

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Approved by RET Board

Approved on September 2024

RET contact Headteacher

Revision due Annually



RUSSELL EDUCATION TRUST

**This policy will be renewed as per the renewal schedule (every 12 months). Should there be new government policy or guidance e.g. an updated version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' prior to the updating of this policy, it will supersede the information given below.**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedure
- Appendix 1 – Types and Signs of Abuse
- Appendix 2 – The Role of the DSL
- Appendix 3 – Specific Safeguarding Issues and Terminology
- Appendix 4 – Gender-Questioning Advice for Schools (for Leadership/staff with a safeguarding role)
- Appendix 5 – Self Harm Guidance for Schools (for Leadership/staff with a safeguarding role)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Danielle Walt.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) are Christopher Martin, Kath Viala and Rebecca Poole.

The named Governor for Safeguarding is Mary Karaolis.

The named person for Looked After Children is Christopher Martin.

The named person for Female Genital Mutilation is Christopher Martin.

The named person for Child Sexual Exploitation is Christopher Martin.

The Lead Mental Health Professional is Christopher Martin.

The named person in charge of filtering and monitoring safeguarding is Christopher Martin.

If you feel that a child is at immediate risk of danger, please call 999 without delay. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection or safeguarding failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – the line is available from 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday and staff can email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## 1. Aims

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
- Staff and governors are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding and child protection issues.

## 2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and the 'Governance Handbook'. It also complies with DFE and Local Authority guidance. This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (December 2023)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
- The Teacher Standards 2011
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- PACE Code C 2019
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment)
- The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

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- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children.
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Advice in Searching, Screening and Confiscation September 2022.
- The Equalities Act 2010 and updates 2022
- The Human Rights Act 1998

### 3. Definitions

a. **Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024' and this policy as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

*Safeguarding is a term which is pre-emptive and involves steps taken to prevent children from harm.*

b. **Child Protection** means:

- Activities undertaken to prevent children suffering or being likely to suffer significant harm.
- Activities undertaken to ensure that where there has been harm in the past, the school does everything it can to ensure that the harm is never repeated.

*Child Protection is a part of Safeguarding, the latter being an umbrella term.*

c. **Abuse is:**

A form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

d. **Neglect is:**

A form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

### 4. Vulnerability and Equality Statement'

Some children are more susceptible to abuse. This increased risk can be caused by many factors including social exclusion, isolation, discrimination and prejudice. To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we give special consideration to children who:

- are vulnerable and/or susceptible because of their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, gender identity or sexuality
- are absent from education
- are vulnerable/susceptible to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- are at risk of sexual exploitation, forced marriage (official or unofficial), female genital mutilation, or being drawn into extremism or county lines organisations
- live in chaotic or unsupportive home situations
- live transient lifestyles or live away from home or in temporary accommodation
- are affected by parental substance abuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- do not have English as a first language
- are looked after children (CLA)
- Have special educational needs or a medical condition (see below)
- are young carers
- are asylum seekers

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The school will take positive action, where proportionate to deal with any disadvantages faced by students with protected characteristics in order to meet their specific need.

## 5. Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

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

Our staff are trained to be aware of and identify these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

## 6. Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the local children's safeguarding board.

### a. All staff will:

- Read and understand Part 1 of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024 and review this guidance at least annually.
- Read and sign the staff Code of Conduct which sets out expectations of staff.
- Receive an annual Safeguarding and Child Protection Training Update which includes advice regarding personal online activity
- Be aware that inappropriate behaviour towards students is unacceptable and that it is a criminal offence for them to engage in any sexual activity with a student under the age of 18.
- Be familiar with types of abuse and possible signs. See Appendix 1 and Appendix 3.
- Understand our systems which support safeguarding, including the staff code of conduct and the role of the designated safeguarding lead.
- Understand their role in identifying potential issues for children, liaising with the DSL or DDSL and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
- Know what to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child protection issue both in and outside school hours.
- Know the signs of different types of abuse and neglect as well as specific safeguarding issues e.g. online abuse, sexual harassment and violence, child sexual exploitation (CSE), FGM, radicalisation, domestic violence, community threats
- Not promise confidentiality to any child who makes a disclosure.
- Put the needs and safety of the child first
- Report any suspicion of FGM directly to the police and any other appropriate body with the DSL/DDSL present.
- Be mindful of safeguarding when planning learning, recreational or other activities involving children or executing their duties in school; risk assess activities appropriately.
- Challenge any form of derogatory, prejudiced or sexualised language or behaviour.
- Be vigilant to issues that affect different genders e.g. aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, initiation or hazing type violence with respect to male students.
- Ensure the curriculum notes the importance of behaviour and consent.
- Understand that a child harming another child could be a sign that the child is themselves being abused and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.
- Understand that a child absent or missing from education could be more vulnerable or susceptible to abuse.

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- Be mindful of the derogatory language sometimes used towards groups such as ethnic minority groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender groups and ensure prejudice and derogatory language is not tolerated.

## **b. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)**

Our DSL is Danielle Walt. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding. During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss and safeguarding concerns. Out of school hours, the DSL can be copied in by email through the school system. Should the DSL be off site in school hours, the Deputy DSLs are Christopher Martin, Kath Viala and Rebecca Poole – they will act in place of the DSL.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- Ensuring that staff know and understand policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that the policy and procedure is reviewed annually.
- Ensuring IT filtering and monitoring systems are in place and ensuring that arising concerns are followed up on in a timely fashion by appropriate staff.
- Referring suspected cases, as appropriate to the relevant body e.g. local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring service, police)
- and support the Headteacher or other staff employed to make such referrals directly. Please note that any member of staff may make a referral if the need arises.
- Confirming verbal referrals in writing within 24 hours of the initial referral.
- Seeking advice from the local authority multi service hub (MASH) where there is uncertainty about making a referral.
- Reporting back to and liaising with staff making referrals to the DSL.
- Ensuring staff receive annual Safeguarding and Child Protection training updates
- Ensure their own Lead Child Protection and Safeguarding training is updated every two years (and in addition update their own skills through briefings, bulletins, DFE guidance).
- Ensuring there is a 2-year programme in place for training staff on Safeguarding 'sub-topics'.
- Keeping the Headteacher informed of any issues and liaising with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.
- Recording allegations and actions appropriately
- Maintaining Child Protection Records for students and of allegations.
- Transferring records to a child's new school.
- Liaising with the headteacher regarding ongoing enquiries under section 17 and/or 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations and being aware of the requirement for Children to have an Appropriate Adult in relevant circumstances.
- Acting as a point of contact for the three local children's safeguarding partners.

The full responsibilities of the DSL/DDSL are set out in Appendix 2.

## **c. The named person for Looked After Children is Christopher Martin.**

They will:

- Ensure that they have appropriate training to carry out the role.
- Be the main point of contact for staff working with Looked After Children.
- Deliver any training needed by staff with regard to Looked After Children.
- Ensure any extra funding allocated for Looked After Children is spent appropriately.
- Ensure educational opportunities and pastoral support for Looked After Children is appropriate.
- Monitor and promote the educational progress of Looked After Children.

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- Liaise with external bodies dealing with Looked After Children including Social Services/Children's Services.

**d. The named person for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is Christopher Martin.**

They will:

- Ensure that they have appropriate training to carry out the role (including the reading of appropriate DFE guidance e.g. Guidance for Professionals May 2016).
- Be the main point of contact for staff who suspect FGM.
- Ensure that any staff referring a potential case of FGM make a phone call to 101 with the DSL or DDSL present.
- Be the main point of contact for students who are either potentially facing FGM or who have already experienced FGM.
- Be the main point of contact for health professionals (and others) dealing with known cases of FGM.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality with respect to possible cases of FGM.
- Be alert to risk factors and signs of FGM.

**e. The named person for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is Christopher Martin.**

They will

- Ensure that they have appropriate training to carry out the role (including an understanding of Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners DFE Feb 2017)
- Be the main point of contact for staff who suspect CSE.
- Be the main point of contact for students who are either potentially involved in or victims of CSE or who have already experienced CSE.
- Be the main point of contact for health professionals (and others) dealing with known cases of CSE.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality with respect to possible cases of CSE.
- Be alert to risk factors and signs of CSE.

**f. The Lead Mental Health Professional is Christopher Martin.**

They will ensure that

- All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- All staff are aware that children who have suffered adverse childhood experiences can suffer from mental health issues, poor behaviour and education.
- Where a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern it is immediately verbally reported to the DSL.
- Students are able to openly discuss mental health concerns and issues.
- Appropriate action is taken in referring students to appropriate bodies when they declare a mental health issue.
- RET guidance documents are followed e.g. with regard to Gender Identity, Self Harm and Suicidal Ideation
- Ongoing in-school support is available for children suffering with mental health issues.

**g. The Governing Body**

- The named Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection is Mary Karaolis.
- New staff, governors and volunteers receive a briefing during their induction which covers this Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and our staff behaviour policy, how to report and record concerns and information about our Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy DSLs.
- Our governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure

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themselves that there is an effective whole trust approach to safeguarding. This training is updated at least annually.

- Our safeguarding governor receives additional training to empower them to support and challenge the Designated Safeguarding Lead and support the delivery of high-quality safeguarding across the trust.
- The Governing Body will scrutinise and approve this policy as appropriate at each review and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.
- The named Governor will monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing body.
- The DSL and the safeguarding governor/trustee meet on a regular basis to discuss safeguarding issues and to agree steps to continuously improve safeguarding practices in the school.
- The Chair of Governors alongside the CEO of the Trust where necessary, where appropriate will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher.

## h. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy including:

- Ensuring all staff (including temporary staff) are informed of this policy as part of their induction.
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and on the school website.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly.
- Act as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against another member of staff or volunteer.
- Report all allegations made against staff to the Local Authority Designated Officer (whether deemed founded or unfounded).

## 7. Confidentiality

- a. Staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about an allegation or concern as this may not be in the child's interests. In addition, where there are safeguarding concerns later proven, the staff member would have been breaking the law.
- b. Staff will pass on safeguarding concerns to the DSL/DDSL/Safeguarding Manager verbally, quickly and effectively and not discuss matters in a public forum.
- c. Confidentiality is also addressed in the CP and Safeguarding Procedure.
- d. Information should be passed on to staff aside from the DSL/DDSL/Safeguarding Manager, on a need to know basis and staff should be mindful that it is not appropriate to discuss or disclose personal student/parent/carer issues with other non-related staff/parents/students.
- e. Information should only be kept from parents/carers where there is a concern that to do so would put the child at a safeguarding risk. In such circumstances MASH advice should be sought and decisions clearly documented on CPOMs.
- f. The DFE emphasises that 'The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.'
- g. Matters pertaining to a specific child or adult will not be discussed by staff outside the circle of the Headteacher/DSL/DDSL/Safeguarding Manager and relevant staff working with the child.
- h. Information and/or records of a child will not be disclosed to a parent, child or third party without seeking formal advice from the Headteacher and/or Lead Adviser.
- i. Letters in support of a child/parent/family for court or other formal bodies can only be written if the Headteacher and Lead Adviser approves this first and the correct formal request has been sent to the school.



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## 8. IT

- a. The school will ensure that appropriate and suitable filtering and monitoring systems are in place and that any inappropriate access to e.g. radicalisation, pornographic sites is reported and dealt with by the appropriate member of senior staff. These filtering and monitoring systems will be reviewed regularly to ensure their effectiveness.
- b. Internet safety is vital to the school's ICT and other curriculum and will be embedded into PSHE and/or the tutor and assembly programme.
- c. The DSL will ensure that staff will receive regular updated training regarding online safety and the filtering and monitoring systems of the school.
- d. The DSL will ensure that staff understand expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- e. The DSL will ensure that the Governing Body of the school receive safeguarding training which includes an understanding of the expectation, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring; governing bodies will consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.
- f. Safeguarding staff will take reports of child-on-child abuse, adult on child abuse and of online safeguarding risks seriously whether they occur in or outside school. They will take appropriate action and make appropriate referrals.
- g. The school will tell parents and carers what filtering and monitoring systems we use, so they can understand how we work to keep children safe.
- h. The school will also inform parents and carers of what we are asking children to do online, including the sites they need to access, and with whom they will be interacting online.

## 9. Site security

- a. Visitors are asked to sign in at the school reception and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site.
- b. Visitors will be given a safeguarding leaflet explaining how to report concerns and what constitutes a concern on entry at reception.
- c. If visitors have undergone the appropriate checks, they can be provided with unescorted access to the school site.
- d. Visitors who have not undergone the required checks will be escorted at all times.
- e. Site security will be considered when the school relocates to an alternative venue, e.g. an arena for a sports day.

## 10. Confidentiality and sharing information

- a. Child protection issues necessitate a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher, Chair of Governors or other appropriate staff e.g. the Safeguarding Manager.
- b. The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share child protection information externally. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for deciding to do so.
- c. Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and only when it is necessary and proportionate to do so and the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.
- d. Information sharing decisions will be recorded whether or not the decision is taken to share.
- e. The UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Data Protection Officer.

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- f. Where there is dispute between parents/carers or between parents and a local authority, and a request has been made for information by one or more of the parties, the DSL/Safeguarding staff will always consult the Lead Adviser/the Trust DPO and/or the Trust Safeguarding lead.

## 11. Storing Information

Child protection information will be stored on CPOMs. It will be stored and handled in line with the Trust Data Protection policy. It is acceptable to scan and upload paper CP files to CPOMs and securely destroy paperwork.

## 12. Staff Training

- a. All staff will receive annual Child Protection and Safeguarding update/training which includes information on school IT filtering and monitoring.
- b. DSLs and DDSLs will update their Lead Child Protection Training every 2 years.
- c. Schools will have a two-yearly programme of staff training which covers:
  - i. Child on Child Abuse and Reporting Systems for Pupils in and Out of School
  - ii. Domestic violence
  - iii. Prevent and radicalisation
  - iv. FGM
  - v. Sexual Harassment and Violence (including Peer on Peer Abuse)
  - vi. CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation)
  - vii. Online risks and protective behaviours (including the risks of Child-on-Child Abuse on the internet)
  - viii. Drug and alcohol abuse and County lines risks
  - ix. Abduction and Community Risk
  - x. Protected characteristics
- d. Schools will ensure that any staff working closely with students on Child Protection or Safeguarding issues including the DSL and DDSL read and understand the following DFE guidance.
  - i. [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines)
  - ii. [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-safeguard-children)
  - iii. [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education)
  - iv. [Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/teaching-online-safety-in-schools)
  - v. [What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/what-to-do-if-you-re-worried-a-child-is-being-abused.pdf)

## 13. Recruitment and Selection of Staff

All staff will be recruited used Safer Recruitment procedures. At least one staff member involved in scrutinising applications and one staff member interviewing will be safer recruitment trained. Appropriate checks will be made in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. This includes online searches.

See RET Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

The school will keep copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications on their personnel file.

## 14. Allegations and Concerns

Allegations and Safeguarding concerns raised in relation to, and allegations made about staff, supply staff, contractors, visitors and volunteers.

- a. If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made about a member of staff including supply staff, contractors, site hirers e.g. sports clubs or volunteers, our set procedure must be followed. Please see the separate RET policy/procedure. The full procedure for managing such allegations is set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- b. Allegations/safeguarding concerns made about staff who no longer work at the school will be reported to the police.



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## 15. Single Central Record

All schools will keep an up to date single central record with appropriate checks for each staff member including where applicable an identity check, an enhanced DBS, a barred list check, a prohibition from teaching check, a Section 128 check, further checks on those who have lived or worked outside the UK, professional qualification check, right to work in the UK check. Staff members employed from September 2022 will in addition have a record of an online check. Records will also be kept regarding the date of completion of annual safeguarding training and the date of reading and signing to confirm understanding of Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant Safeguarding policies and procedures.

## 16. Use of School Premises for Non-School Activities

- a. Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the Headteacher, DSL and/or governing body will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed).
- b. The school will ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll.
- c. The school will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and make clear that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.
- d. The guidance on Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings details the safeguarding arrangements that the schools will expect these providers to have in place.
- e. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings>