



CONIFERS HOUSE SCHOOL

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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Reviewed by	Georgios Chatzakis
Approved by	Dr Julie Smith, Chair of Governors

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Introduction

This policy sets out how Conifers House School safeguards and promotes the welfare of its pupils. It applies to all staff, including temporary and agency staff, volunteers, contractors and governors, and should be read alongside the school's related policies and procedures.

The policy reflects the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* (KCSIE) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*, together with the safeguarding requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. It will be reviewed at least annually and updated when legislation, statutory guidance or local safeguarding arrangements change.

All staff must read Part One of KCSIE 2026 in full and follow this policy and the school's safeguarding procedures. This includes staff who do not work directly with pupils. Staff may also use the KCSIE overview for all staff as a quick reference; it does not replace Part One. The school will provide staff with the information and training they need to understand and carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.

As part of induction, staff will be made aware of the school's safeguarding systems and procedures, including:

- this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, including the procedures for responding to child-on-child abuse;
- the Behaviour Policy, including measures to prevent and respond to bullying, including online, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- the Code of Conduct Policy, including procedures for raising low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing;
- the school's response to pupils who are absent from education, particularly when absences occur repeatedly or for prolonged periods; and
- the role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSLs), and how to contact them.

The current versions of the relevant statutory guidance and legislation will be made available to staff, including through links on the school website or other appropriate school systems.

Key Changes in 2026

This policy has been reviewed against *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* (KCSIE 2026), which came into force on 1 September 2026 and replaced the 2025 edition. Staff and governors must refer to the current statutory guidance when carrying out their safeguarding responsibilities.

The main changes relevant to this policy are reflected in its procedures and staff guidance. These include the requirement for all staff, including those who do not work directly with pupils, to read Part One of KCSIE 2026, and the updated expectations concerning safeguarding practice, online safety and information-sharing.

The policy also reflects *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*, the current statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, support and protect children. The full guidance and the Department for

Education's summary of changes are available through the links provided in the relevant statutory guidance section of this policy.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been prepared with regard to the legislation and statutory guidance that apply to Conifers House School, including:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* (DfE), statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England on safeguarding children and safer recruitment;
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026* (DfE), statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, support and protect children;
- the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the requirements in Part 3 relating to welfare, health and safety;
- the Children Acts 1989 and 2004;
- the Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- the Equality Act 2010, including its protections against discrimination, harassment and victimisation and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils;
- the Human Rights Act 1998;
- the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the statutory Prevent duty guidance;
- the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, including the mandatory reporting duty inserted by the Serious Crime Act 2015;
- the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Police Act 1997, in relation to regulated activity and criminal record checks; and
- the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation, in relation to the lawful handling and sharing of personal information.

The school will have regard to the current guidance and procedures issued by the West Sussex safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies. Where a pupil's circumstances require it, the school will also work with the safeguarding partners and agencies in the pupil's home local authority.

This list is not exhaustive. The school will follow other relevant legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures when they apply. References to guidance in this policy mean the current version, unless a specific version is stated.

Important Contacts

Role/ Organisation	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) /Conifers House School	Catherine Miller	Catherine.miller@conifershouse-school.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Georgios Chatzakis	Georgios.Chatzakis@conifershouseschool.co.uk
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Duty LADO	West Sussex LADO@westsussex.gov.uk 03302226450
Role/ Organisation	Name	Contact Details
Chair of governors	Julie Smith	07713 255531 chair@Conifershouse-school.co.uk
DfE Prevent advice helpline		020 7340 7264

Aims

The Conifers House School aims to safeguard and promote the welfare of every pupil. We recognise that pupils may have special educational needs, disabilities, communication differences or health needs that affect how they express themselves, understand risk or seek help. These needs will be taken into account when staff listen to pupils, assess concerns and decide how to support them.

The school aims to ensure that:

- all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, as part of induction and at regular intervals;
- all staff receive safeguarding updates, at least annually, to maintain their knowledge and understanding;
- all staff know how to respond to a safeguarding concern, including how and when to report it to the DSL or a DDSL, and understand that they must act promptly;

- all staff understand the local early help process and their role in it;
- all staff understand how to refer concerns to children’s social care and how they may be asked to contribute to assessments and multi-agency work;
- staff listen to pupils, take their wishes and feelings into account, and respond calmly and supportively when a pupil shares a concern;
- staff do not promise to keep a safeguarding disclosure secret, and explain in an age- and communication-appropriate way that information may need to be shared to help keep the pupil or another person safe;
- pupils who report abuse, exploitation or neglect are taken seriously, treated with dignity and supported; they are not made to feel that they have caused a problem or should feel ashamed;
- staff remain professionally curious and alert to changes in a pupil’s presentation, behaviour, communication or circumstances, recognising that a pupil may not be able to explain what is happening or may not identify their experience as harmful; and
- staff build trusted relationships with pupils and use appropriate communication strategies to help them express their views and concerns.

Online Safety and Cyber Security

Online safety is part of the school’s safeguarding responsibilities. The school will take reasonable and proportionate steps to protect pupils from harm online, both while using school systems and when online activity outside school may affect their safety or wellbeing.

The Head of School is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has lead responsibility for safeguarding, including online safety. The Head of School will understand the school’s filtering and monitoring arrangements and work with the Executive Headteacher, governors and the school’s IT support to identify risks, review provision and ensure that concerns are acted on. Governors and the proprietor are responsible for ensuring that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.

The school will maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in line with current DfE guidance. The arrangements will be reviewed at least once every academic year and when a significant change or concern indicates that an earlier review is needed. Reviews will consider the school’s pupils and provision, including pupils’ ages, SEND and individual vulnerabilities; the devices and systems used; what content is blocked or allowed; and whether alerts and concerns are followed up effectively.

The school will ensure that relevant staff know how to recognise and report online safeguarding concerns, understand the purpose and limits of the filtering and monitoring systems, and know how to escalate concerns. Technical support will maintain the systems and provide relevant reports or information to support the school’s review and response.

The school will teach and support pupils to use technology safely in a way that is appropriate to their age, communication, understanding and individual needs. Staff will remain alert to online bullying, harassment, coercive or controlling behaviour, grooming, exploitation, harmful content, and the creation or sharing of nude or semi-nude images. Any concern will be addressed through the school’s

safeguarding procedures and relevant policies, including the Online Safety Policy, ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy, Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils must hand in their mobile phones to reception when they arrive at school. The school will keep them securely and return them at the end of the school day. Any exception must be agreed by the Head of School and managed in line with the pupil's individual needs and safeguarding arrangements. Staff will follow the school's procedures for any other smart technology brought onto the premises.

Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- providing help and support to meet children's needs as soon as problems emerge;
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing impairment of children's mental or physical 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 to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of safeguarding. It refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. It may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. The types of abuse are described in Appendix 2.

Neglect is a form of abuse. It 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. Further information is provided in Appendix 2.

Sharing of nude or semi-nude images refers to the sending or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by children. Staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures when they become aware of this.

For the purposes of this policy, **child** means anyone under the age of 18.

The safeguarding partners for West Sussex are the local authority, the relevant integrated care board and the chief officer of police. They are responsible for agreeing how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in West Sussex. Where a pupil's home local authority is elsewhere, the school will work with the safeguarding partners and agencies relevant to that pupil.

The terms **victim**, **alleged perpetrator** and **perpetrator** may be used when describing abuse. The school recognises that a child who has experienced abuse may not identify with the term "victim". Staff will consider the child's wishes and circumstances when choosing language, while ensuring that records and safeguarding actions remain clear and accurate. The school will also consider carefully how it refers to a child alleged to have caused harm, recognising that the child may also have safeguarding needs.

Equality Statement

Some pupils may be at greater risk of abuse or face additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting harm. Conifers House School is committed to safeguarding every pupil, taking account of individual circumstances and making appropriate adjustments so that pupils can access protection and support.

Staff will be particularly alert to the needs of pupils who may face increased risk or barriers to disclosure, including pupils who:

- have special educational needs, disabilities, communication needs or health conditions;
- are young carers;
- may experience discrimination related to a protected characteristic, including race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability;
- have English as an additional language;
- live in circumstances that may increase vulnerability, including domestic abuse, substance misuse or insecure accommodation;
- may be at risk of female genital mutilation, forced marriage, sexual or criminal exploitation, or radicalisation;
- are asylum seekers or refugees;
- are affected by their own or a family member's mental health needs;
- are looked-after or previously looked-after;
- are missing from education, or have repeated or prolonged absences; or
- may be at risk of harm if they are withdrawn from school or their education arrangements change.

This list is not exhaustive. Staff will consider each pupil's circumstances and take account of their communication, learning and support needs when identifying concerns, hearing their views and responding to disclosures. The school will make reasonable adjustments where required and will not allow a pupil's disability, communication differences or other individual needs to prevent a safeguarding concern being recognised or acted upon.

Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection are everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors. It applies to pupils' school attendance and to school activities taking place off site or outside the usual school day.

The school will take a whole-school approach to safeguarding, including preventative education. Staff will challenge sexism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, sexual harassment and sexual violence, and respond to these behaviours in line with the school's policies and procedures.

Preventative education will be delivered through the curriculum, pastoral support and the school's PSHE Policy. It will be inclusive and appropriate to pupils' age, development, communication and learning needs. It will help pupils to develop understanding of:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- personal boundaries, consent and how to seek help;
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality;
- body confidence and self-esteem;
- abusive relationships, including coercive and controlling behaviour;
- sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, harassment and violence, and how to access support; and
- forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The school will have regard to the current DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.

All Staff

All staff must:

- read Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* (KCSIE) in full and follow this policy and the school's safeguarding procedures;
- confirm at the beginning of each academic year that they have read the required guidance and school policies;
- take part in safeguarding and child protection training and updates, including online safety;
- know the identity of the Head of School, who is the DSL, and the DDSs, and how to contact them;
- know the school's safeguarding systems, including this policy, the Code of Conduct Policy, the Behaviour Policy and the Children Missing Education (CME) Policy;
- know how to identify and report concerns promptly, including concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation, child-on-child abuse, female genital mutilation, radicalisation or serious violence;
- know how to respond if a pupil makes a disclosure, including listening calmly, taking the pupil seriously, not promising confidentiality, and reporting the concern to the DSL or a DDSL without delay;
- understand the local early help process and their role in identifying emerging needs, sharing relevant information and contributing to assessments or multi-agency work;
- understand how to make a referral to children's social care and the role they may be asked to play in any subsequent assessment;
- understand that pupils may be at risk of harm at home, at school, in the community or online, and that SEND or communication needs may affect how a pupil expresses a concern or seeks help;

- treat pupils with dignity and respect, provide appropriate opportunities for them to raise concerns, and ensure that no pupil is discouraged from speaking about harm or discrimination; and
- reassure pupils who report abuse or harm that they are being taken seriously and will be supported.

Staff should refer to Appendix 5 for further information about specific safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Head of School is the DSL and a member of the senior leadership team. The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety. This lead responsibility remains with the DSL and cannot be delegated, although specific activities may be carried out by appropriately trained deputies.

During term time, the DSL or a DDSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. The school will have clear cover arrangements for periods when the DSL is unavailable and for out-of-hours or out-of-term activities. The Chair of the Board's safeguarding role is to provide governance oversight; it does not replace the operational role of the DSL or DDSL. If a member of staff cannot reach the DSL or a DDSL and believes a child may be at immediate risk, they must contact the relevant emergency service or children's social care directly and inform the DSL as soon as possible.

The school will provide the DSL with the time, authority, training, resources and support needed to carry out the role. The DSL will:

- advise and support staff on child welfare and child protection matters;
- refer cases to children's social care, the police or the Channel programme when appropriate, and support staff who make referrals;
- make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the school has a legal duty to do so;
- participate in, and contribute to, strategy discussions, inter-agency meetings and assessments where required;
- maintain a sound understanding of harmful sexual behaviour and the support available locally for all children involved;
- liaise with children's social care, the police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and other relevant agencies, as appropriate; and
- ensure that safeguarding concerns are handled in line with this policy and the school's procedures.

The DSL's and DDSLs' detailed responsibilities are set out in their role descriptions and in Annex B of KCSIE 2026. The DSL will ensure that the school has adequate safeguarding cover for all school activities.

The Conifers House School Board

The Conifers House School Board, on behalf of the proprietor, has overall responsibility for ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place. The Board will:

- promote a whole-school approach to safeguarding and child protection;
- approve this policy and review it at least annually, and when changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local arrangements make an earlier review necessary;

- monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the school’s safeguarding arrangements and hold the Head of School to account for their operation;
- ensure that the DSL has the status, authority, time, training, resources and support needed to carry out the role effectively;
- ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and read the required parts of KCSIE 2026;
- ensure that online safety is included in the school’s safeguarding arrangements and that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place;
- receive assurance that filtering and monitoring provision is reviewed at least once every academic year, with the review recorded and actions followed up;
- ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for managing allegations against staff and low-level concerns, including those involving supply staff, volunteers and contractors; and
- ensure that safeguarding arrangements take account of the additional barriers to recognising or disclosing harm that some pupils with SEND, disabilities or health conditions may face.

The Chair of the Board, Julie Smith, is the Board’s safeguarding lead. She will monitor safeguarding arrangements on behalf of the Board and report concerns or required actions to it. This governance role is separate from the operational role of the DSL.

Where another organisation provides services or activities on the school’s premises, the school will seek assurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place, agree how safeguarding concerns will be shared, and include safeguarding requirements in the terms for use of the premises.

The Chair of the Board will act as case manager for allegations against the Head of School, in accordance with the procedures set out in Appendix 4 and current statutory guidance.

Governors will read KCSIE 2026 and undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their role. The Board will ensure that governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and receive sufficient information to provide effective oversight.

The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and is also the DSL. The Head of School will ensure that staff, including temporary and agency staff, and volunteers:

- are informed about the school’s safeguarding systems and procedures as part of their induction;
- understand and follow this policy, including how to report concerns and make referrals;
- receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, with updates provided when needed;
- know how to access the DSL or a DDSL and understand the school’s cover arrangements; and
- understand the school’s expectations for safeguarding pupils during the school day and school activities.

The Head of School will ensure that this policy is made available to parents and carers when their child joins the school and through the school website. The Head of School will act as case manager for allegations about staff or volunteers, and will receive and respond to low-level concerns, in line with the procedures in Appendix 4 and current statutory guidance. Where an allegation concerns the Head of School, the Chair of the Board will act as case manager, as set out in the Board's responsibilities and Appendix 4.

The Head of School will ensure that staffing and supervision arrangements are appropriate to pupils' needs and that any applicable statutory requirements are met. Where the school provides for a child in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the Head of School will ensure that the child is assigned a key person.

Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher provides strategic leadership, challenge and support in relation to safeguarding, compliance, health and safety and school improvement. The Executive Headteacher supports the Board and proprietor in understanding safeguarding assurance information, inspection findings, strategic risks and priorities for action.

The Executive Headteacher also supports the Head of School and senior leaders through professional oversight, constructive challenge and guidance on policy implementation, quality assurance, improvement planning, external scrutiny and the completion of actions arising from monitoring, incidents, inspection, governor visits or external advice.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Conifers House School will handle personal information carefully and share it when necessary to safeguard and promote a child's welfare. Confidentiality must not prevent staff from reporting a safeguarding concern or sharing relevant information with the DSL, a DDSL or an appropriate external agency.

Staff must not promise a pupil that information will be kept secret. If a pupil shares a concern, staff should explain, in a way the pupil can understand, that information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them or others safe. Staff should pass the information promptly to the Head of School, who is the DSL, or to a DDSL.

The school will handle and share personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and current statutory guidance. Data protection law does not prevent necessary and proportionate information sharing for safeguarding. Consent is not always required; the school must identify and record an appropriate lawful basis and, where special category data is involved, an applicable condition for processing. Staff should seek advice from the DSL if they are unsure, but this must not delay action to protect a child.

The DSL will consider the child's wishes and feelings, the level of risk, the needs of other children, and whether informing parents or carers could increase risk or prejudice a safeguarding response. Information will be shared only with those who need it for the safeguarding purpose, using secure methods, and the decision and rationale will be recorded.

Reports of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault will be referred to the police in line with KCSIE 2026 and the school's safeguarding procedures. The DSL will consider whether and how parents or carers should be informed, taking account of the child's safety and any advice from children's social care or the police.

Staff will take reasonable steps to protect the privacy of children involved and avoid unnecessary disclosure or discussion.

The school will comply with the statutory Information Sharing Duty under section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 when it comes into force and have regard to the associated statutory guidance.

Further requirements for handling and sharing information are set out in the school's Data Protection Policy and Information Sharing Policy. Record-keeping requirements are set out in the Record-Keeping section of this policy. Allegations about staff are addressed in Appendix 4.

Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

- Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.
- Where this policy refers to reporting a concern to the DSL, staff may report it to a DDSL if the DSL is unavailable. This does not transfer responsibilities that are assigned specifically to the DSL.

Referral to Social Care and the Police

Staff must report safeguarding concerns promptly to the Head of School, who is the DSL, or to a DDSL. If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent protection, staff must call 999. They must not wait to contact the DSL before seeking emergency help.

The DSL will decide whether to refer the concern to children's social care, the police or another appropriate agency and will make the referral without delay where required. If the DSL or a DDSL is unavailable, or a staff member believes that a referral is necessary and the concern is not being acted on, the staff member may contact the relevant agency directly. They must inform the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible and record the action taken.

Anyone can make a referral to children's social care or the police. Staff should follow the contact arrangements set out in the **Agency and Contact Details** subsection below.

Agency and Contact Details

Agency	Contact details
Police — emergency	If a child is in immediate danger or urgent police action is needed, call 999.
Police — non-emergency	Call 101 for non-emergency advice or to report a non-emergency crime. You can also use the Sussex Police website .
West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD)	If the child lives in West Sussex, call 01403 229900 Monday to Friday, 9.00am–5.00pm. Referrals can also be made through the West Sussex Integrated Front Door portal .
West Sussex out-of-hours service	Outside office hours, including weekends and bank holidays, call 0330 222 6664 .
Another local authority	If the child lives outside West Sussex, contact the children’s social care service for the local authority where the child lives. If you are unsure which local authority to contact, use the government’s report child abuse to a local council service .

These contact details do not replace the requirement to contact emergency services where a child is in immediate danger. Staff must also inform the DSL or a DDSL as soon as possible, in line with the ‘Referral to Social Care and the Police’ section.

Informing the DSL

Staff must report safeguarding concerns promptly to the Head of School, who is the DSL, or to a DDSL. They should provide a clear, factual account of what they have seen, heard or been told, including when and where it happened and who was present.

Staff must record the concern as soon as possible using the school’s safeguarding recording system and follow any instructions from the DSL or DDSL. Staff must not investigate the concern themselves or delay reporting it while seeking further information.

The DSL will consider the information, decide what action is needed and make or arrange any necessary referral to children’s social care, the police or another agency. Staff should provide further information or contribute to multi-agency work if requested.

If the concern is urgent and the DSL or a DDSL cannot be reached, staff must contact the appropriate agency directly, following the procedure set out in the “Referral to Social Care and the Police” section. They must inform the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible.

If the concern is about the Head of School, staff must follow the procedures for allegations against staff in Appendix 4 and may contact the Chair of the Board or the LADO as appropriate.

Time Scales

Staff must report safeguarding concerns to the Head of School, who is the DSL, or a DDSL without delay. They must not wait until the end of the day or attempt to investigate the concern themselves.

The DSL or DDSL will consider the concern promptly and decide what action is required, including whether to refer it to children's social care, the police or another agency. Referrals must be made without delay where a child may be at risk of harm. If a child is in immediate danger, staff must call 999.

Staff must follow up if they do not receive a response from the DSL or DDSL or are not satisfied that appropriate action is being taken. If the DSL and DDSL are unavailable, staff must use the referral and emergency contact arrangements in the Agency and Contact Details section.

The school will record the concern, decisions made, actions taken and any follow-up required in the pupil's safeguarding record.

If a Child Makes a Disclosure to You

If a pupil tells you about abuse, neglect, exploitation or another safeguarding concern:

- listen calmly and give the pupil time to communicate in their own way;
- take what they say seriously, remain supportive and do not show shock or disbelief;
- use the pupil's usual communication method and any appropriate communication aids. Do not assume that a pupil's communication or learning needs make their account unreliable;
- do not ask leading questions or investigate. If you need to clarify what the pupil means, use brief, open questions and avoid asking them to repeat their account unnecessarily;
- reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by telling you;
- explain, in a way the pupil can understand, that you need to share the information with people who can help keep them or someone else safe. Do not promise secrecy;
- report the concern promptly to the Head of School, who is the DSL, or a DDSL, and make a record in the school's safeguarding recording system as soon as possible;
- record the pupil's words as accurately as possible, distinguishing what the pupil said from your own observations. Include the date, time, context, any questions asked and any action taken; and
- keep the information confidential and share it only with those who need it for safeguarding purposes.

If the DSL or a DDSL is unavailable and the matter is urgent, follow the referral and emergency contact arrangements in the "Referral to Social Care and the Police" section. Tell the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible about any direct referral you make.

Some pupils may not feel ready or able to explain what is happening, may not recognise their experience as harmful, or may communicate distress through changes in behaviour or presentation. Staff must remain professionally curious and report concerns even when a pupil has not made a direct disclosure.

If You Discover that FGM has Taken Place, or a Pupil is at Risk of FGM

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and a criminal offence. It involves procedures that injure or alter the external female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Indicators of FGM and factors that may suggest a pupil is at risk are set out in Appendix 5.

Mandatory reporting duty

A teacher must report a known case of FGM in a pupil under 18 directly to the police, without delay, if the teacher is informed by the pupil that FGM has been carried out on them or personally observes physical signs that appear to show it has been carried out. This is a personal statutory duty; it cannot be fulfilled by reporting the matter only to the DSL.

The teacher must also inform the Head of School, who is the DSL, as soon as possible, unless doing so would place the pupil at further risk or impede a police investigation. The DSL will refer the matter to children's social care and take any other safeguarding action required. Staff must not examine a pupil.

Risk or suspicion

The mandatory reporting duty does not apply where FGM is suspected or a pupil is considered to be at risk, but there is no known case. Any member of staff who has such a concern must report it promptly to the DSL or a DDSL. The DSL will assess the concern and refer it to children's social care or the police as appropriate. Staff must not investigate the concern themselves or contact family members if doing so could increase risk to the pupil.

For emergency and referral contacts, staff should use the Agency and Contact Details section.

If You Have a Concern About a Child

A concern may arise from something a pupil says, something you observe, information shared by another person, or a change in the pupil's presentation or circumstances. You do not need proof of abuse or neglect before reporting a concern.

Staff must report concerns promptly to the Head of School, who is the DSL, or a DDSL, and record the facts in the school's safeguarding recording system. The DSL or DDSL will consider the information and decide what action is needed. Staff must not investigate the concern themselves or wait for further evidence before reporting it.

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. If you cannot reach the DSL or a DDSL, or you believe appropriate action is not being taken, contact the relevant children's social care service or the police directly. Follow the referral and contact arrangements in the Agency and Contact Details section, and inform the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible.

Staff may contact the NSPCC Helpline on **0808 800 5000** for advice. This does not replace making a referral where a child may need help or protection and must not delay urgent action.

Out of School Settings

Where an activity is organised, managed or directly supervised by Conifers House School staff, the school's safeguarding arrangements apply, including when the activity takes place off site or outside normal school hours.

Where another organisation provides an activity on the school's premises, the school will seek assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding and child protection arrangements. This may include reviewing its policies and procedures, confirming how concerns will be reported and agreed with the school, and checking that the provider has suitable arrangements for the people working with children.

The school will set out safeguarding requirements in the relevant hire or service agreement. The agreement will require the provider to report safeguarding concerns relating to pupils promptly to the school and to cooperate with safeguarding enquiries. The school may monitor compliance and may end the agreement if safeguarding requirements are not met.

Where Conifers House School arranges or supports a pupil's participation in an activity provided by another organisation, the school will take reasonable steps to understand the provider's safeguarding arrangements and agree how relevant concerns will be communicated. Where necessary and lawful, the school will share information about a pupil's communication, support or safety needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Early Help Assessment

Early help means providing support as soon as a child or family needs it, to address emerging needs and reduce the likelihood of difficulties becoming more serious. Under *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*, local arrangements may provide this support through a Family Help approach.

Staff should be alert to changes in a pupil's presentation, circumstances, attendance, relationships or behaviour that may indicate emerging needs or a risk of harm. They should consider the pupil's views, communication and learning needs, and the context around the concern. A pupil's SEND or disability does not, by itself, mean that an early help or safeguarding concern exists; staff should consider whether the pupil's individual needs are being met and whether additional support is required.

Staff must share concerns promptly with the Head of School, who is the DSL, or a DDSL, and record them in the school's safeguarding recording system. The DSL will consider whether early help or Family Help is appropriate and will follow the relevant local authority's procedures, involving the pupil and family where appropriate. The school will work with other agencies and contribute to assessment and planning. A member of school staff may act as lead practitioner where this is agreed and appropriate.

Early help does not replace a referral to children's social care when a child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. The DSL will review whether support is helping and will refer or escalate concerns if the pupil's needs are not being met or the situation is not improving.

Referral

The Head of School, as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will normally make referrals to children's social care or the police. Any member of staff may make a referral directly if they believe this is necessary to safeguard a pupil. Staff must not delay an urgent referral while trying to contact the DSL or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

A member of staff who makes a direct referral must inform the DSL or a DDSL as soon as possible and record the referral in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Following a referral, children's social care should acknowledge it and decide what action to take, normally within one working day. If the referrer or DSL has not received an appropriate response, they must follow up promptly with the relevant local authority and record the contact and outcome. The local authority may limit the information it can share, but this must not prevent the school from continuing to act to safeguard the pupil.

If the school's concerns are not addressed, or the pupil's circumstances remain unsafe, the DSL must use the relevant local safeguarding partnership's escalation procedures. Where there is immediate danger, staff must contact the police on 999.

See Appendix 1 for local contact details for referral and escalation.

If You Have Concerns About Extremism

Concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation must be treated as safeguarding concerns. Staff must report them promptly to the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or to a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). Staff must record the facts and must not investigate the concern themselves.

The DSL will assess the concern, consider the pupil's individual circumstances and communication needs, and decide the appropriate next steps. These may include seeking advice from the local authority or police, making a referral to children's social care, or making a Prevent referral for consideration under the Channel process. A Prevent referral is not a substitute for a children's social care referral where the pupil may be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.

If the DSL or a DDSL is unavailable, staff must not delay action. They should seek advice from a senior leader and make a referral directly where this is necessary to safeguard the pupil. Any staff member making a direct referral must inform the DSL or a DDSL as soon as possible.

Staff can also contact the DfE dedicated helpline on **020 7340 7264** or email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk for advice about concerns relating to a pupil. The email address must not be used for emergencies. If anyone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

If You Have a Mental Health Concern

A pupil's mental health concern may sometimes indicate that they have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff must remain alert to changes in a pupil's presentation, behaviour, communication, attendance or engagement, taking account of the pupil's individual needs and usual ways of communicating.

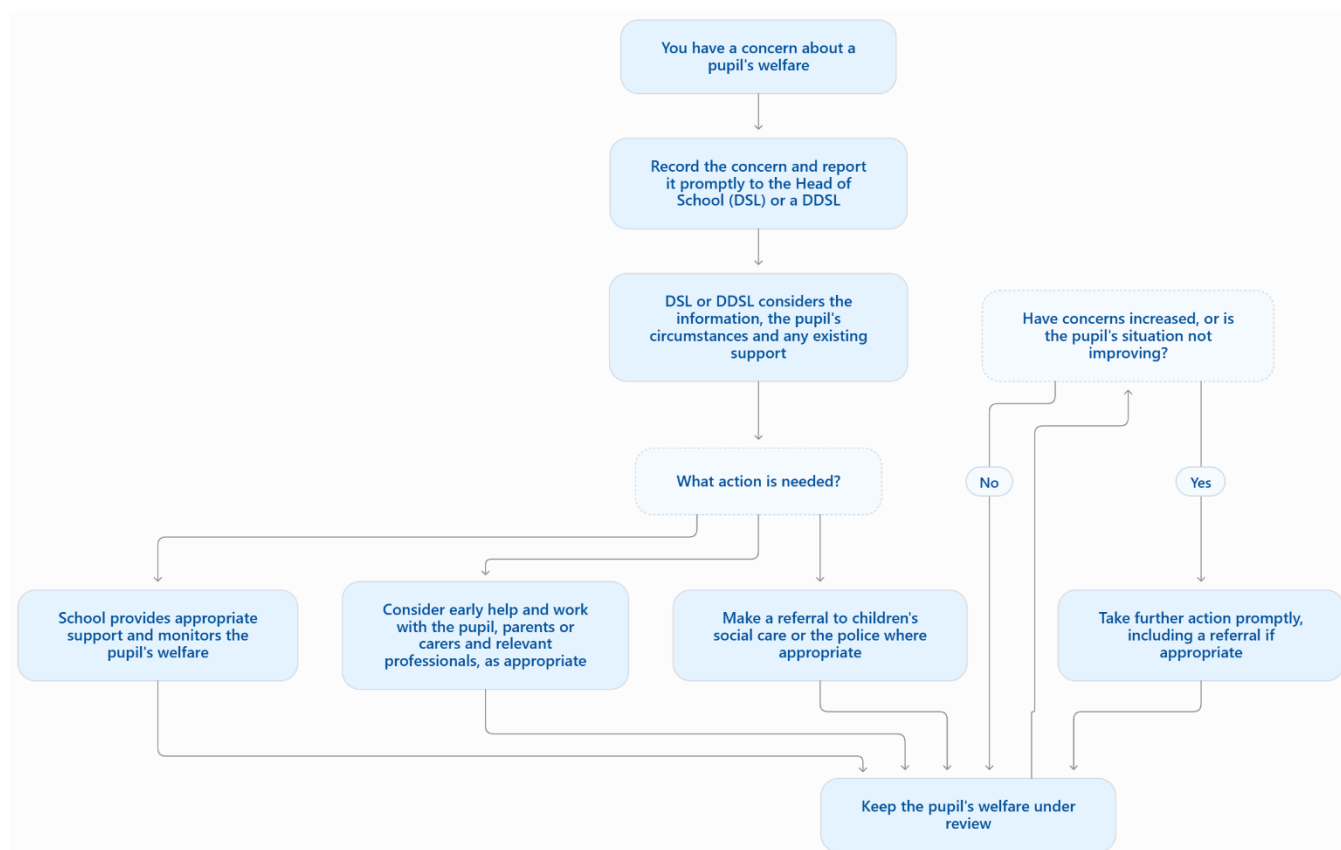
If a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the safeguarding procedures in this policy and report it promptly to the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or to a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). Staff must act immediately if a pupil is at risk of immediate harm.

If the concern does not indicate a safeguarding risk, staff should discuss it with the DSL or relevant senior leader so that the pupil's needs can be considered and appropriate support or advice arranged. This may include working with the pupil's parents or carers and relevant health or other professionals, where appropriate and in line with the school's information-sharing procedures.

For further information, refer to the DfE's *Mental health and behaviour in schools* guidance and its guidance on *Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges*.

Welfare Procedure

Procedure where you have concerns about a pupil's welfare, but do not believe they are suffering or likely to suffer harm, or are in immediate danger.



If information indicates that a pupil may be suffering or likely to suffer harm, or is in immediate danger, staff must follow the safeguarding and referral procedures in this policy without delay.

Concerns About a Staff Member, Supply Teacher, Volunteer or Contractor

Any concern or allegation that a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor may have harmed a pupil, may have committed an offence involving a pupil, may have behaved towards a pupil in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm, or may otherwise be unsuitable to work with children must be reported promptly.

Concerns or allegations about a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor must be reported to the Head of School, Catherine Miller. The Head of School must consult the West Sussex Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the concern or allegation meets the LADO threshold, and follow the LADO's advice and the procedures in Appendix 4. Where the threshold is met, the LADO referral must be made within one working day.

Concerns or allegations about the Head of School, Catherine Miller, must be reported to the Executive Headteacher, Georgios Chatzakis. Concerns or allegations about the Executive Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of the Board, Julie Smith. If the concern or allegation is about the Chair, staff must contact the LADO directly. The relevant case manager must follow Appendix 4 and the LADO's advice.

If the concern or allegation is about the Chair of the Board, or there is a conflict of interest in reporting it through the routes above, staff must contact the LADO directly. Staff must not investigate the matter themselves or inform the person concerned before taking advice from the LADO or police.

West Sussex LADO

Telephone: 0330 222 6450

Email: LADO@westsussex.gov.uk

If a child is in immediate danger, staff must contact the police on 999. This procedure does not replace any separate duty to report a crime or make a safeguarding referral.

Allegations of Abuse Made Against Other Pupils

Conifers House School recognises that children can harm other children. Abuse or harmful behaviour must never be dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. All reports will be taken seriously and considered in the context of the pupils involved, including their age, developmental stage, individual needs and ability to communicate.

Staff must report any concern or allegation of child-on-child abuse promptly to the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or to a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). Staff must make a factual record and must not investigate the allegation or ask leading questions. They must take immediate action if a pupil may be at risk of harm.

The DSL or DDSL will assess the report and decide what action is needed. This will include considering the safety and wellbeing of the pupil who has experienced harm, the pupil alleged to have caused harm, and any other pupils affected. The school will take proportionate steps to protect pupils while concerns are considered. This may include a risk assessment and support plan, identifying a trusted adult for each pupil, and considering safety during lessons, transitions, break times, school transport and other activities.

The school will consider whether the matter can be addressed through its Behaviour Policy or whether it also requires action under this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Behaviour measures do not replace safeguarding action. The DSL or DDSL will refer to children's social care and/or the police where the circumstances indicate this is necessary, and will seek and follow advice from those agencies. If a crime may have been committed, the school will liaise with the police and will not take action that could prejudice an investigation.

Parents or carers will normally be informed, unless doing so could increase risk to a pupil, prejudice an investigation or be contrary to advice from children's social care or the police. Information will be shared only with those who need it to safeguard and support the pupils involved.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils with SEND can understand what is happening, communicate their views and access appropriate support. This may include using communication aids, familiar adults or other appropriate communication methods.

See Appendix 5 for further information about child-on-child abuse.

Creating a Supportive Environment in School and Minimising the Risk of Child-on-Child Abuse

Conifers House School will take proactive steps to reduce the risk of child-on-child abuse and to create an environment in which pupils feel safe and able to communicate concerns. Staff must challenge derogatory, discriminatory, sexualised or otherwise harmful language and behaviour between pupils. Abuse must not be dismissed as “banter” or as a normal part of growing up.

The school will:

- Teach pupils, in ways suited to their age, development, communication and learning needs, about respectful relationships, appropriate behaviour, consent, personal boundaries and how to seek help.
- Make sure pupils know how to report a concern and can do so using communication methods and supports appropriate to them.
- Take seriously direct and indirect indications of harm, including changes in behaviour or presentation, disclosures by friends, or information overheard by staff.
- Be alert to the possibility that a pupil who harms another pupil may also be experiencing harm or need support.
- Consider whether a report points to wider risks in the school environment or local community, including risks linked to online communication, and take appropriate action.
- Support pupils who have experienced or witnessed abuse, and pupils alleged to have caused harm, while taking steps to prevent bullying, retaliation or unwanted contact.
- Consider whether siblings or other pupils may also need support.

All staff must maintain an attitude that child-on-child abuse can happen in the school, even when no concerns have previously been reported. Staff must report concerns promptly to the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or to a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), in accordance with this policy.

Safeguarding action and behaviour management will be coordinated but remain distinct responsibilities. The DSL will lead the safeguarding response. Any behaviour or disciplinary decision will be made by the appropriate school leader under the Behaviour Policy, taking account of the needs and safety of all pupils involved and advice from children’s social care or the police where relevant. The school may take its own action while an external investigation is ongoing, but will liaise with the relevant agencies and avoid any step that could prejudice an investigation or prosecution.

Sharing of Nudes and Semi-Nudes (‘Sexting’)

This section applies when a pupil has shared, or is reported to have shared, a nude or semi-nude image, video or live stream of themselves or another child. Staff should use the term “sharing of nudes and semi-nudes”; pupils may use other terms.

What staff must do

Any incident or concern must be reported immediately to the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or to a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Staff must not view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a pupil to send or download it. Staff must not delete the imagery or ask a pupil to delete it, ask pupils to explain details of the imagery, or blame or shame anyone involved. If a staff member sees imagery accidentally, they must report this to the DSL or DDSL immediately.

Staff should explain to the pupil that they need to report the concern and reassure them that the school will support them. Staff must keep information confidential and share it only with those who need it to safeguard the pupils involved.

DSL response

The DSL or DDSL will follow the current UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance, *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people*. They will assess the circumstances, immediate safety and welfare needs of all pupils involved and decide what action is required. This may include referral to children's social care and/or the police, support for the pupils, contacting parents or carers, and taking steps to prevent further sharing or contact.

Only the DSL may decide, in exceptional circumstances and where necessary to safeguard a pupil, that viewing imagery is required. The DSL must follow the current UKCIS guidance when making and recording that decision. Staff must not search a pupil's device or handle imagery except as permitted by law and applicable DfE guidance.

Where an adult is involved in creating or sharing imagery of a child, the matter must be referred to the police urgently and to children's social care as appropriate. Where anyone is in immediate danger, staff must call 999.

The DSL or DDSL will record the concern, decisions, actions and rationale on the pupil safeguarding records, in line with this policy. Parents or carers will normally be informed and involved, unless doing so could place a pupil at risk or prejudice an investigation, or an agency advises otherwise.

Curriculum

The school will teach pupils about respectful relationships, consent, privacy, online safety and the risks of requesting, creating or sharing nude or semi-nude images. Teaching will be age- and developmentally appropriate and adapted to pupils' communication and learning needs. This will be addressed through relevant PSHE, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and computing teaching.

Reporting Systems for Our Pupils

Conifers House School will provide clear, accessible ways for pupils to report worries, concerns or allegations. Staff will take what pupils say seriously and will consider their wishes and feelings, taking account of their age, understanding, communication and individual needs.

Pupils will be told, in ways they can understand, who they can speak to and how to seek help. The school's reporting arrangements will include:

- Displays showing the names and photographs of the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs).
- Child-friendly "Worries and Concerns" forms, where appropriate.

- A nominated trusted adult for each pupil, with regular opportunities to talk.
- Suitable communication methods and support for pupils who may find it difficult to express a concern verbally or in writing.
- Information about the NSPCC and Childline, displayed in ways pupils can access and understand.

Pupils may report a concern to any member of staff. Staff must pass safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a DDSL promptly and record them in accordance with this policy. Staff must not promise to keep a safeguarding concern secret, but should explain that information will be shared only with people who need it to help keep the pupil safe.

Online Safety and the use of Mobile Technology

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as ‘mobile phones’)
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

The Four Key Categories of Risk

Our Conifers House School will help pupils develop the knowledge and skills to use technology safely and responsibly. Teaching will be adapted to pupils’ age, development, communication and learning needs. It will address harmful or inappropriate content, unsafe contact, harmful online conduct and online financial or commercial risks.

The school’s approach to online safety, including filtering and monitoring, staff training and review of online safeguarding risks, is set out earlier in this policy under “Online Safety and Cyber Security”. Staff, pupils and parents must also follow the school’s Online Safety Policy and ICT and internet acceptable use policy.

Pupils’ mobile phones

Pupils must not use personal mobile phones during the school day. Any pupil bringing a phone to school must hand it in at reception on arrival, where it will be kept in accordance with the school’s arrangements and returned at the end of the school day.

The Head of School may agree an exception where this is necessary for an individual pupil, including as a reasonable adjustment, for a medical need or for an approved learning activity. Any exception must be agreed in advance, recorded and managed so that the pupil and others remain safe.

Parents and carers should contact the school office if they need to get a message to a pupil during the school day. Any breach of the mobile phone arrangements will be addressed under the school's Behaviour Policy.

Staff use of mobile phones and cameras

Staff must not use personal mobile phones or cameras to photograph or record pupils. Any photography or recording for an authorised school purpose must use school-approved equipment and follow the school's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Staff must follow the school's arrangements for personal phone use and must not use personal devices in front of pupils during the school day, except where an authorised school purpose or emergency requires it.

Signposting and Notifying Parents or Carers

The school will normally keep parents or carers informed about safeguarding concerns affecting their child and will work with them to support the child, where it is safe and appropriate to do so. The Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will normally oversee this communication. Other staff must consult the DSL before discussing a safeguarding concern with a pupil's parents or carers.

The school will not inform parents or carers before seeking advice from children's social care or the police where doing so could place a pupil at greater risk, prejudice an investigation or conflict with advice from an agency. Decisions about when and what to share will be made case by case and recorded. Parent or carer notification must not delay a necessary safeguarding referral.

When more than one pupil is involved, the school will consider the needs of each pupil and their family separately. Information about another pupil will be shared only where lawful and necessary to safeguard or support the child. The school will liaise with relevant agencies where needed to coordinate communication and support.

Where helpful, the school will signpost families to appropriate support services. This may include West Sussex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS), the SEND information, advice and support service in the family's home local authority, Mencap or other relevant organisations. Signposting will be tailored to the family's circumstances and needs.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities or Health Issues

All pupils at Conifers House School have special educational needs, and some also have disabilities or health needs. These needs may affect how a pupil communicates, understands risk, recognises harmful behaviour or seeks help. Staff must consider each pupil's individual circumstances and must not assume that a change in behaviour, mood, presentation or physical wellbeing is explained by their SEND or health needs without considering whether there may be another cause.

Staff must be alert to safeguarding risks and barriers that may affect pupils with SEND, including:

- Communication difficulties that may make it harder for a pupil to understand, describe or report what has happened.
- Isolation, bullying, discrimination, exploitation or harmful treatment by peers or adults.

- A pupil's needs being misunderstood or indicators of harm being attributed to their disability, health condition or usual behaviour.
- Difficulties recognising unsafe situations, asserting boundaries or understanding that behaviour is inappropriate.

Staff must use communication approaches and support suited to the pupil, including communication aids and the involvement of familiar adults where appropriate. They must listen carefully, take concerns seriously and report them in line with this policy.

Conifers House School's small classes and high levels of staff support help staff to build consistent relationships with pupils and support their communication and self-advocacy. These arrangements do not replace staff vigilance or the need to report and assess concerns.

Pupils with a Social Worker

A pupil may have a social worker because of safeguarding or welfare needs. Experiences of adversity or trauma may affect a pupil's safety, attendance, learning, behaviour or mental health.

Where the school knows that a pupil has a social worker, the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will take this into account when considering the pupil's safety, welfare and educational needs. The DSL and relevant staff will work with the social worker and other agencies, sharing information lawfully and where necessary to safeguard and support the pupil.

The school will consider the pupil's individual circumstances when responding to concerns about absence, missing education, changes in presentation or behaviour, and when planning pastoral or educational support. Having a social worker does not replace the school's responsibility to report new safeguarding concerns or make a referral where needed.

Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children

Conifers House School will take account of the safeguarding and educational needs of any pupil who is looked after or previously looked after. The Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will coordinate the school's response and work with the pupil's local authority, social worker and relevant Virtual School Head, as appropriate.

The DSL will seek and maintain the information needed to safeguard and support the pupil, which may include their legal status, social worker, care arrangements and contact arrangements. Relevant information will be shared with staff who need it to support the pupil or keep them safe, in line with the school's information-sharing procedures.

Staff must report safeguarding concerns about a looked-after or previously looked-after pupil promptly under this policy. The school will work with the relevant Virtual School Head and other professionals, as appropriate, to support the pupil's safety, welfare and educational achievement.

Complaints and Concerns About School Safeguarding Policies

Complaints or allegations about staff

A complaint or allegation about a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor that may indicate a risk of harm to a pupil must be reported and managed under the procedures in the “Concerns About a Staff Member, Supply Teacher, Volunteer or Contractor” section and Appendix 4.

Other complaints

Complaints about the school’s safeguarding arrangements that do not concern an allegation about an adult must be raised and managed under the school’s **Complaints Policy and Procedures**. Any immediate safeguarding concern must also be reported promptly to the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or to a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Whistleblowing

All staff must raise concerns about the school’s safeguarding practice, including unsafe practice, failures in safeguarding arrangements or concerns about a colleague’s conduct. Staff should follow the school’s Whistleblowing Policy.

Concerns should normally be raised with the Head of School. If the concern is about the Head of School, staff may raise it with the Executive Headteacher, Georgios Chatzakis. If the concern is about the Executive Headteacher, or cannot appropriately be raised through these routes, staff may raise it with the Chair of the Board, Julie Smith.

If a member of staff does not feel able to raise a child protection concern internally, or believes it has not been addressed appropriately, they may contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:

Telephone: 0800 028 0285

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Opening hours: 8am–8pm Monday to Friday; 9am–6pm Saturday and Sunday.

The LADO should be contacted where the concern is an allegation about an adult who works or volunteers with children, in accordance with the procedures in the relevant section of this policy. For an immediate risk to a child, staff must contact the police or children’s social care as appropriate.

Record-Keeping

Staff must make a timely, accurate and factual written record of safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions and actions. Records must distinguish facts from opinion and, where relevant, include the pupil's own words. They must record how the concern was followed up, the decisions made, the reasons for those decisions and the outcome. Staff who are unsure whether information should be recorded must consult the Head of School, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

A separate child-protection file will be maintained for each pupil where safeguarding concerns or referrals arise. Safeguarding records will be stored securely, with access limited to those who need the information for safeguarding or another lawful professional purpose. The school's safeguarding records are held electronically on CPOMS, with access controls in place.

Safeguarding records will be retained and securely disposed of in accordance with the school's approved records-retention schedule and applicable data-protection requirements. The schedule will reflect DfE data-protection guidance, which recommends retaining child-protection files until the pupil's 25th birthday, or until their 75th birthday where the file relates to child sexual abuse. These are guidance recommendations and not statutory retention periods.

When a pupil with a child-protection file moves to another school or college, the DSL will arrange for the file to be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file, as soon as possible and within the timescales set out in KCSIE. This is within five days for an in-year transfer, or within the first five days of a new term. The transfer and its receipt will be recorded. Where concerns are significant or complex, or children's social care is involved, the DSL will contact the receiving school's DSL to support appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

The school will share safeguarding information with other agencies where this is necessary and lawful to protect or support a pupil. Decisions to share information, what was shared and with whom will be recorded in the pupil's safeguarding file.

Appendix 3 sets out the school's record-keeping arrangements for recruitment and pre-appointment checks. Appendix 4 sets out the arrangements for records relating to allegations of abuse made against staff.

Training

All Staff

All staff must receive safeguarding and child-protection training as part of their induction and regular updates thereafter. Updates will be provided at least annually and whenever required to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, local safeguarding arrangements or the school's procedures.

Training and updates will cover the school's safeguarding arrangements, staff responsibilities, recognising and reporting concerns, online safety, whistleblowing and the Prevent duty. They will help staff recognise that pupils may communicate concerns in different ways and that changes in behaviour, presentation or communication may indicate a safeguarding concern. Training will be relevant to Conifers House School's specialist SEND context and the roles staff perform.

All staff must read Part One of the current *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) and follow this policy. Staff must also understand their responsibilities in relation to the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements.

Volunteers will receive safeguarding information and training appropriate to their role and level of contact with pupils. Contractors will be given relevant safeguarding information before working at the school and must follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

The DSL and DDSLs

The Head of School, as DSL, and the DDSLs must complete safeguarding and child-protection training at least every two years. They must also receive regular updates, at least annually, to maintain their knowledge and skills.

Their training and updates must cover online safety, the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements, local referral and escalation procedures, and the management of safeguarding concerns. The DSL and DDSLs must undertake Prevent training appropriate to their responsibilities.

Conifers House School Board

Board members must receive safeguarding and child-protection training at induction and regular updates thereafter. This must equip them to understand their safeguarding responsibilities, provide strategic challenge, and seek assurance that the school's policies and procedures are effective in practice.

The Chair of the Board, Julie Smith, must receive training appropriate to the role in managing allegations. The Board must ensure that the person responsible for managing an allegation is identified and trained in accordance with Appendix 4 and current guidance.

Recruitment interview panels

At least one person on every interview panel must have completed safer recruitment training. Recruitment and pre-appointment procedures, including online searches of candidates, must follow Appendix 3, the **Recruitment and Selection Policy** and current KCSIE.

Supervision and support

Staff who work with pupils and families will receive appropriate supervision, support and opportunities for professional discussion. Supervision will help staff reflect on practice, raise concerns and discuss sensitive safeguarding matters.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Head of School, as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will keep this policy and its procedures under review and will recommend updates when required. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if changes in legislation or guidance, safeguarding incidents, monitoring, inspection findings or other external advice make an earlier review necessary.

Julie Smith, Chair of the Conifers House School Board and Safeguarding Lead Governor, will review the policy and provide safeguarding oversight on behalf of the Board. The Executive Headteacher, Georgios Chatzakis, will provide strategic oversight, constructive challenge and support to the Head of School and the Board, including by helping them consider safeguarding assurance, inspection findings, risks and actions for improvement.

The Conifers House School Board will approve the policy at least annually and monitor the completion of actions arising from its review.

Link with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following Conifers House School policies and procedures:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- After-School Care Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Sexual Exploitation Policy
- Children Missing Education (CME) Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Confidentiality Policy
- Contractors on Site Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Exclusions and Suspension Policy and Procedures
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Information Sharing Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Moving and Handling Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

- Return Home Interviews and Missing Episode Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability and Inclusion Policy
- Supporting Medical Needs Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

These policies support the school's safeguarding arrangements and should be applied consistently with this policy.

Appendices

Appendix 1: West Sussex Contacts

Use these contact details where a pupil lives in West Sussex. If a pupil lives in another local authority area, contact the children's social care service for the pupil's home local authority.

Service	When to contact	Contact details
Police — emergency	If a child is in immediate danger or needs urgent police assistance.	999
Sussex Police — non-emergency	To report a crime or seek police assistance where an emergency response is not required.	101
West Sussex Children's Services Integrated Front Door (IFD)	For safeguarding concerns, referrals to children's social care, or requests for support, including early help.	01403 229900 (Monday to Friday, 9.00am–5.00pm). Online referrals and requests for support: West Sussex request support or raise a concern about a child .
West Sussex Emergency Duty Team	For urgent children's social care concerns outside office hours that cannot wait until the next working day.	033 022 26664

The Head of School, as DSL, will normally coordinate referrals. Staff may refer directly to children's social care or the police where they believe this is necessary to safeguard a pupil. Staff must not delay an urgent referral while trying to contact the DSL or a DDSL.

Where there is a professional disagreement about the response to a safeguarding concern, the DSL should follow the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership's professional disagreement and escalation procedures: [Professional disagreements and concerns](#).

Appendix 2: Types of Abuse

Abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur separately or together, and a child may experience more than one form of harm. They can happen within a family, in an institutional or community setting, between children, or online. Technology may also be used to facilitate abuse that takes place offline. The examples below are not exhaustive.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve causing physical harm to a child, including by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may also involve a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional or psychological maltreatment of a child that causes, or is likely to cause, serious and lasting harm to their emotional development. It may involve:

- Telling a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate, or valuing them only for meeting another person's needs.
- Preventing a child from expressing their views, deliberately silencing them, or mocking what they say or how they communicate.
- Imposing expectations that are inappropriate for the child's age or development, including expectations beyond their capabilities, excessive protection or restrictions that limit exploration, learning or social interaction.
- A child seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of the ill-treatment of another.
- Serious bullying, including cyber-bullying, that repeatedly causes a child to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening and whether or not physical violence is used. It may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration and non-penetrative acts, or non-contact activity such as involving a child in viewing or producing sexual images, watching sexual activity, sexual grooming or encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour.

Sexual abuse can take place in person or online, and technology may be used to facilitate abuse. It is not perpetrated only by adult men: women and other children can also commit sexual abuse.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It involves an imbalance of power being used to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, including in exchange for something the child needs or wants, or for the benefit of the person exploiting them. It may occur without physical contact and through technology. Apparent agreement by a child does not mean that sexual exploitation has not taken place.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, where this is likely to seriously impair the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, including as a result of maternal substance misuse.

After a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, including by excluding a child from home or abandoning them.
- Protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger.
- Provide adequate supervision, including by using inadequate caregivers.
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Provide suitable education.
- Respond to a child's basic emotional needs.

Domestic abuse affecting children

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises a child as a victim of domestic abuse in their own right when the child sees, hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to the person carrying out the abuse or the person affected by it. Domestic abuse can include physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour and economic abuse.

Appendix 3: Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks – Policy and Procedures

Recruitment and selection process

Conifers House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils through safe recruitment practices. Recruitment and pre-appointment checks will follow this policy, the school's Recruitment and Selection Policy and the current *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE).

At least one person conducting each interview must have completed safer recruitment training. Everyone involved in recruitment must understand and follow the safeguarding requirements relevant to their role.

Advertising

When advertising a role, Conifers House School will make clear:

- The school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, and that appropriate safeguarding checks will be carried out before appointment.
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the role, including the nature and extent of any contact with pupils.
- Whether the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, as amended.

Where a role is exempt, applicants will be told what criminal record information they are legally required to disclose. Protected convictions and cautions must not be requested or taken into account.

Application forms

Application forms will:

- Require applicants to complete the school's application form; CVs alone will not be accepted.
- Explain that it is an offence for a person who is barred from regulated activity with children to apply for a role involving that activity.
- Provide applicants with, or link them to, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and information about the school's approach to employing people with criminal records.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting will normally be undertaken by at least two people. At least one person involved in the process must have completed safer recruitment training. Shortlisting will follow KCSIE and relevant local safeguarding procedures and will include:

- Checking applications for gaps in employment, inconsistencies and other matters that may require clarification.
- Considering each candidate's suitability to work with children and any information relevant to the role.
- Asking shortlisted candidates to complete a criminal record self-declaration, limited to information they are legally required to disclose for the role, and to disclose other information relevant to their suitability to work with children.
- Carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to identify publicly available information that may be relevant to their suitability. Any matter identified will be considered fairly and explored with the candidate where appropriate.

The school will not ask for, or take into account, protected convictions or cautions.

Seeking references and checking employment history

The school will normally obtain references before interview and will resolve concerns before confirming an appointment. References will be obtained directly from the referee and will not be accepted as open references or testimonials supplied by the applicant.

The school will:

- Seek a reference from the candidate's current or most recent employer and, where relevant, from the employer with whom the candidate most recently worked with children.
- Ask referees to confirm the candidate's employment history, role, dates, reason for leaving and suitability to work with children, and to disclose relevant disciplinary matters or concerns.
- Where a reference is from a school, seek confirmation from the head of School, or an authorised senior person, that it is accurate and complete.
- Compare references with the application and employment history, and explore discrepancies or gaps with the candidate.
- Record and assess any concerns before an appointment is confirmed.

Interview and selection

At least one person conducting each interview must have completed safer recruitment training. The panel will assess the candidate's skills, experience and suitability for the role and will:

- Explore gaps in employment, frequent changes of employment or location, and any discrepancies in the application or references.
- Explore safeguarding concerns or other information relevant to the candidate's suitability to work with pupils.
- Give candidates an opportunity to explain relevant information fairly.
- Record the information considered and the reasons for the selection decision.

Pre-appointment checks and the Single Central Record

Before appointment, the school will complete the pre-appointment checks required by law and KCSIE for the role. The school will record the required checks on its Single Central Record (SCR). Supporting records will be stored securely in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

The school will not retain a copy of a DBS certificate for longer than six months, unless there is a specific lawful reason to do so. The school may record that a check was completed, its outcome and the recruitment decision.

New staff appointments

An offer of employment will be conditional on satisfactory completion of the checks required for the role. These will include, as applicable:

- Verification of identity.
- A DBS check at the level for which the role is legally eligible. For a role involving regulated activity with children, this will include children's barred-list information.
- A separate children's barred-list check before the DBS certificate is received, if the person is to begin regulated activity before the certificate is available. Any such arrangement must be lawful and the person appropriately supervised until the required checks are complete.
- Verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK.
- Verification of relevant professional qualifications.
- Confirmation of medical fitness to undertake the role, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and applicable employment law.
- A prohibition-from-teaching check for anyone employed to teach.
- A section 128 direction check for anyone taking up a management position to which that check applies.
- Additional checks for candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK, as appropriate and available.

For teaching roles, overseas checks may include a criminal record check or a letter from the relevant professional regulating authority. The school will assess the information available and consider any further steps needed to establish the candidate's suitability. An overseas check does not replace any check required in England.

The school will assess whether the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 apply to a role. Where they apply, the school will complete the required checks. If they do not apply, the school will not request information that it is not legally entitled to obtain.

Regulated activity with children

The school will determine whether a role involves regulated activity by applying the current legal definition and DfE and DBS guidance. From 1 September 2026, the supervision exemption no longer applies to regulated activity with children. Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children may be regulated activity when carried out frequently—on more than three days in a 30-day period—or overnight, even if the person is supervised.

A barred person must not engage in regulated activity with children, and the school must not knowingly permit them to do so. The school will obtain the appropriate enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information for people engaging in regulated activity, including volunteers where the role meets the legal definition.

Existing staff

The school will consider whether further checks are required when:

- There is a concern about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children.
- A staff member moves into a role involving regulated activity or other duties requiring a check not previously completed.
- There has been a break in service, in accordance with current KCSIE and DBS guidance.

The school will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where the legal duty to refer is met, including where a person is removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left, because they harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child.

Agency and third-party staff

Before agency or third-party staff begin work, the school will obtain written confirmation from the supplying organisation that the checks required for the role have been completed. The school will check the identity of the person presenting for work and confirm that they are the person to whom the checks relate.

The school will ensure that the required information is recorded on the SCR where applicable and will maintain appropriate safeguarding arrangements while the person is on site.

Contractors

The school will assess the duties and access to pupils of contractors and contractor staff and ensure that appropriate checks and safeguarding arrangements are in place. DBS checks will be requested only where the role is legally eligible for that level of check.

Contractors and their staff must follow the school's safeguarding and site arrangements. The school will verify the identity of people attending site and ensure that any individual who has not completed the checks required for their role is appropriately supervised and does not undertake regulated activity.

Contracts and site arrangements will set out relevant safeguarding expectations. The school will retain a record of its risk assessment and control measures where a check is not available or not legally available.

Trainee and student teachers

Where trainee teachers are employed by the school, the school will complete the checks required for the role.

Where a trainee teacher is fee-funded and placed at the school, the school will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that the required checks have been completed and that the provider considers the trainee suitable to work with children. The school will verify the trainee's identity and maintain appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

Volunteers

The school will assess each volunteer role to determine whether it is regulated activity and what checks are legally available and required.

- Volunteers engaging in regulated activity with children must have an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information.
- The school will carry out an appropriate risk assessment before accepting a volunteer into a role where checks are not required or are not legally available.
- Volunteers will not be permitted to undertake regulated activity until the required checks are complete.
- The school will ensure that volunteers understand and follow its safeguarding procedures and will provide appropriate supervision and oversight.

The school will review existing volunteer arrangements against the regulated activity definition in force from 1 September 2026.

Conifers House School Board and proprietors

The school will complete the identity, DBS, barred-list and other checks required by KCSIE and the Independent School Standards for the proprietor, members of the proprietor body and people involved in the management of the school.

The school will:

- Obtain an enhanced DBS check for relevant members of the proprietor body and management.
- Obtain children's barred-list information where the person will engage in regulated activity.
- Carry out section 128 checks for people in management positions to which the direction applies.
- Arrange for the Chair's DBS certificate to be countersigned by the Secretary of State where required.
- Carry out any further checks required because a person has lived or worked outside the UK.

Right-to-work checks will be completed where required for employment. The school will record the required checks on the SCR and retain supporting information securely.

Alternative provision

Conifers House School remains responsible for safeguarding pupils placed with an alternative provision provider. Before a placement begins, the school will obtain written confirmation that the provider has completed the checks required for the adults who will work with the pupil. The school will maintain suitable communication, oversight and safeguarding arrangements during the placement.

Adults supervising pupils on work experience

When arranging work experience, the school will assess the safeguarding risks and put appropriate arrangements in place to protect pupils from harm. It will determine whether checks are required by considering the pupil's age, the nature and frequency of the activity, the level of supervision and whether the adult's role meets the legal definition of regulated activity.

The school will not request DBS checks from employers where the role is not eligible for that check.

Pupils staying with host families

If the school arranges for a pupil to stay with a host family to whom they are not related, the school will follow current KCSIE guidance and assess the safeguarding arrangements and checks required for the circumstances. For overseas hosting, where equivalent checks are unavailable, the school will work with the partner school or organisation to obtain appropriate assurances and put suitable safeguards in place.

Appendix 4: Allegations Against Staff (including low-level concerns) policy

This appendix applies to all adults working in or on behalf of Conifers House School, including employees, agency and supply staff, volunteers, contractors, trainees and members of the proprietor body.

The school will follow *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE), local authority procedures and the school's Code of Conduct when responding to concerns or allegations about adults. The child's safety and welfare will be the first consideration. The school will also treat the adult who is the subject of a concern fairly and provide appropriate support.

For this appendix, the **Head of School is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**. The **Executive Headteacher** provides strategic oversight and challenge and will act as case manager where an allegation or concern relates to the Head of School. If the Executive Headteacher is the subject of the concern, the Chair of the Conifers House School Board, Julie Smith, will act as case manager. Any person who is the subject of a concern must not be involved in decisions or enquiries about that concern.

Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This section applies where it is alleged that an adult working in or on behalf of the school has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This may include behaviour inside or outside the school.

If there is uncertainty about whether the harms threshold is met, the case manager will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay.

Initial response and referral

Any adult who receives an allegation or has a concern that may meet the harms threshold must report it immediately to the Head of School as DSL. If the concern is about the Head of School, it must be reported to the Executive Headteacher. If it concerns the Executive Headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of the School Board.

The person receiving the concern must make a written record as soon as possible, using the child's own words where relevant, and pass it promptly to the appropriate case manager. Staff must not investigate the allegation, interview witnesses or promise confidentiality. If a child is at immediate risk or a crime may have been committed, the police or children's social care must be contacted as appropriate; this must not be delayed while waiting to consult the LADO.

The case manager will:

- Make only the initial enquiries necessary to establish basic facts, taking care not to prejudice a police or social-care investigation.
- Consult the LADO promptly to discuss the nature, context and details of the allegation and agree next steps, including whether a strategy discussion or referral to the police or children's social care is needed.

- Follow the LADO's advice and local procedures. Where immediate police contact is necessary, the LADO will be informed as soon as practicable.
- Ensure that a child-protection referral is made where a child may be at risk of harm, and that appropriate support is arranged for the child.
- Inform the adult who is the subject of the allegation of the concern and the likely course of action as soon as it is appropriate to do so. Where the police or children's social care are involved, the case manager will agree with those agencies what information can be shared and when.
- Inform the child's parents or carers as soon as appropriate, in agreement with the LADO and, where involved, the police or children's social care. Parents or carers will be kept informed about the progress of the case insofar as it concerns their child, without disclosing confidential employment information.
- Provide the adult with a named contact and appropriate support, while maintaining the confidentiality of the process.
- Consider whether other children or members of the adult's household may be at risk and consult the DSL or relevant agencies as appropriate. If the concern is about the DSL, this responsibility rests with the case manager.

Risk management and suspension

Suspension is not an automatic response and must not be used as a disciplinary sanction. The case manager will assess the risk to pupils and consider whether reasonable alternatives can manage that risk. Options may include changing duties, restricting contact with pupils, increased supervision or temporary redeployment.

The case manager will consult the LADO and seek HR advice before making a decision, unless immediate action is necessary to protect a child. Any decision to suspend must be recorded with reasons, including the alternatives considered and why they were not suitable. The adult will receive written confirmation and be given a named school contact.

Outcomes and conclusion

The outcome of an allegation will be recorded using the relevant KCSIE terminology:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to show that there was a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm.
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. This does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Unfounded:** there is no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation.

The case manager will consult the LADO about the outcome and any action required. If the matter proceeds to a criminal investigation or prosecution, the case manager will liaise with the LADO and police about whether and when the school's disciplinary process should proceed.

Where an allegation is substantiated, the school will consider disciplinary action and whether a referral to the DBS is legally required. The school will also consider whether referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency is appropriate for a teacher.

If an allegation is determined to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, the case manager and LADO will consider whether the child or the person who made the allegation needs support or referral to another service. The school will not take disciplinary action against a child or adult solely because an allegation is unsubstantiated. If there is evidence that an allegation was deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider any appropriate action in accordance with relevant procedures.

Where an adult returns to work following suspension or temporary restrictions, the case manager will plan a safe return and consider any necessary arrangements for contact with the child or children concerned.

Supply, agency and contracted staff

The school will take the lead in protecting pupils and referring concerns to the LADO, while informing and working with the person's employer or supplying agency as appropriate. The school will not cease using an individual solely on the basis of an allegation without first considering the facts and consulting the LADO, unless immediate action is required to protect pupils.

The school and the agency or employer will agree appropriate interim arrangements, information-sharing and support. Any decision about employment or continued deployment remains subject to the relevant employer's responsibilities and procedures.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Information about an allegation will be shared only with those who need it to safeguard children, manage the case or meet legal duties. The case manager will consult the LADO, police or children's social care, as appropriate, about what information may be shared with the adult, the child's family, staff, the wider community or the media.

The school will comply with any statutory restrictions on identifying a teacher who is the subject of an allegation. Confidentiality must not prevent information being shared where necessary to protect a child or comply with a legal duty.

Records and references

The case manager will ensure that a clear, accurate and confidential record is kept of the allegation, how it was followed up, decisions and actions taken, and the outcome. Records will be stored securely, with access limited to those who need them, and handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and retention arrangements.

Records of allegations found to be false or malicious will be removed from the individual's personnel record unless the individual consents to their retention. Records of other allegations will be retained in accordance with KCSIE and the school's retention arrangements. Where an allegation is not found to be false or malicious, the record will include a summary, how the matter was resolved, the outcome, actions taken and whether the information may be referred to in a future reference. A copy will be provided to the individual where appropriate and where this does not prejudice any police or social-care process.

Allegations found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be included in references. Substantiated allegations may be included where relevant, fair and factual, in accordance with KCSIE and employment law.

Timescales and learning

The school will act promptly and keep the LADO informed. The case manager will monitor progress, avoid unnecessary delay and record reasons for any delay. The case manager will review completed cases with the LADO, where appropriate, to identify learning and any improvements needed to safeguarding practice, staff guidance or school procedures.

Non-recent allegations

A non-recent allegation must be taken seriously, regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred. The school will refer it to the LADO and follow local procedures. If an adult tells the school that they were abused as a child, the school will listen, record their account sensitively and discuss appropriate next steps with the individual, including referral to the police or other support where appropriate.

Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harms threshold

This section applies to concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school that do not meet the harms threshold. A low-level concern is any concern, however small, that an adult may have acted in a way inconsistent with the school's Code of Conduct, including conduct outside work, but that does not meet the harms threshold or otherwise require referral to the LADO.

Examples may include:

- Being overly friendly with a pupil or showing favouritism.
- Taking photographs of pupils on a personal mobile phone.
- Having one-to-one contact with a pupil in a secluded area or behind a closed door without an appropriate reason or safeguard.
- Humiliating or undermining a pupil.
- Failing to follow an expected professional boundary or school procedure.

A concern may be raised by a pupil, parent or carer, staff member, volunteer, contractor or another person, or may arise from the adult's own self-referral.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns

Staff must report a low-level concern promptly to the Head of School. If the concern is about the Head of School, it must be reported to the Executive Headteacher. If it concerns the Executive Headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of the School Board. Staff may also use the school's whistleblowing arrangements if they feel unable to use the usual reporting route.

The person receiving the concern will make a written record and ensure it is considered promptly. The Head of School, Executive Headteacher or Chair, as appropriate, will:

- Speak to the person who raised the concern where possible, and to the adult who is the subject of it, unless there is a reason not to do so.
- Gather relevant information proportionately and fairly, without prejudging the matter.

- Consider the context, the adult's explanation, any relevant evidence and whether the concern indicates a safeguarding or conduct issue.
- Decide whether the matter can be addressed through guidance, support, training or management action, or whether it needs to be referred to HR, the LADO or another agency.
- Refer the matter under Section 1 if new information means that it meets the harms threshold.
- Record the rationale for decisions and actions taken.

The Head of School is responsible for decisions about low-level concerns relating to other adults, with the Executive Headteacher providing oversight and support. Where either is the subject of the concern, that person will take no part in its consideration.

Recording, review and retention

All low-level concerns, including those raised anonymously, will be recorded in a central, confidential record. The record will include:

- The details of the concern and the context in which it arose.
- The name of the person raising the concern, if known, and the adult concerned.
- Any relevant account or explanation from the adult.
- The action taken, the rationale for decisions and the outcome.
- Whether advice was sought from the LADO, HR or another appropriate adviser.

Records will be stored securely, with access limited to those who need it. They will be reviewed periodically to identify patterns, repeated concerns or weaknesses in safeguarding practice. If a pattern emerges, the school will consider whether it requires management or disciplinary action or whether the harms threshold has been met.

Records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and records-retention arrangements. Where a concern relates to an agency worker or contractor, the school will share relevant information with the person's employer where necessary and lawful, so that any pattern of concerns can be considered.

Low-level concerns will not normally be included in references. Information may be included where the concern, or a pattern of concerns, is substantiated and relevant to the reference, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Low-level concern record form

Conifers House School: Low-Level Concern Record

This form may be used to report any concern, however small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted inconsistently with the school's Code of Conduct. If the concern may meet the harms threshold, report it immediately through Section 1 of this appendix.

CONIFERS HOUSE SCHOOL LOW-LEVEL CONCERN RECORD

Use this form to report any concern, however small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted inconsistently with the school's Code of Conduct. If the concern may meet the harms threshold, report it immediately under Section 1 of Appendix 4.

1. Details of the concern

Date and time of incident or concern	
Location or context	
Pupil(s) or other person(s) involved, if relevant	
Chronological account of the concern (use the person's own words where relevant)	

2. Person raising the concern

Name and role	
Date and time reported	
Signature and date	

3. Person receiving the concern	
Name and role	
Date and time received	
Was the person raising the concern spoken to?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If no, give the reason	
Was the adult who is the subject of the concern spoken to?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If no, give the reason	
Summary of the adult's response, if obtained	
4. Action and decision	
Action taken and rationale	
Was advice sought from the LADO, HR or another adviser?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, from whom and when?	
Does the concern meet the harms threshold or require referral under Section 1?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Reason for decision and any follow-up action	
Record completed by (name and role)	
Signature and date	
<i>This record will be stored securely and handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and records-retention arrangements.</i>	

Appendix 5: Specific Safeguarding Issues

Children missing education and attendance concerns

Persistent or unexplained absence, a child going missing during the school day, or a child leaving the school without a known destination may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation or another safeguarding concern. These concerns may include child sexual or criminal exploitation, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, radicalisation, female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage.

Staff must follow the school's attendance and Children Missing Education (CME) procedures and report safeguarding concerns promptly to the DSL. The DSL will consider the pupil's individual circumstances, including their SEND, communication needs, known vulnerabilities and any existing support from children's social care. The DSL will make appropriate referrals and share information with the relevant local authority in accordance with current requirements. If a pupil is at immediate risk of harm, staff must contact the police or children's social care without delay.

Staff must remain alert to patterns of absence and changes in attendance, presentation or behaviour. Repeated or prolonged absence must be followed up in line with the school's procedures and escalated where the circumstances give rise to a safeguarding concern.

Child criminal exploitation

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse in which an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. This may be in exchange for something the child needs or wants, for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, or through violence or the threat of violence.

CCE can be perpetrated by adults or children, male or female. It may be a one-off incident or happen repeatedly over time. It can occur in person or online, and the child may appear to take part willingly. Examples include being forced or coerced to move drugs or money, work in a cannabis farm, shoplift, pickpocket or threaten other young people.

Possible indicators include a child:

- appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- showing changes in emotional wellbeing;
- misusing drugs or alcohol;
- going missing or regularly coming home late; or
- frequently missing or disengaging from education.

These indicators do not, by themselves, prove that a child is being exploited. Staff must report concerns promptly to the DSL, who will assess the information and take appropriate action, including referral to children's social care and the police where necessary. Staff must not delay an urgent referral while trying to contact the DSL.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse in which an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. This may be in exchange for something the child needs or wants, for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, or through violence or the threat of violence.

CSE can be perpetrated by adults or children, male or female. It may happen once or repeatedly over time, and can occur in person or online. A child may appear to take part willingly, may not recognise the abuse, or may trust or feel attached to the person exploiting them. CSE can involve contact or non-contact sexual activity. It may include pressure or coercion to create or share nude or semi-nude images or videos, or to take part in sexual activity online. Images or recordings may be copied or shared without the child's knowledge.

Possible indicators include those listed under Child Criminal Exploitation, as well as a child having a relationship with a person who may be exploiting them, or becoming pregnant or contracting a sexually transmitted infection. These indicators do not, by themselves, prove that a child is being exploited.

Staff must report concerns promptly to the DSL. The DSL will assess the information and take appropriate action, including referral to children's social care and the police where necessary. Staff must not delay an urgent referral while trying to contact the DSL.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online and can occur simultaneously between the two.

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are no reports, which doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

Staff must report any concern or disclosure about child-on-child abuse promptly to the DSL or a DDSL and follow the procedures in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The DSL will ensure that the concern is assessed, recorded and acted on in accordance with this policy, the Behaviour Policy and other relevant procedures. Staff must not delay an urgent referral to children's social care or the police while trying to contact the DSL.

When responding to harmful sexual behaviour between children, the school will consider the children's ages, developmental stages, needs, vulnerabilities and circumstances. The school recognises that a child displaying harmful sexual behaviour may also have experienced abuse or trauma. The school will safeguard and support all children involved, including the child harmed and the child who has displayed the behaviour, and will make referrals where required.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can affect children directly or indirectly. A child who sees, hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse is a victim and may be harmed even if they are not the direct target. Domestic abuse can take place within or outside the home and can involve intimate partners or family members. It may be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic. Older children may also experience abuse in their own intimate relationships or use abusive behaviour towards a family member.

Domestic abuse can have a serious and lasting effect on a child's safety, health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn. Staff must report any concern that a pupil may be affected by domestic abuse promptly to the DSL or a DDSL. The DSL will consider the pupil's individual circumstances and wishes, arrange appropriate support, record the concern and make referrals to children's social care or the police where necessary.

Operation Encompass

Conifers House School will follow the Operation Encompass arrangements operated by Sussex Police. Where the school receives information that a child may have been affected by a domestic abuse incident, the DSL will consider the information promptly, share it only with staff who need it to support the child, and make any further safeguarding referral required. Staff must pass any information they receive about domestic abuse affecting a pupil to the DSL without delay.

Homelessness

Being homeless or at risk of homelessness can affect a child's safety, health, wellbeing and education. A housing concern may also indicate other safeguarding risks.

Staff must report concerns about a pupil's housing situation promptly to the DSL or a DDSL. The DSL will consider the pupil's immediate safety and welfare, discuss appropriate support with the family where it is

safe and appropriate to do so, and contact the relevant local authority housing service or children's social care where necessary. If the pupil may be at risk of harm, the DSL will follow the school's child-protection referral procedures. Staff must not delay an urgent referral while trying to contact the DSL.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Staff must follow the procedures set out in this section if they become aware that FGM may have been carried out or that a pupil may be at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues

A girl:

- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
- Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
- Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs
- Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:
 - A family history of FGM.

FGM being known to be practised in the pupil's community or country of origin. This information should be considered in context and is not evidence of risk on its own

- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues

A girl:

- Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM

- Confiding to a professional that she is to have a “special procedure” or to attend a special occasion to “become a woman”
- Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
- Talking about FGM in conversation—for example, telling other children about it. Staff should consider the context and the pupil’s individual circumstances.
- Being unexpectedly absent from school
- Having sections missing from her ‘red book’ (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication
- The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forced marriage is illegal and is a form of domestic abuse. It includes a marriage where one or both people do not or cannot consent and pressure or abuse is used to make them marry. It is also forced marriage to cause a child under 18 to marry, even if pressure or abuse is not used.

If a pupil may be at risk of forced marriage, staff must report the concern promptly to the DSL or a DDSL. Staff must not contact the pupil’s family or community, arrange mediation or family counselling, or investigate the concern themselves. If it is safe and appropriate to speak with the pupil, staff should do so sensitively and alone, using suitable communication support or an accredited interpreter where needed. A family member or community member must not interpret.

The DSL will consider the pupil’s immediate safety and wishes, record the concern and decide what action is needed. This may include a referral to children’s social care or the police and seeking specialist advice from the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU). If a pupil is in immediate danger, call 999.

The FMU can be contacted on 020 7008 0151 or at fm@fcdo.gov.uk.

Preventing radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or terrorism-related ideology. The Prevent duty aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Staff should use the current definitions and procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Prevent duty guidance. Concerns must be reported promptly to the DSL.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alerted to changes in pupils' behaviour.

There is no single profile of a pupil who may be susceptible to radicalisation. Staff should consider concerning changes or communications in context, including indications that a pupil may be supporting or promoting violence, expressing support for terrorist activity, seeking to recruit others, or being influenced by people who promote extremist views. A change in religion, identity or political belief is not, by itself, evidence of radicalisation. These indicators may have other explanations and are not exhaustive. Staff should report concerns to the DSL rather than assess them alone.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they must follow the procedures under “If You Have Concerns About Extremism” and report the concern to the DSL. Staff must act if they are worried.

Further information about the school's approach to preventing radicalisation is set out in the Behaviour Policy and Online Safety Policy.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between two children of any age and sex;
- when a group of children sexually assaults or sexually harasses an individual child or group of children; and
- online or in person, verbally or physically

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they 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 by reporting any form of abuse or neglect.

Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure the pupil that they are being taken seriously, will be supported and that the school will take steps to keep them safe.

The school will also:

- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs
- Some groups are potentially more at risk.
- Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Challenging inappropriate behaviours

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.
- Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they must follow the procedures under “Allegations of Abuse Made Against Other Pupils” and report the concern promptly to the DSL or a DDSL.

Serious violence

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors attending for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID. The school will seek assurance from the organisation they represent that the appropriate DBS check has been completed. Staff must not ask the visitor to show their DBS certificate. If the school cannot obtain appropriate assurance, the visitor must be supervised while on site.

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

Before inviting a visiting speaker, the school will carry out appropriate safeguarding and Prevent checks. The school will not invite a speaker known to disseminate extremist views or whose participation would create an unacceptable safeguarding or Prevent risk.

Non-collection of children

If a pupil is not collected at the end of the session or day, staff will contact the parent or carer after 15 minutes, inform the Head of School and record the incident in the safeguarding record. The pupil will remain safely supervised until an authorised adult collects them or another safe arrangement is agreed. If home-school transport is delayed or unavailable, the school will contact the parent or carer and follow its transport procedures. Staff must not transport a pupil in a personal vehicle unless this has been authorised under the school's transport and risk-assessment procedures, with appropriate consent, insurance and supervision arrangements in place.

Missing pupils

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible.

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored by adhering to the Conifers House School attendance policy and Missing Persons Procedure. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The DSL will monitor unauthorised absences and follow up repeated or prolonged absence and missing episodes. Where a pupil may be missing education, the school will make reasonable enquiries and notify the

relevant local authority as required. The DSL will refer safeguarding concerns to children's social care or the police where appropriate. Staff will follow the school's Attendance Policy, Missing Persons Procedure and the current *Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools*.

Appendix 6: Designated Safeguarding Lead - Job Description

Role

The Head of School is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Conifers House School and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety.

The DSL has the status, authority, time, training, resources and appropriate support needed to carry out the role. The DSL may delegate specific activities to appropriately trained Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSLs), but retains lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

The Executive Headteacher provides strategic leadership, oversight, challenge and support in relation to safeguarding, compliance and school improvement. The Executive Headteacher supports the DSL, senior leaders and the School Board to understand safeguarding assurance, risks and actions required. This oversight does not replace the DSL's operational lead responsibility.

The Chair of the Conifers House School Board, Julie Smith, is the Safeguarding Lead Governor.

Managing referrals and concerns

The DSL will:

- Refer suspected abuse, neglect or other child-protection concerns to West Sussex children's social care and, where appropriate, the police, in accordance with local procedures.
- Support staff who raise concerns or make referrals, and ensure that concerns are followed up where a response is not received.
- Consider whether a referral to Prevent or Channel is appropriate where there is a concern that a pupil may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- Ensure that a DBS referral is made where the statutory referral duty is met.
- Ensure that information about a suspected crime is passed to the police where appropriate, and that immediate risks are addressed without delay.
- Take part in strategy discussions, multi-agency meetings and assessments, and support other staff to contribute where needed.
- Liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) about allegations or concerns relating to adults, in accordance with Appendix 4.
- Ensure concerns are recorded accurately, securely and promptly, with the action taken and rationale documented.

Working with others

The DSL will:

- Act as the school's safeguarding point of contact with children's social care, the LADO, the police, health services and other relevant agencies.
- Work with the local safeguarding arrangements, including the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Liaise with the Chair and Safeguarding Lead Governor, sharing safeguarding assurance and significant issues through appropriate governance arrangements while maintaining confidentiality.
- Work with the Executive Headteacher and relevant staff, including pastoral, teaching, medical, SEND and IT staff, to coordinate safeguarding responses.
- Support effective information-sharing within the school and with other agencies, in accordance with data protection law and safeguarding guidance.

- Promote a culture in which pupils' wishes and feelings are heard and taken into account in safeguarding decisions.

Training and expertise

The DSL will:

- Complete appropriate DSL training and refresh it at least every two years. The DDSL(s) will also receive appropriate training for their role.
- Ensure the DSL and DDSL(s) receive regular updates to their safeguarding knowledge, at least annually.
- Complete Prevent training and ensure that staff receive appropriate guidance and training on the Prevent duty.
- Maintain knowledge of local referral routes, thresholds for early help and statutory intervention, and local child-protection procedures.
- Understand the role of the DSL in child-protection conferences and other multi-agency processes, and attend or contribute to them as required.
- Keep knowledge current on safeguarding risks affecting pupils, including the additional risks and communication barriers that may affect pupils with SEND and disabilities.
- Understand the school's online-safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements and work with the relevant staff and leaders to identify and address safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure safeguarding information, advice and training are accessible to staff, including new and part-time staff.

Safeguarding policies and practice

The DSL will:

- Support the Executive Headteacher and School Board in reviewing the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at least annually and when changes to legislation, guidance or school practice require an earlier review.
- Ensure staff know how to access and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure parents and carers can access the safeguarding policy and understand the school's role in referring concerns to the appropriate agencies.
- Share relevant local safeguarding updates and training opportunities with staff.
- Contribute to reviewing safeguarding practice and addressing learning from incidents, audits, visits and external scrutiny.

Child-protection records and information transfer

The DSL will:

- Ensure child-protection records are accurate, up to date, secure and stored separately from the pupil's main education record.
- When a pupil leaves, transfer the child-protection file securely to the receiving school or college separately from the main file, and obtain confirmation of receipt.
- Transfer the file as soon as possible: within five days for an in-year transfer, or within the first five days of a new term for a transfer at the start of a term.
- Consider whether safeguarding information should be shared with the receiving school or college before the pupil leaves, so that suitable support and protection can be arranged.

Availability and cover

The DSL will be available during the school day to discuss safeguarding concerns. When the DSL is unavailable, an appropriately trained DDSL will act as the contact for concerns and referrals.

The school will make suitable cover arrangements for safeguarding during educational visits, activities outside the normal school day and other occasions when pupils are under the school's care.