff and agreed with the Educational Visits Coordinator (all members of SLT will complete EVC training with Wide Horizons or other regulated provider of EVC training).
- A briefing for parents going on the trips including detailed information about complying with safeguarding responsibilities and what to do if a child discloses to them.
- Defined roles and responsibilities for school staff
- Risk assessments
- DBS/barred list checks for parents/carers where appropriate

### **6.6 Looked After Children**

Our Headteacher and our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are responsible for Looked After Children and ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. The Headteacher and the Inclusion Leader also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The DT for Looked After Children has details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child. The Chair is the designated Governor for Looked After Children (LAC).

A separate policy sets out our systems and procedures in relation to CLA, which has been written with reference to the two statutory DfE guidance documents, 'Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children' and 'Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children' released in February 2018.

### **6.7 Children Missing From Education**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

Victoria School places a great emphasis on regular and punctual attendance and we promptly follow up any unexplained absence. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

Victoria School has both an admission register and attendance register as required by law. All pupils are placed on both registers. Victoria School informs and seeks guidance from the Local Authority before any child is deleted from the admission register. No child is deleted unless there are appropriate checks conducted to ensure that the child is not at risk from being missing from education.

A child may be deleted from the admission register for the following reasons.

- The child has been taken out of school by their parents and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education.
- The child ceased to attend the school and no longer lives within reasonable distance from the school at which they are registered.
- The child has been certified by the education medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the Headteacher does not reasonably believe that they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

The Local Authority must be notified when the school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty so that Local Authorities can, as part of their duty to identify 8 regulation 4 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 9 Regulation 12(3) of the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 14 children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Victoria School works in partnership with the BCP LA and informs the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days.

### **6.8 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

For a variety of reasons, children with additional needs face an increased risk of abuse and neglect, therefore adults are expected to take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect. Indications of abuse will be reported as for other pupils.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- There may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.

At Victoria School we identify pupils who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe as part of our admissions process, baseline assessments and as part of our SEND policy.

### **6.9 Fabricated Induced Illness**

Fabricated or induced illness (FI) is a rare form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. FI is also known as 'Munchausen's syndrome by proxy' (not to be confused with Munchausen's syndrome, where a person pretends to be ill or causes illness or injury to themselves). FI covers a wide range of symptoms and behaviours involving parents seeking healthcare for a child. This ranges from extreme neglect (failing to seek medical care) to induced illness.

Behaviours in FI include a parent or other carer who:

- Persuades healthcare professionals that their child is ill when they're perfectly healthy.
- Exaggerates or lies about their child's symptoms.

- Manipulates test results to suggest the presence of illness – for example, by putting glucose in urine samples to suggest the child has diabetes.
- Deliberately induces symptoms of illness – for example, by poisoning their child with unnecessary medication or other substances.

If you suspect that a parent/carer may be fabricating or inducing illness in their child, you should not confront them directly. It's unlikely to make the person admit to wrongdoing, and it may give them the opportunity to dispose of any evidence of abuse. You must immediately report any concerns to the DSL using the concerns form.

Please see further guidance on the DfE website via the link below:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277314/Safeguarding\\_Children\\_in\\_whom\\_illness\\_is\\_fabricated\\_or\\_induced.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277314/Safeguarding_Children_in_whom_illness_is_fabricated_or_induced.pdf)

### **6.10 Private Fostering**

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. (Please refer to the Private Fostering Policy for more details).

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins. Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

School staff should notify the DSL when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements.

A referral should be made to Children's Social Care in writing using BCP's referral form. The referral should have as much information as possible, including full details of all children concerned and their parents/carers/those with PR and any information about how these children came to be in

their current situation. In some cases you may not have been provided with all the details so it is important that you discuss the referral with the carers in order to obtain them. However, if the information is not forthcoming, the referral should not be delayed.

Once notified about a private fostering arrangement, the local authority is required to assess the home to ensure that is suitable. If it is happy with the arrangements, then it is required to arrange a visit once every six weeks for the first year and then at three-monthly intervals whilst the placement continues. Children's Social Care will be appointing a dedicated worker to work with private fostered children. Details will be provided as soon as possible. This worker will be available to offer advice and assistance if required.

### **6.11 Separated Parents**

The definition of a parent for school purposes is much wider than for any other situation. The Education Act 1996 defines a parent as:

- All natural parents, including those that are not married.
- Any person who has parental responsibility but is not a natural parent e.g. a legally appointed guardian or the Local Authority named in a Care Order.
- Any person who has care of a child i.e. a person with whom the child resides and who looks after the child irrespective of the relationship.

Who has "Parental Responsibility"? (The Children Act 1989)

Having parental responsibility means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. People other than a child's natural parents can acquire parental responsibility through:

- Being granted a Residence Order
- Being appointed a Guardian
- Being named in an Emergency Protection Order (although parental responsibility in a such a case is limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child's welfare)
- Adopting a child.

### **6.12 Photography and Images**

To protect our students we will:

- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example on our website or in newspapers and/or publications)
- Only use the school's equipment
- Only take photos and videos of children to celebrate achievement
- Use only the child's first name with an image
- Ensure that the children are appropriately dressed
- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

Parents that are taking photographs at school assemblies and other productions or school trips are instructed that these are to be for personal use only and are not to be shared on social media.



### **6.13 Commissioned Extended School Provision and Lettings**

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any other services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. (Chapter 2 - Working Together 2018)

In relation to extended school provision and lettings, these include:

- A clear line of accountability for the commissioning and /or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- A designated professional lead for safeguarding
- Safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children
- Clear policies, in line with those from the LSCP for dealing with allegations against people who work with children.

'Employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.' Working Together 2018. Where any extended service is directly commissioned by BCP Council, they will be responsible for the safeguard

Where extended school provision is offered directly under the supervision or management of school staff, for example an after school sports club led by a member of school staff, the school's safeguarding arrangements will apply.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the Governing Body should seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

Schools and colleges should have arrangements in place with extended school providers and contractors to make sure that anyone who will be coming onto school site and working with children has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check and safer recruitment processes.

### **6.14 Mental Health/Self-Harm**

Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people. They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, including self-harm, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.

At Victoria School, we have a robust wellbeing policy and approach. As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to be aware that mental health problems can in some cases be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation keep students safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. For example, The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

Recent research also indicates that up to one in ten young people in the UK engage in self-harming behaviours, and that this figure is higher amongst specific populations, including young people with special educational needs. School staff can play an important role in preventing self-harm and also in supporting students, peers and parents of students currently engaging in self-harm. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood.

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing difficulties that may lead to thoughts of self-harm or suicide. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should seek further advice from the DSL.

For further details of our school's procedures around supporting children who are self-harming or experiencing any other mental health issues refer to our Wellbeing Policy policy.

### **6.15 Faith Based Abuse**

Faith abuse is abuse of a child, linked to faith or belief. It is not about challenging people's beliefs, but where these beliefs lead to abuse, this should never be tolerated.

This includes: belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs), the evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context); ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies; and use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune, such as telephoning a wrong number which is believed by some to allow malevolent spirits to enter the home.

In working to identify such child abuse, it is important to remember every child is different. Some children may display a combination of indicators of abuse whilst others will attempt to conceal

them. In addition to the factors above, there are a range of common features across identified cases. These indicators of abuse, which may also be common features in other kinds of abuse, include:

- A child's body showing signs or marks, such as bruises or burns, from physical abuse.
- A child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated and appearing alone amongst other children.
- A child's personal care deteriorating, for example through a loss of weight, being hungry, turning up to school without food or lunch money, or being unkempt with dirty clothes and even faeces smeared on to them.
- It may be directly evident that the child's parent or carer does not show concern for or have a close bond with the child.
- A child's attendance at school becoming irregular or the child being taken out of school altogether without another school place having been organised, or a deterioration in a child's performance at school.
- A child reporting that they are or have been accused of being 'evil', and/or that they are having the 'devil beaten out of them'.

All staff should be alert to the indicators above and should be able to identify children at risk of this type of abuse and intervene to prevent it. Following the potential identification, confirmation or disclosure of faith abuse by a child/young person/family member to an adult in school, the following actions will be considered:

- Standard child safeguarding procedures apply and must always be followed in all cases where abuse or neglect is suspected including those that may be related to particular belief systems.
- A MASH referral may be necessary in order to safeguard the child/young person (see below for contact details)
- An Early Help Assessment may be appropriate for some children and young people in order to meet need

### **6.16 Exclusions**

Decisions to exclude a child are not taken lightly and the final decision will always be made by the Headteacher. In line with the recent DfE statutory guidance, 'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England', September 2017, when the school is considering excluding, either fixed term or permanently, a vulnerable pupil and / or a pupil/student who is the subject of a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multi-agency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude. In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, the risk assessment must be completed prior to convening a meeting of the Management Committee.

### **6.17 Searching Screening and Confiscation**

The DfE advisory guidance, searching, screening and confiscation guidance for Headteachers, school staff and governing bodies' sets out the power schools have when searching pupils, both with or without consent, and their right to confiscate items found during the searches.

At Victoria School there are times that we routinely screen students for safeguarding reasons while on other occasions it may be necessary to conduct searches more randomly. Any such searches/screening will always be done in accordance with advisory guidance and full details of our school's approach are detailed in our Behaviour Policy.

#### **6.18 Serious Youth Violence and Knife Crime**

In line with the recommendations that came out of the recent DfE report, Safeguarding children and young people in education from knife crime, March 2019 which summarises their findings and recommendations from a research project in London on knife crime in education we will carry out routine screening and searches as above.

#### **6.19 Contextual Safeguarding**

Victoria School is aware that the young people in our school may face additional extra-familial risks outside of the school context. Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 states that, "These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online".

These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including:

- Exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines
- Trafficking
- Online abuse
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Sexual exploitation
- The influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

As part our whole-school approach to these contextual safeguarding risks, we have developed a curriculum, policy and practice that promotes a culture that focuses on educating about risks and potential threats as well as responding to these. In addition to this, Victoria School will regularly use student-led intelligence to identify potential risks in and outside of our community and mitigate against them through regular safety mapping exercises.

Where safety mapping exercises identify people, places and environments where extra-familial harm could take place, we will focus on interventions that address these wider environmental factors by partnering with other professionals, external agencies and community establishments to create more safe spaces for our young people. We will train colleagues to understand how to

identify these potential contextual safeguarding risks/threats and refer any new concerns in the normal way.

Schools have been identified as sites in which young people can experience and/or be safeguarded from abuse and violence. From experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence through to physical assaults, relationship-based abuse, bullying and grooming into exploitative networks, young people have told practitioners, researchers and journalists about risks they have faced in educational settings.

As such it is critical that when young people experience abuse and violence and this is in some way associated to their school environment or school relationships – that the school itself features within the process of assessment and intervention. If we want to address the factors that cause abuse, or provide an opportunity for abuse to occur, then these factors need to be identified, explored and addressed – and school assessments is one way to achieve this.

School assessments uncover risks and strengths within school contexts, that are associated to young people's experiences of abuse.

A school assessment draws on aspects of the environment to build a picture of how the school can be safer for young people. A range of methods will be used to gather this information including:

- Speaking to young people
- Student and parent surveys
- Speaking with staff
- Reviewing behaviour logs
- Observing the school environment

At Victoria School we take contextual safeguarding very seriously. If colleagues have concerns or become aware of circumstances within school where young people are currently experiencing or are at risk of harm, please report to the DSL using the concerns form. A decision will then be made by the Senior Leadership Team about the potential need to carry out a school assessment.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The working of this Policy will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the School and will report as required to the Headteacher. This Policy will be reviewed as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance and practice. This process is carried out to ensure that the School is continuing to provide the very highest standard of safeguarding possible.

Any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in this Policy or in any of Victoria School child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All staff, with responsibilities under this Policy must take into account the Equal Opportunities Policy when discharging their duties.

### **Equality**

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. At Victoria School, this is particularly the case with many of our students displaying trauma and attachment related behaviours that may hide other underlying learning needs, including SEND.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12)
- Are missing from education
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

### **Key Contacts**

**Victoria School:** 01202 763697 (Reception)

**DSL/DDSL Mobile phone number:** 07712060930

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Nikki Nabney – Lead Nurse

**Deputy Safeguarding Leads:** Ed Potterton, Sean Mogg, Donna Brown, Gemma Mallett

**Safeguarding Lead – Livability:** Liz Salmon 07525 611750

**Director of Education – Livability:** Adele Audin 020 8315 4800

**BCP Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** 01202 817600

**BCP Children's First Response Hub:** 01202 123334

**NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000

**Date:** January 2024

**Part 1 – To be completed by the person raising the concern**

Name of person raising concern:
Position:
Date form completed:
Time form completed:
Date of concern:
Time concern occurred:
Name of young person involved:
Details of concern ( <i>please include names, position or relationship of person involved, times dates etc...</i> )

The Cause for Concern form must be handed to and discussed with a member of the safeguarding team within 1 hour of the concern being raised.



**Part 2 - To be completed by the safeguarding team member leading on this concern**

Name of safeguarding team member leading concern:	Time discussed:
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The cause for concern must be discussed with one other member of the safeguarding team

Person 2 Name:	Time Discussed:	Position:
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Outcome of discussion or any immediate actions:
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Any follow on actions or safeguarding information:
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**Part 3 – To be completed at the Safeguarding Team meeting**

Date discussed at the Safeguarding Meeting:
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Any other actions or learning to be achieved:
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Signed off by Safeguarding Team Yes/No:
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CPOMS Ref Number:

**DATE/TIME SCALE:** To be reviewed annually or as deemed necessary.

Revised: January 2024: Nikki Nabney	Due for Revision: January 2025
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