



**WOODLANDS**  
**SCHOOL**

ASPIRATION, RESILIENCE, OPPORTUNITY, EXCELLENCE

# Safeguarding Policy

Amended: September 2023

Approved by Governors: December 2023

Review date: September 2024

Reviewing Panel: Standards, Staffing and Curriculum

## **Purpose and Aims**

The purpose of Woodlands School's safeguarding policy is to provide a secure framework for the workforce in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those pupils who attend our school. The policy aims to ensure that:

All our pupils are safe and protected from harm.

Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable pupils to feel safe and adopt safe practices;

Staff, pupils, governors, visitors, volunteers and parents / carers are aware of the expected behaviours and the school's legal responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our pupils.

## **Ethos**

Safeguarding in Woodlands School is considered everyone's responsibility and as such our school aims to create the safest environment within which every pupil has the opportunity to achieve and Woodlands School recognises the contribution it can make in ensuring that all pupils registered or who use our school feel that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken. We will do this by endeavouring to work in partnership with other agencies and seek to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and other colleagues to develop and provide activities and opportunities throughout our curriculum that will help to equip our children with the skills they need.

## **Responsibilities and expectations**

Woodlands School has a Governing body whose legal responsibility it is to make sure that the school has an effective safeguarding policy and procedures in place and monitors that the school complies with them. Trustees should also ensure that the policy is made available to parents and carers if requested. It is also the responsibility of the Governing body to ensure that all staff and volunteers are properly checked out to make sure they are safe to work with the pupils who attend our school and that the school has procedures for handling allegations of abuse made against members of staff (including the Head Teacher) or volunteers.

All Child Protection concerns need to be acted on **immediately**. If you are concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you should tell the Child Protection lead Dominic Riste (Ext 168)

Please refer to Woodlands School's Child Protection Policy for further details.

## **Recognising concerns, signs and indicators of abuse**

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. For our school it includes such things as pupil safety, bullying, racist abuse and harassment, educational visits, intimate care, children missing education and internet safety etc. The witnessing of abuse can also have a damaging effect on those who are party to it, as well as the child subjected to the actual abuse, and in itself will have a significant impact on the health and emotional well-being of the child. Abuse can often be difficult to recognise and to disclose, at Woodlands we will support our students by establishing and maintaining an ethos where children/young people feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.

## **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. This was previously known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else such as Domestic Violence or Domestic Abuse.

Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction;
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic violence and abuse;
- Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, including online;
- Exploiting and corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). It includes 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. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to:

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

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

Included in the four categories of child abuse and neglect above are several factors relating to the behaviour of the parents and carers which have significant impact on children, such as domestic abuse.

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

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

### **Child on Child Abuse**

Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- 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;
- pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude images (known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery). Sexting is the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent;
- sharing of unwanted explicit content
- bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example sexual or sexist name-calling.
- facilitating, threatening and/or encouraging sexual violence through online or offline interaction.

CYP can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes at school, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At school, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, corridors, changing areas, common rooms, outside spaces such as the playground and sports facilities, and when CYP are travelling home.

The principle aim of our approach is to foster the conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships, at school and as they continue in life. We work to a culture in which the voice of our CYP is central, where pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, knowing that they will be listened to, and that they will not be judged.

### **Mental health**

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school wants to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs.

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only trained professionals should make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, but staff are well placed to observe children and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem, or be at risk of developing one. Abuse, neglect and other traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact on children's mental health, behaviour and education.

Some mental health concerns are also safeguarding concerns and therefore should be acted on by following the school's child protection policy and reporting concerns to the DSL, Dominic Riste.

## **Managing Allegations**

We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers.

At this point, Woodlands School's Child Protection Policy should be followed and the Head Teacher informed. If the allegation is against the Head Teacher, the Chair of Trustees should be contacted.

## **Training**

**All members of staff and volunteers will have access to whole school safeguarding training every year. We will also, as part of our induction, issue information in relation to our Safeguarding policy and any policy related to safeguarding and promoting our children/young people's welfare to all newly appointed staff and volunteers.**

Our Senior Designated Person (Dominic Riste) will undertake further safeguarding training in addition to the whole school training. This will be undertaken at least every two years which updates their awareness and understanding of the impact of the wide agenda of safeguarding issues. This includes taking part in multi-agency training in addition to safeguarding training.

Our Trustees will have access to safeguarding training and our Named Trustee for Safeguarding will also undertake additional training at least every two years to support their employers' role in Handling Allegations against adults.

Our safeguarding arrangements are reported on a termly basis to our Trustees and our Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, in order to keep it updated in line with local and national guidance/legislation.

We will include a summary of our Safeguarding Policy to parents / carers in our school prospectus/website and will post copies of our policy throughout the school.

*The above list is not exhaustive and as new policy guidance and legislation develops within the remit of Safeguarding we will review and update our policies and procedures as appropriate and in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Local Authority.*

## **Child Missing from School Policy Statement:**

Woodlands School has a statutory duty of care to all its pupils to provide a safe environment and to ensure their health, safety and welfare at all times. All at Woodlands School should do their utmost to ensure this. Making sure that all pupils are present, accounted for and safe is therefore a vital role of the staff at the school.

(NB – A child going missing from school or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow this procedure for dealing with children who go missing and refer to the Safeguarding Policy if appropriate)

The Aims of the Missing from School Policy are as follows:

- To ensure the safety of all pupils
- To ensure that we are able to find any pupil that goes missing either in School or on an activity outside School as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- To communicate effectively and to an appropriate timescale with everyone concerned.
- To follow up incidents and to review procedures accordingly.

## **Missing Child Procedure (at School):**

A register must be taken at the beginning of the school day and every lesson. Thereafter no pupil will leave the classroom without a teacher's pass. If a pupil is missing from a lesson and they were previously registered, Pupil Services should be contacted to check whether or not they have signed out

of school for any specific reason. If they have not signed out, the appropriate HOY should be informed immediately. The HOY or a member of SLT should undertake a search of school premises, grounds and CCTV where possible.

If the pupil is not located after 20 minutes, parents/carers (or another named contact) should be contacted by Attendance to inform them that their child cannot be located on school premises. If parents/carers are unable to be contacted the police are then to be informed by the Child Protection lead and relevant information about the missing pupil will be given to the police who will then take over the search. Whilst the search is ongoing, the school will continue to liaise with the police and act in accordance with police instructions.

#### **Missing Child Procedure (off site activity):**

When on excursions off school premises staff will implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the pupils in accordance with the school's 'School Visit policy'. A list of all pupils' names and contact information will be carried at all times by the visit leader.

- Register checks must be made regularly during the trip and action taken according to procedure as soon as a pupil is identified as missing.
- The visit leader will organise a search for the pupil whilst other staff members will maintain the safety and well-being of the rest of the group.
- If a pupil is not located after 20 minutes the school will be informed and parents will be contacted by Pupil Services.
- The visit leader will contact police in the area where the visit is located.
- The visit leader will remain with the police to assist and will maintain regular contact with the school.
- All other staff will return to the school with the rest of the pupils or to the appropriate hotel/hostel if the visit is residential.

Whether the incident occurs on at School or off site, the member of staff directly involved will, once the pupil has been found, you must alert the Safeguarding Department either via email or in person detailing.

- The date and time when it happened
- What staff were present
- When and where the pupils was last seen
- What was taking place at the time
- Estimate of time when the pupil went missing

Any resulting child protection issues must be referred to the child protection designated person.

#### **Child Missing from Education Policy Statement:**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

Woodlands School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with pupils that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

It is essential that all Woodlands School staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

As required by law, Woodlands School maintains an admission register and an attendance register; all pupils are placed on both. The attendance officer must inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

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

The attendance officer will inform the local authority when the school deletes a pupil from its register under the above circumstances.

### **Children of compulsory school age who are missing from education**

Woodlands School pastoral staff will follow up any pupil who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect. When informed by the attendance officer, the child protection designated person will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Policy Statement:**

FGM is a collective term for all procedures involving partial or total removal of external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. Typically it is performed on girls aged between 4 -15 or on older girls before marriage or pregnancy. **It is illegal in the UK and it is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM. There is a maximum prison sentence of 14 years for anyone found to have aided this procedure in any way.** It is considered to be child abuse as it causes physical, psychological and sexual harm.

FGM is more common than many people realise, both across the world and in the UK. It is practised in 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle and Far East and increasingly in developed countries amongst the immigrant and refugee communities. In the UK it has been estimated that 24,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM.

### **Signs and Indicators to be aware of some indications that FGM may have taken place include:**

- The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM, especially if there are elderly women present in the extended family.
- A female pupil may spend time out of the classroom or from other activities, with bladder or menstrual problems.
- A long absence from school or in the school holidays could be an indication that a female pupil has recently undergone an FGM procedure, particularly if there are behavioural changes on her return - this may also be due to a forced marriage.
- A female pupil requiring to be excused from physical exercise lessons without the support of her GP.
- A female pupil may ask for help, either directly or indirectly.

- A female pupil who is suffering emotional / psychological effects of undergoing FGM, for example withdrawal or depression.
- Midwives and obstetricians may become aware that FGM has taken place when treating a pregnant woman / young woman.

**Some indications that FGM may be about to take place include:**

- A conversation with a female pupil where they may refer to FGM, either in relation to themselves or another female family member or friend;
- A female pupil requesting help to prevent it happening;
- A female pupil expressing anxiety about a 'special procedure' or a 'special occasion' which may include discussion of a holiday to their country of origin;
- A boy may also indicate some concern about his sister or other female relative.

**Action to take if staff believes a child is at risk of FGM**

- Report to child protection designated person or **in an emergency - do not delay – ring 999**
- Once reporting to the child protection designated person, all usual safeguards steps are to be followed
- If required an interpreter must be used in all interviews carried out by the child protection designated person and the family if their preferred language is not English. The interpreter must be female.

**Female Pupils in Immediate Danger**

- If the parents cannot satisfactorily guarantee that they will not proceed with the mutilation and the Strategy Meeting / Discussion decides that as such the female pupil is in immediate danger, then an Emergency Protection Order should be sought, by the child protection designated person
- The primary focus is to prevent the child undergoing any form of FGM, rather than removal from the family.
- If the female pupil has already undergone FGM, the child protection designated person will need to consider whether to continue enquiries or whether to assess the need for support services. Consideration should be given to establish, if there are any younger sisters, and an assessment may be needed to determine if there are any risks to younger siblings. If any legal action is being considered, legal advice must be sought.

**If a Female Pupil Has Already Undergone FGM**

- Where FGM has been practiced, a referral should be made by the child protection designated person to Children's Social Care.
- A female pupil who has undergone FGM should be seen as a Child in Need and offered services as appropriate. There may be a need for medical assessment and / or therapeutic services for her. The risk to other female children in the family and extended family must be considered. The child protection designated person will be required to make a referral to Children's Social Care Services or Police as appropriate.

**Cultural context**

The issue of FGM is very complex. Despite the obvious harm and distress it can cause, many parents from communities who practice FGM believe it important in order to protect their cultural identity.

FGM is often practiced within a religious context. However, neither the Koran nor the Bible supports the practice of FGM. As well as religious reasons, parents may also say that undergoing FGM is in their daughter's best interests because it:

- Gives her status and respect within the community;
- Keeps her virginity / chastity;



- Is a rite of passage within the custom and tradition in their culture;
- Makes her socially acceptable to others, especially to men for the purposes of marriage;
- Ensures the family are seen as honourable;
- Helps girls and women to be clean and hygienic.

### **Consequences of FGM**

Many people may not be aware of the relation between FGM and its health consequences; in particular the complications affecting sexual intercourse and childbirth which occur many years after the mutilation has taken place.

#### **Short term health implications include:**

- Severe pain and shock;
- Infections;
- Urine retention;
- Injury to adjacent tissues;
- Fracture or dislocation as a result of restraint;
- Damage to other organs;
- Death
- Depending on the degree of mutilation, it can cause severe haemorrhaging and result in the death of the girl / young woman through loss of blood.

#### **Long term health implications include:**

- Excessive damage to the reproductive system;
- Uterus, vaginal and pelvic infections;
- Infertility;
- Cysts;
- Complications in pregnancy and childbirth;
- Psychological damage;
- Sexual dysfunction;
- Difficulties in menstruation;
- Difficulties in passing urine;
- Increased risk of HIV transmission.

#### **Forced Marriages Policy Statement:**

- A forced marriage is a marriage without consent from both parties and where pressure or threats are a factor. This is very different to an arranged marriage, which both people will have to agree to. It is a criminal offence to force someone to marry.
- Signs of concern could include truancy / absence from school, punctuality concerns, low motivation, self-harm, depression, isolation, attempted suicide, eating disorders, other family members forced to marry or reported missing, family disputes, domestic violence and substance abuse
- Further guidance can be found under Part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education Document.

#### **Action to Take if Staff Believe a Child is at Risk of Forced Marriages**

- Report to child protection designated person or in an emergency - do not delay – ring 999
- Once reporting to the child protection designated person, all usual safeguards steps are to be followed
- If required an interpreter must be used in all interviews carried out by the child protection designated person and the family if their preferred language is not English.

### **PREVENT Safeguarding Objectives**

Within Woodlands School we will adopt the Prevent strategy specifically:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support: and
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

Woodlands School can help to protect children from extremist and violent views in the same ways that we help to safeguard children from drugs, gang violence or alcohol. Any concerns of this nature will be passed to Mr Riste in the same way as other child protection issues.

The purpose must be to protect children from harm and ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values. Awareness of prevention and the risks it is intended to address are both vital. All staff will receive training in line with the PREVENT resources. Staff can help identify, and to refer to the relevant agencies, children whose behaviour suggests that they are being drawn into terrorism or extremism.

Schools of all kinds can play a role in enabling young people to explore issues like terrorism and the wider use of violence in a considered and informed way. Schools can facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government. These are important for reasons which go far beyond Prevent but they connect to the Prevent agenda.

PREVENT referrals will be reported in line with other safeguarding procedures.

Mr Wright, Mr Amran or Mr Riste could contact Essex Police to discuss any concerns on PREVENT @essex.pnn.police.uk.

In case of imminent threat we would contact the Anti-Terrorism Unit via 999.

### **Preventing Radicalisation Policy Statement:**

Protecting pupils from the risk of radicalisation is seen as part of Woodlands Schools' wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable pupils being radicalised.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer.

In March 2015 the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015) placed new statutory duties on schools to prevent young people being drawn into extremism. As a community, at Woodlands we strive together to uphold a strong, shared culture of tolerance and respect. This statement expresses our commitment to these values, as well as the overall safety and wellbeing of our pupils.

The current threat from extremism and radicalisation in the UK can include the exploitation of vulnerable people to sympathise with violent ideology, on both the extreme left and right of the political spectrum. The exposure to extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Woodlands School is clear that this exploitation

and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern and that staff and governors have a duty to protect young people from the negative influence of extremist groups and individuals.

The School seeks to protect its pupils against all messages of violent extremism using any means or medium to express views that:

- encourage, justify or glorify political, religious, sexist or racist violence,
- subscribe to narrow mind-sets that are intolerant to diversity,
- foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence,
- seek to provoke others to violent acts,
- encourage other criminal activity.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities all Woodlands staff will be alert to:

- Disclosures by pupils of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of school, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where students have not actively sought these out;
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images;
- Pupils accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites, e-safety policies have been impact assessed and control measures in place;
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance;
- Partner schools, local authority services, police reports of issues affecting pupils.


#### **Action to take if Staff Believe a Child is at Risk of Radicalisation**

- Report to child protection designated person or in an emergency - do not delay – ring 999
- Once reporting to the child protection designated person, all usual safeguards steps are to be followed
- If required an interpreter must be used in all interviews carried out by the child protection designated person and the family if their preferred language is not English.

Gaming Disorder has been added to the World Health Organisation's classification of diseases; note this is a 'disorder', not an addiction. The clinical conditions say that: 'Gaming disorder is characterised by a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour...' manifested by:

- "impaired control over gaming"
- "increasing priority given to gaming to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities"
- "continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences."

Freelance games expert, Andy Robertson, has written an article on the internetmatters.org website that explains 'What you need to know about WHO gaming disorder'. You can read the article here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/what-you-need-to-know-about-who-gaming-disorder/>

Signed:   
Head Teacher

Dated: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Signed:   
Chair of Governors

Dated: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023