



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Our Vision

We want Virginia Primary School to be a community of happy, confident, motivated lifelong learners. We want our children to be successful citizens who value themselves and each other. Therefore, we are continually striving to ensure that we nurture, challenge and enable each and every one to be the very best they can be in all areas of school life.

Policy Review

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Rights Respecting School

We are a Rights Respecting School and this policy supports the following articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child:

- Article 3– the best interest of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.
- Article 6 – survival and development. Every child has a right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.
- Article 12 – freedom of expression. Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.
- Article 19 – protection from all forms of violence. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are free from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
- Article 28 – every child has the right to an education. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity.
- Article 29 – goals of education. Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment.

Rationale

At Virginia School we believe that all pupils have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and that they cannot learn effectively unless they feel safe. We strive to build a school where pupils feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and adults listen to them and hear them.

A range of documents, circulars and guidance for good practice governs Child Protection work at Virginia Primary School. Key documents are:

- The Children Act 1989
- Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families 2000.
- Every Child Matters 2003
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2006
- The Children Act 2004
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2004
- London Child Protection Procedures 2013
- The Equality Act 2010
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018
- Tower Hamlets LSCB Child Protection Procedures for Staff Working in Children’s School and Family Settings - September 2017
- Tower Hamlets LSCB Procedures for Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff working in Children’s School and Family Settings - September 2017

This policy applies to the head teacher, all staff (including supply and peripatetic staff), volunteers, governors or anyone working on behalf of Virginia Primary School. This policy needs to be read alongside the following safeguarding policies:

- Anti-bullying
- Positive Behaviour
- Single Equality
- Inclusion
- Health and Safety
- Staff Handbook
- Whistle Blowing
- Educational Visits
- Physical Activity
- Safer Recruitment
- Safer Code of Conduct

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is deputy head Barbara Lo Giudice and the Designated Safeguarding Deputies (DSD) are Kate Gooding and Joan Kearns. The designated Safeguarding governor is Kathy Darby.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Head Teacher

The head teacher is ultimately responsible, within the school, for child protection. The head teacher is responsible for:

- Supporting the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ensuring internal and external arrangements for consultation and liaison are devised
- Considering, in conjunction with the DSL, at what point to involve parents/carers
- Advising parents/carers of the decision to make a referral
- Ensuring an effective record-keeping system is in place
- Ensuring arrangements are in place for police checks of voluntary helpers
- Ensuring information about a child with a Child Protection Plan is passed on to a new school
- Taking the lead where allegations are made against a member of staff

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

There are two principles that the DSL should always bear in mind:

- The welfare of the child is **paramount** and should always be at the forefront of all decisions taken
- Confidentiality must be respected at all times

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Make sure all staff and governors know about and know where to find the procedures relating to child protection
- Ensure that all staff are clear about their responsibilities within the child protection procedures
- Make sure that all staff know that the DSL should be informed about any suspicions or allegations of abuse
- Ensure that formal referrals to children's social care are made following consultation with the head teacher on behalf of the school
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is radicalisation concern as required;
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the police as required
- Ensure the head teacher is kept informed of every situation, including those cases of uncertainty, as well as giving an update report on the welfare of those children who have a Child Protection Plan or are being monitored
- Attend relevant training every two years
- Undertake Prevent awareness training
- Understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- Keep all records up to date and secure
- Advise staff in cases of uncertainty and give informed advice and guidance to new staff and especially NQTs
- Consider, in conjunction with the head teacher, at what point to involve parents/carers
- Contact and liaise with children's social care and any other relevant agencies
- Be supportive to those members of staff to whom pupils have made disclosures
- Be active in supporting the Child Protection Plan
- Establish a system, in conjunction with the head teacher, for passing appropriate Child Protection information to a new school

The Role of Staff

There are two principles that all staff should always bear in mind:

- The welfare of the child is paramount and should always be at the forefront of all decisions taken
- Confidentiality must be respected at all times

To support these principles

- All staff will be alert to signs of abuse and will act upon any concerns or suspicions. Observations/comments should be recorded and passed on immediately to the DSL
- All staff, including the DSL, will receive regular and appropriate training
- All staff will respect confidentiality and share information on a need to know basis

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Lead is not in school, staff should go to a member of the senior leadership team or the head teacher.

For general advice, information and Early Help or to access services if it is not clear who needs to be involved contact: The Early Help Hub (which includes the work of the Social Inclusion Panel) Tel: 020 7364 5006 email: EarlyHelp@towerhamlets.gov.uk

All emails sent to MASH will be sent using the GCSX secure email address: MASH@towerhamlets.gcsx.gov.uk

Safeguarding roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as;

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing the impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- and taking action to enable all children have the best outcomes (KCSIE, 2018).

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff, adults and volunteers working in Virginia Primary School

What is Abuse?

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 other (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Categories of Abuse

We are uniquely placed as responsible adults outside pupil's family homes to be able to detect signs of child abuse e.g. changes in behaviour, injuries, or failure to develop. Abuse is 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.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. The following categories of abuse and definitions are recognised for the purposes of the child protection register:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when a child suffers physical injury as a result of deliberate infliction or knowingly not prevented by a parent/carer. Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is classed as physical abuse. FGM comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. This is illegal and considered as child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women.

Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM. The UK communities most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians and Eritreans. However, girls

from non-African communities that are at risk of FGM include Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani. Teachers have a statutory duty to personally report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

So called Honour Based Violence (HBV) / Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

So-called 'honour' based violence is a term used to describe violence committed against a woman or a girl (or sometimes men) who the family or the community feels has not followed what they believe is acceptable behaviour and has brought dishonour or shame to the family.

What sort of behaviours lead to so-called 'honour' based violence?

Women and girls can experience violence or, in the most extreme form, be killed for a wide variety of behaviours, which can range from very trivial, such as talking to a male who is not a relative to being sexually assaulted or raped. Some common 'behaviours' are:

- defying their parents
- talking to a male who is not related to the family
- seeking a divorce or seeking residence of the children after divorce
- refusing to marry a man chosen by the family (rejecting a forced marriage)
- sexual relationships or pregnancy before or outside of marriage (including kissing or intimacy in public)
- becoming 'western' (wearing make-up or clothes deemed inappropriate, having male friends or boyfriends from another faith etc.)
- gossip (rumours can damage the 'honour' of a family)
- using drugs or drinking alcohol
- being sexually assaulted or raped
- being homosexual.

So-called 'honour' based violence is not a religious based issue it has been recorded in communities practising every major religion, including Jewish, Sikh, Christian, Hindu and Muslim communities. The underlying belief behind so-called 'honour' based violence is to maintain the control over women by the men within the family or community by denying women autonomy over their lives – including decisions such as who to marry, their sex lives or divorce and their human rights.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar 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 children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another (domestic violence). It may involve serious bullying (including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment 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 children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images or watching sexual activities, encouraging children 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 children. The sexual abuse of children by other children (peer on peer) is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

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 does not 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
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Sexting or 'Youth Produced Sexual Imagery'

Whilst professionals refer to the issue as 'sexting' there is no clear definition of 'sexting'. Many professionals consider sexting to be 'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet.' Yet when young people are asked 'What does sexting mean to you?' they are more likely to interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know'. Similarly, many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.

In this policy sexting covers the sharing of sexual imagery by young people. Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools and other agencies when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management.

- 'Youth produced' includes young people sharing images that they, or another young person, have created of themselves.
- 'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent.' A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context.
- 'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos.

The types of incidents which this covers are:

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18

Sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. This increase in the speed and ease of sharing imagery has brought concerns about young people producing and sharing sexual imagery of themselves. This can expose them to risks, particularly if the imagery is shared further, including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Producing and sharing sexual images of under 18s is also illegal.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage.

Neglect

Neglect can be difficult to define and consequently is under reported and underestimated. Neglect co exists with other forms of maltreatment. It is mainly defined as the failure of adults to meet children's basic human needs (food, warmth, shelter, hygiene) or the abdication of responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for children.

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that practitioners remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action.

However, while you may be concerned about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify. Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. 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)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. (These definitions come from "Working Together to Safeguard Children")

These categories come under the concept of significant harm in terms of current or likely abuse. We believe that if there are concerns about abuse, action must be taken to stop it and to prevent further abuse. It is better to err on the side of caution and talk over any concerns with the DSL or DSD responsible for child protection.

Peer on Peer Abuse

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

We need to recognise the gendered nature of peer on peer abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Staff are regularly trained so that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of the different categories of abuse. The following is a summary of some of the indicators that may suggest that a child is being, or is at risk of harm under each category. It is important to recognise that indicators alone cannot confirm whether a child is

being abused. Every child needs to be seen in the context of their family and wider community and a proper assessment carried out by appropriate persons.

The important message is that if it makes you feel unsure, or worried, do something about it, don't keep it to yourself.

Physical observations

Bruising especially:

- bruises on trunk
- bruises on upper arm, shoulders, neck consistent with gripping
- fingertip bruising/finger marks.

Burns and scalds especially:

- cigarette burns
- burns caused by lengthy exposure to heat.

Other physical indicators:

- Human bite marks
- Fractures, particularly spiral fractures
- Swelling and lack of normal use of limbs
- Any serious injury with no explanation or conflicting explanations/inconsistent accounts.
- Untreated injuries.

Behavioural observations

- Unusually fearful with adults
- Unnaturally compliant to parents
- Refusal to discuss injuries/fear of medical help
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Aggression toward others
- Wears cover-up clothing
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging

Indicators of girls at risk of FGM

Signs that show a pupil may be at risk of FGM include where the girl:

- Is from a community known to practice FGM
- Has an older sibling, or someone else in the family, who has undergone FGM
- Talks about having a 'special ceremony' or 'special procedure' to become a woman

Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Teachers may have cause for concern where:

- A girl is going abroad but seems vague about where they are going and how long for, is reluctant to talk about the holiday, or seems upset or scared when discussing it but won't say why
- Parents ask to take their daughter out of school before the holidays begin and/or are incommunicative or become aggressive when asked about their plans.

Signs a girl may have had FGM include where she:

- Is absent for a long time from school with noticeable behaviour change on return
- Goes to the toilet more than usual or stays in there for an unusually long time
- Isn't able to cross her legs when sitting on the carpet/looks uncomfortable and finds it hard to sit still

- Tries to get out of doing PE
- Suffers urinary tract infections/menstrual problems

Indicators of neglect

Behavioural observations

- Constant hunger
- Constant tiredness
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging
- Multiple accidents and accidental injuries.

Physical observations

- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation, pot belly, short stature
- Poor skin tone and hair tone
- Untreated medical problems

Indicators of sexual abuse

Physical observations

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unexpected pregnancy especially in very young girls
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

Behavioural observations

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour in young children
- Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Inexplicable falling off in school performance
- Sudden apparent changes in personality
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Socially withdrawn
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Acting out, aggressive behaviour
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting, by day or night
- Onset of insecure, clinging behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation, self-disgust
- Eating disorders

Indicators of emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive

- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing in education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

At Virginia we monitor pupils' attendance through our daily registers. We monitor attendance and punctuality closely and address poor or irregular attendance paying close attention to our vulnerable families. We systematically refer pupils' poor attendance to the local authority and investigate any unexplained absences. Children who are going abroad for extended period of time, going to stay elsewhere with relatives in the UK, or who are living in a 'private fostering' arrangement are subject to additional monitoring.

The school follows the procedures as set out through the Attendance and Welfare Service. If a child moves house they remain on our school register until their attendance at another school is verified through the Local Authority. In the case of families moving abroad permanently, the LA will be notified and the school will endeavour to contact the school in the country that the family have moved to.

We always will notify our local authority when we remove a pupil's name from the school admission register. We will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation. We will also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.

County Lines

County lines, or 'going country' means groups or gangs using young people or vulnerable adults to carry and sell drugs from borough to borough, and across county boundaries. It is a tactic used by groups or gangs to facilitate the selling of drugs in an area outside of the area they live, reducing their risk of detection. This issue is affecting all London boroughs and its impact can be seen in the Home Counties and many other towns and cities.

County line enterprises almost always involve exploitation of vulnerable people: this could involve both children and adults and is always a safeguarding issue. The gang/group will put vulnerable individuals between themselves and the risk of detection, asking them to carry and sell drugs, and/or to sell drugs at the other end of the line. A group/gang may also target a vulnerable person living in the area outside of London and take over their home as a base to sell drugs from.

This almost exclusively involves violence, intimidation and the offer of money or drugs. The use of the property for drug dealing often leads to the vulnerable person being left homeless. This is sometimes known as 'cuckooing'. The gang might also send young vulnerable people from their own area to stay at the house and distribute the drugs, again often intimidating and threatening them to stay. This is sometimes known as a 'trap house', and mobile phones are used to order more drugs, carried by other young people or vulnerable adults, who travel by train or car.

The impact of this is that young people become indebted to gang/groups and are forced into labour and exploitation to pay off debts and local vulnerable people are targeted in care homes, foster care, and local authority and supported housing.

Safeguarding from Radicalisation

We at Virginia Primary School recognise that protection from radicalisation and extremist narratives is a safeguarding issue.

Exposure of children to extremist ideology can hinder their social development and educational attainment alongside posing a very real risk that they could support or partake in an act of violence.

“Safeguarding vulnerable people from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding them from other forms of harm”. Home Office – The Prevent Strategy.

Staff should also be aware that the most vulnerable to “extremist travel” are close friends and family of others who have travelled.

Recognising Extremism

Early indicators may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships.

If a member of staff has concerns about a child and think they are at risk from extremist narratives or being radicalised, they should report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Pupils who cause concern for their extremist views should be referred to child protection agencies using a Multi-Agency Referral Form and emailing it to the following addresses;

Prevent.referral@towerhamlets.gov.uk and MASH@towerhamlets.gcsx.gov.uk

Looked after children and previously looked after children (LAC and PLAC)

At Virginia we understand that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

The designated teacher

On commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, designated teachers will have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. NICCO (National Information Centre on Children of Offenders) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

We understand the added vulnerabilities of children with a parent in prison are;

- Twice as likely to experience conduct and mental health problems, and less likely to do well at school.
- Three times more likely to be involved in offending. Sixty five per cent of boys with a convicted father will go on to offend themselves

Ensuring Safety at Other Provisions

Some of our students may arrive from, or consider leaving to attend independent provisions. We are legally required to alert the local authority if this situation arises so they can ensure these are appropriately registered schools. Likewise we are required to report any child whose parents intend to home educate.

Many of our children attend evening or weekend classes and staff should be alert to any indication that a class may not be complying with safeguarding legislation or not promoting appropriate values.

We have strong, positive relationships with our community and therefore we have a good local knowledge of the provision in the area. We keep up to date with this knowledge with support from the local authority.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. We recognise the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

We take measures to ensure extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

Key points to follow if you suspect, or are told, of abuse

Adults looking after children should be aware of the risks of abuse (by adults or other young people), and take steps to reduce those risks.

Staff or volunteers in charge of children should know what to do if they suspect that someone is physically or sexually abused, or if someone tells them that this is happening. The following key points give a guide on what to do and what not to do:

- **Always stop and listen** straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. The school's initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem or ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- If you can, **write brief notes** of what they are telling you while they are speaking. However, note taking can inhibit listening, and confuse a child, so if you make a brief note tell the child what and why you are making notes so there is a pause in the conversation and nothing is missed, and to inform the child exactly what is being written. The general advice is not to make notes during a disclosure but to make them as soon as practicable afterwards.
- **Never make a promise** that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – if you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it (see below). If asked, explain that if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell the people who absolutely have to know.
- **Do not ask leading questions** that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (e.g. "did he do X to you?") – Just ask "what do you want to tell me?" or "is there anything else you want to say?"
- Immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead (unless they are themselves accused or suspected of abusing) – don't tell other adults or young people what you have been told.
- **Never** discuss disclosures with the child's parents until you have spoken to the DSL. In cases of suspected sexual abuse by a parent, it is the role of the investigating authority to speak to parents.
- Discuss with the DSL whether any steps need to be taken to protect the person who has told you about the abuse (this may need to be discussed with the person who told you).
- Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people etc. – Social Services and police staff are trained to do this – you could cause more damage and spoil possible criminal proceedings. It is your duty to refer concerns on, not investigate.
- As soon as possible (and certainly the same day) the DSL should refer the matter to the local Social Services Department (helped by your notes). Follow their requests about what to do next. They will set up any necessary investigations, and advise you – that is their statutory job.
- Never think abuse is impossible in your organisation or group, or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.

If staff suspect another member of staff of abuse they must see the head teacher immediately (see Safeguarding Policy). If they suspect the head teacher of abuse they must contact the chair of governors immediately.

Remember, immediately a child protection issue is raised it should be referred to the DSL BEFORE any further action is taken.

Record Keeping and Reporting

Any member of staff or volunteer who has concerns about the safety or potential abuse of a child must report their concerns orally to a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team without delay:

It is expected that a written account of the concern or disclosure follow as soon as possible.

- This must be completed on the schools Concern Form.
- The Concern Form must be given to a designated senior member of staff immediately - in their absence either the DH or HT.
- If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken
- It must include as much information as possible - including time, date, exact words used in a disclosure, specific description to visible marks and their location, or a general description how a child's behaviour, demeanour has changed giving a sense of concern for the child's experience outside of school.
- The DSL must act on the information and report back to the member of staff as to outcomes. Options include:
 - managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes;
 - an early help assessment; or
 - a referral for statutory services, for example as the child is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm
- Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead professional. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse
- Any meetings with parents should also be recorded and kept secure.

Reports prepared for child protection conferences should focus on changes in:

- the child's educational progress and achievements
- attendance and punctuality
- behaviour (changes in behaviour/out of character)
- participation in school life
- relations with other children
- Where appropriate, the child's appearance.

The class teacher will compile a report for the meeting and discuss this with the Head prior to the meeting.

Confidentiality

Child protection records on children are kept securely in the head teacher's office and are available to staff on a need-to-know basis.

- Recording of information needs to be factual and objective
- Child protection records must be kept separate from educational records
- Need to know basis for staff involved with that child, not for general knowledge
- Staff must not promise confidentiality to the pupils

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Referrals

The role of education staff in child protection matters is to **identify** concerns and **refer** them directly to the Social Services who are the investigative agency, together with the police Child Protection Team. It is not the responsibility of teachers and other staff in our school to investigate suspected abuse. They should not take action beyond that agreed in the procedures within this policy. The DSL has responsibility for liaising with the social services department and other agencies over cases of abuse. If they are unsure about whether a case should be formally referred, they will seek advice and support from the appropriate agencies. In the case of a concern about radicalisation, the DSL will refer the child to the Social Inclusion Panel.

If a formal referral is made a strategy meeting may be called which in turn could lead to a case conference being convened and the child being placed on the child protection register. Staff will need to monitor pupils whose names are on the child protection register in line with what has been agreed in the child protection plan.

Pan London Continuum of Help and Support (2017) and the Threshold Guidance

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| Level 1 | Should be met within universal settings; including low level addition needs. |
| Level 2 | Which meet the criteria for more formal targeted services delivered as part of the early help offer; multi-agency intervention, a lead professional and a team around the family approach in addition to support in universal services |
| Level 3 | Which meet the threshold for social work assessment and support under S.17 Children Act 1989 (child in need), in addition to provision in universal settings and by targeted services |
| Level 4 | Which meet the threshold for statutory child protection by social work teams delivered under S.47 Children Act 1989, in addition to provision in universal settings and by targeted services. This may also include children subject to a Care Order or children looked after under S.20 (duty to accommodate) of the Children Act 1989. |

Inter-Agency Involvement

Attendance at strategy meetings and case conferences is very important. A member of staff from the school (normally the DSL or the head teacher,) will be nominated to be part of the Core Group to draw up a Child Protection plan of action and time scale. The plan will need to be assessed prior to the following Social Service review meeting. Information contributed to this meeting will be provided by the school Child Protection monitoring system.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

What to consider:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- the ages of the children involved;
- the developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?;
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;
- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or staff;

The starting point regarding any report should always be that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. **Especially important is not to pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter', 'part of growing up' or 'having a laugh'**

Risk Assessments

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- the alleged perpetrator; and all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments should be recorded (written or electronic) and should be kept under review. At all times, the school should be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and students and putting adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure they are engaging with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required.

Action following a report of youth produced sexual imagery

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy and reported to the safeguarding lead or deputy.

When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to a school attention:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

An initial review meeting should consider the initial evidence and aim to establish:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to a young person or young people
- If a referral should be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person – in most cases, imagery should not be viewed

What further information is required to decide on the best response

- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms. This may be unknown.
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices/online services
- Any relevant facts about the young people involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents /carers of the pupils involved - in most cases parents should be involved

An immediate referral to police and/or children's social care would be made if at this initial stage:

1. The incident involves an adult
2. There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
3. What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
4. The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 18
5. You have reason to believe a pupil or pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

If none of the above apply then a school may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care (a school can choose to escalate the incident at any time if further information/concerns come to light).

Training for staff

- Supply staff and visitors are informed of the school's child protection procedures on arrival at the school by the school office.
- New members of staff and volunteers receive induction training on child protection.
- The DSL will ensure all staff are informed about procedures when they start work at the school and will be reminded of these every term.
- Members of the senior leadership team (SLT) and senior teachers who may be in charge of the school are trained at 'Designated' level and this training is ongoing.
- Parent/carers have access to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and are made aware of it in pupil admission meetings.
- Staff will be regularly updated about any changes to the guidelines as outlined in this policy
- All staff should receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Safer Recruitment, Vetting, Maintenance of DBS (Disclosure + Barring Service) checks

Virginia Primary adheres to the statutory requirements set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018) which ensures all adults who work with pupils in the school have undergone the appropriate recruitment and vetting checks. We ensure that safer recruitment practices are in place and followed in checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children, including relevant members of the Governing Body. Evidence of these checks, DBS and Children's Barred List, are recorded on our SCR (Single Central Record).

To help us comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, if we choose to retain a copy of DBS, we do not retain it for longer than six months. Where we employ agency staff we take to follow the steps laid out in paragraph 152 and 153 of KCSIE 2018:

We must obtain written notification from any agency they use that the organisation has carried out the checks (in respect of the enhanced DBS certificate, written notification that confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business), on an individual who will be working at school that we would otherwise perform.

Where the position requires a barred list check, this is obtained by the agency prior to appointing the individual. We also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Volunteers

Under no circumstances would a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis teach or look after children regularly, or provide personal care on a one-off basis in school will be in regulated activity. We would obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (which should include barred list information) for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity. We understand that existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

However, we reserve the right to conduct a repeat DBS check (which should include barred list information) on any such volunteer should we have concerns. We understand that we are not legally permitted to request barred list information on a supervised volunteer as they are not considered to be engaged in regulated activity. We determine whether a volunteer is considered to be supervised we have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State (see Annex F KCSIE 2018). This guidance requires that, for a person to be considered supervised, the supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity;

- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children

We undertake a risk assessment and use our professional judgement and experience when deciding whether to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate for any volunteer not engaging in regulated activity