



# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

(to be used in conjunction with Mulberry

School for Girls Child Protection and

Safeguarding Policy)

<b>Approval Body:</b>	MST Board
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## Version Control

Version	Reviewed	Changes since last version
1	September 2025	No changes made.
2	January 2026	References to KCIE 2025 added, updated definition of safeguarding inline with KCIE definition
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This policy should always be read in conjunction with Mulberry School for Girls Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Mulberry Schools Trust Trainee Code of Conduct.

The aim of this policy is to establish and promote a child centred and co-ordinated approach to safeguarding our pupils' welfare, safety, and physical and mental health. The guidance in this policy fosters an honest, open, caring, and supportive ethos, where pupils, beginning teachers or staff can talk freely about their concerns, in the belief that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance.

Mulberry College of Teaching (MCoT) fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support children in our school ("children" includes everyone under 18).

Our policy applies to all beginning teachers, staff, governors, and visitors working with MCoT.

Safeguarding' is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) as;

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the 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

#### 1. College Commitment

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends, and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult help all pupils and especially those at risk of, or suffering from, abuse. MCoT will:

- establish and maintain a whole school safeguarding culture where pupils feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- ensure pupils know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- include opportunities in the curriculum (e.g. PSHE, RSE, citizenship, pastoral assemblies, tutor time activities) for pupils to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse which may include online abuse, child-on-child abuse, or extremist influences;
- ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies;
- ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working in the school have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupils. Staff and beginning teachers are to take an attitude of 'it could happen here' to safeguarding. Everyone who has contact with pupils has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action. All staff and beginning teachers are aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care.

In the schools you will work be based the key people who have specific responsibilities under Child Protection (CP) procedures are – Year Learning Coordinators, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Leads, the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Governor. The names of those carrying these responsibilities will be in the school you are placed in.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety, understanding the filtering, and monitoring systems and processes in place.

These responsibilities include:

- managing referrals by reporting suspected abuse to the Local Authority as required; supporting staff who make referrals; referring concerns about radicalisation as required; referring relevant cases to the Disclosure and Barring Services and refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police;
- working with others, such as the Headteacher, to keep them informed of ongoing enquiries and investigations; liaising with designated officer(s) at the Local Authority for child protection concerns;
- liaising with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, using the document NPCC- 'When to call the police' as guidance. 6
- liaising with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding to make a referral; acting as a source of support, advice, and expertise for staff;
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with staff
- ensuring the child protection policies are known, understood, and used effectively, reviewed annually and available publicly; ensuring that staff have relevant, up-to-date safeguarding training; This safeguarding should be reviewed regularly and should include an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to internet filtering and monitoring.
- ensuring that child protection files are transferred where a child leaves to join a new school or college

The DSL (or deputy DSLs) is always available during school hours for staff in the school or pupils to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The Deputy DSL is the 'designated teacher' for Looked After Children (LAC) and has the lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked-after children learn and achieve.

The designated teacher for LACs is the main point of contact with the Virtual School Head Teacher. The role of the designated teacher is to effectively implement the school's duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children. The designated teacher will also support care leavers in career aspirations and ambitions and will liaise with the local authority Personal Advisors to do this.

Year Learning Coordinators support the work of the DSL and take forward cases delegated to them. They are responsible for ensuring that students are kept safe daily, that any issues are reported to the DSL and that the pastoral curriculum meets students' needs in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

The Headteacher has oversight of all safeguarding and child protection practice and ensures that policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff.

The Governing Body has a duty to the Trust Board to ensure that the school meets its statutory responsibilities and that the children and young people attending the school are safe. Safeguarding is a standing item at all governing body meetings. The Chair of Governors at Mulberry School for Girls is currently the Designated Safeguarding Governor. They undertake regular reviews of safeguarding practice and reports the outcomes to the Local Governing Body and the Headteacher.

### 3. Procedures

Staff and beginning teachers should remember that Child Protection procedures relate to a range of issues, including physical abuse and non-accidental injury, sexual abuse including child-on-child abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and failure to thrive, as well as radicalisation and extremism and involvement in serious crime. Staff and beginning teachers will also recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff and beginning teachers must adhere to the following guidelines in relation to pupils who disclose information about potential Child Protection issues:

Never promise that you will keep everything the pupil says a secret. They must know that in a situation where their safety and well-being are at risk, you will have to get help for them and so refer the matter to someone more senior. You must explain that

this would be so in all such cases, that what happens next will be supportive and that only key people will be told. At the point of disclosure, pupils are told that staff will have to seek the professional help of others to resolve some situations satisfactorily.

Above all, listen to what they say and be clear on facts. You must not ask leading questions or what you may say in possible proceedings later will not be admissible evidence. You may ask, 'What happened?' However, you are NOT conducting an interview, nor an investigation and it is important that you go on to the next step as soon as possible. The pupil should not have to keep repeating their story.

When a pupil has disclosed abuse or neglect to you, you must report this immediately to the Year Learning Coordinator and Designated Safeguarding Lead or (if the DSL is not available) to the Headteacher. No one else has a 'right to know' at this stage and the pupil must be assured of your confidentiality in this.

When a pupil reports sexual abuse including child-on-child abuse, reassure them 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 by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Go with the pupil to the relevant member of staff and support them in this. They chose you for a reason. You may be present and support them throughout any procedure which may follow but of course you must say if you do not feel able, for any reason, to go through with this.

Others will take over and it is the responsibility of the DSL / Deputy DSL to proceed with this.

A pupil may choose to tell you something, clearly indicating that they are at risk, at a time when, or in a place where, there is no senior or named person available, for example during an after-school activity. You must then contact the local authority's safeguarding team via the Child Protection Advice Line or if they fail to answer, the local police. They are legally responsible for securing a place of safety for the child via Social Care. You MUST NOT deal with this on your own. You must inform the DSL as soon as possible after the referral has been made.

If you are concerned for the safety or physical or mental well-being of any pupil, whether they have spoken to you or not, you should report this to their Year Learning Coordinator or DSL, in confidence, immediately. All concerns, no matter how minor they may be thought to be, must be reported as soon as possible.

If a teacher, in the course of their work, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police on 101 immediately.

If you have safeguarding concerns about a member of school staff or another adult in the school you are placed in, including supply staff and volunteers, or an allegation is

made about them posing a threat to children, or if you believe a person behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (this is considered 'transferable risk') you must refer this to the DSL and Headteacher by completing the low level concern form on MS Teams or the way that the placement schools requires you to log any concerns. If your concern is about the Headteacher you must refer this to the Chair of Governors of the relevant school.

#### 4. Referral Procedures, Record Keeping and Information Sharing (YLCs, CP designated teacher, Head Teacher)

When a disclosure is made the YLC should:

- listen, accept, and record what the pupil says;
- not ask any leading questions;
- let the pupil know you will need to tell someone;
- reassure but be honest;
- give the pupil as much information as possible;
- not leave the pupil alone;
- immediately inform the DSL (or the Headteacher if the DSL is not available) if the child is at risk of harm so that further action can be taken;
- Consult the school social worker or if unavailable ring CP Advice line – 020 7364 3444 / 020 7364 5006 – option 3, or if necessary, the Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team on 020 7364 4079 (5– 9am). They will give feedback and/or pass on the referral to the appropriate Advice and Assessment Team. The name of duty social worker and details of call to be recorded on CPOMS;
- complete a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referral form. Send to MASH and upload onto Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) alerting the DSL;
- details of referral to duty and actions taken as a result to be recorded on CPOMS alerting the

DSL;

- All CP records are to be kept on CPOMS

#### 5. Supporting Pupils at Risk

MCoT recognises that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which 10 facilitate communication. We also recognise

that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way.

We will endeavour to support pupils through:

- the curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- the school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive, and secure environment;
- the implementation of the school behaviour management policy;
- regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families;
- a commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's interest to do so.

MCoT also recognises that students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges, and all staff need to be aware that there may be additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

These barriers 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 SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

## 6. Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Staff must be mindful of issues that may require early help, including; children who are young carers, family circumstances that present challenges such as substance abuse, mental health problems, domestic abuse, involvement in serious crime, children misusing drugs or alcohol, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

If staff or a beginning teacher has a concern about a pupil's wellbeing they should act on it immediately. At MCoT this means staff should discuss early help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the YLC in the school you are assigned to. Trainees may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.

This should be distinguished from instances where a child is in immediate danger, where a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately (see Appendix 2). Early help cases will be under constant review to determine whether a referral to statutory services is necessary.

## 7. Allegations against MCoT beginning teachers

MCoT recognises there are situations where it is possible for beginning teachers or staff to conduct themselves in a manner that may be deemed to be causing harm to children and takes any allegation seriously. MCoT is guided by local procedures for managing allegations against staff or beginning teachers, which are set out in paragraph 2.6 of London Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

If a concern is raised about a beginning teacher, then this should be referred to the Director [rusmith@mulberryschoolstrust.org](mailto:rusmith@mulberryschoolstrust.org)

## 8. 'Low-level' concerns

Low level concerns are those that are deemed not to have met the harm threshold as set out in KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe In Education) 2025. 'Low-level' does not mean that it is insignificant. Low-level concerns could include a beginning teacher who is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, has favourites within the classroom or takes photos of children on their mobile phone, contrary to the school policy. This is not an exhaustive list, and low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources.

All low-level concerns should be referred to the Director of MCoT. The school's Professional Tutor and the Director of MCoT (or delegated) will have a formal, recorded conversation with the beginning teacher about the concern and clearly explain the correct procedures that should be followed. If it is appropriate, they may be placed on a Cause for Concern that relates to Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards.

All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including the details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and the action taken. The record will be saved in the beginning teacher's electronic personnel file. Low-level concerns will only be used in references if they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance.

Concerns or allegations that meet the harm threshold:

Allegations that meet the harm threshold are defined in KCSIE 2025 as being where any person who works in a school or college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

In the event of an allegation against a staff member, the employing school's safeguarding policy will be followed.

In the event of an allegation against a MCoT beginning teacher that meets the threshold, the placement school must follow their school's safeguarding policy, including looking after the welfare of the child and investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation. The placement school must also inform the Director of MCoT immediately. Either the placement school, or MCoT may ask the beginning teacher to leave the school premises immediately, temporarily pausing the placement, while investigations are conducted. The CEO must be made aware of the investigation by the Director of MCoT.

Either the placement school or the Director of Mulberry MCoT should inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and inform the other party immediately. The Beginning Teacher should also inform the Director of MCoT. When dealing with allegations, the placement school and MCoT should:

- apply common sense and judgement
- deal with allegations quickly, fairly, and consistently,
- provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

Following investigation by the LADO that leads to no further action, the Director of MCoT of Teaching and the LADO should record the decision and justification for it and agree on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerns and by whom. Advice will be given by the Mulberry Schools Trust's Chief People Officer.

Where further enquiries are required, the beginning teacher may be suspended from the course, following advice from the LADO. The Director of MCoT will record the rationale and justification for such a course of action, writing to the beginning teacher to inform them of the decision within no more than 2 working days. The DfE (Department for Education) Register will be updated by the MCoT administrators. The process for allegations that meet the harm threshold, as set out in KCSIE 2025 will be followed.

## 9. Recruitment of Beginning Teachers

MCoT will undertake DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Enhanced Disclosures and Prohibition for Teaching for all beginning teachers to ensure compliance with DfE requirements. For salaried beginning teachers, these checks are completed by the employing school.

A record of all checks on beginning teachers will be held on the Single Central Record. A satisfactory check is defined as having no criminal convictions (including cautions, reprimands, and final warnings) that might impact on undertaking the role of a beginning teacher. Overseas police checks will be carried out for those who have lived outside the UK for six months or more within the last five years, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

All registered beginning teachers must report any subsequent criminal convictions to the HR department. Failure to do so will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken. It is the responsibility of the beginning teacher to complete the DBS application correctly. Where a DBS certificate shows a conviction, caution, reprimand, or final warning, MCoT will liaise with the placement school Headteacher / Principal. The Director of MCoT will have the final decision on satisfactory DBS checks with advice from HR.

Our staff and beginning teacher recruitment policies and practices are rigorous and comply with safe recruitment and selection requirements. We always pursue identity checks and qualification checks, and we take up and scrutinise written references.

Identity checks must be carried out on all conditional offers made before the commencement of training:

- MCoT completes online searches as part of their due diligence checks on applications.
- All successful applicants will have an enhanced DBS check before starting the programme.
- All beginning teachers should wear their MCoT identification badges when at centre-based training and follow school placement protocols and the placement school's ID badge where they are on placement.
- The beginning teachers should bring in their original DBS certificate for the HR Department to note the DBS number and issue number for the single central record.
- All beginning teachers will receive Child Protection, Safeguarding and Prevent training during their training.

- All placement schools must make their Safeguarding, Child Protection policies and Code of Conduct available to the beginning teachers and induct them on the policies and procedures. These must be adhered to by the beginning teacher.

- Beginning teachers need to follow the placement school's policy on taking photographs of children.

Personal cameras, personal mobile phones or other personal devices should not be used to take photographs of pupils.

- All beginning teachers are to sign a register when attending centre-based training.

- Beginning teachers are advised to follow their placement school's policies as and where requested.

**Appendices are noted and to be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Mulberry School for Girls Policy.**