



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Document title		Safeguarding Policy	
Author (name & role title)		Julie Swann	
Version number		V10	
Date approved			
Review cycle		Annually	
Approved by		Senior Leadership Team	
Date of next review		1 st August 2026 (subject to changes to KCSIE DFE guidance and any associated safeguarding and child protection legislation)	
Document history			
Version	Date	Author	Note of revisions
V1	1/9/2020	Julie Swann	Amendments following issuance of KCSIE 1.9.2020
V2	25/9/2020	Julie Swann	Amendments following review by Board of Governors and Louise Greatrex
V3	21/8/2021	Julie Swann	Amendments following issuance of KCSIE 1.9.2021
V4	01/09/2022	Julie Swann	Amendments following issuance of KCSIE 1.9.2022
V5	15/01/2023	Cathy Friend	Amendment due to school's change of ownership
V6	01/09/2023	Julie Swann	Amendment following issuance of KCSIE 1.9.2023
V7	30/01/2024	Julie Swann	Amendment following issuance of WTSC Dec 2023
V8	24/03/2024	Julie Swann	Amendment following issuance of amended WTSC (Feb 2024) DSL review.
v9	7.7.2024	Julie Swann	Draft amendments in preparation for issuance of KCSIE 1.9.2024
v10	26.8.2025	Julie Swann	Amendments in preparation for issuance of KCSIE 1.9.2025

Heathermount School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular, it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core value of building confidence and preparing students for life.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Heathermount School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative.
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school contracts the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for:

- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Data Protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover

Where this policy refers to 'employees' or 'staff' the term refers to any individual who is classified as an employee or worker, working with and on behalf of the school (including volunteers and contractors).

Heathermount School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Heathermount School.

The policy documents of Heathermount School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

Contents

Section	Item	Page
1	Introduction	6
2	Responsible School, responsible leaders	8
3	Responsibilities - Designated Safeguarding Lead	10
3.1	Heathermount Safeguarding Team	11
4	Supporting Children	12
4.1	Mental Health & Well-being	13
4.2	Children Who May be Particularly Vulnerable	13
4.3	Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children	14
4.4	Children Who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi or Trans (LGBT)	14
4.5	Children who are absent from Education	15
5	Confidentiality / Information sharing	15
6	Supporting Staff	16
7	Allegations Against Staff	16
8	Whistleblowing	17
9	Physical Intervention	18
10	Anti-bullying	18
11	Racist Incidents	19
12	Prevention	19
13	Child Protection procedures	20
13.1	Recognising abuse	20
13.2	Taking action	20
14	Health & Safety	20
15	Monitoring and Evaluation	21
16	Safer Recruitment	21
17	Site Security	22
18	Extended School and off-site arrangements	22
19	Equalities statement	22

Appendices

Section		Page
A	Signs of Abuse What is abuse? Recognising physical abuse Recognising emotional abuse Recognising signs of sexual abuse Recognising neglect Other harms	23
B	Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation,	27

	Domestic Abuse Serious Violence County Lines Homelessness Children Missing Education	
C	The Prevent Duty, Honour Based Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation	31
D	Child on child Abuse, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children	34
E	School Internal Safeguarding Referrals Process	36
F	Local Authority Referral Process and Local Authority Safeguarding Contacts	38
G	School Safeguarding Training Schedule 2025-2026	40
H	Local Authority Virtual Heads for Looked after Children	41
I	List of linked policies and procedures used to develop the Safeguarding Policy	42

1. Introduction

Heathermount School is an independent specialist school, owned by Cavendish Education, for pupils aged 5-18 with a primary diagnosis of Autism. The School is supported by the Board of Directors at Cavendish Education.

Heathermount School adopts the definition of safeguarding used in the Children Act 2004 and in “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (September 2025) and “Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023), which have a focus on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children which is defined for purposes of the guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children’s mental health and physical health or development.
- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children.
- Taking Action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The school and Cavendish Education takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff¹, volunteers and governors have a full and active part to play in protecting our students from harm, and that the welfare of the child is our paramount concern. We will ensure that the best interest of the child is considered at all times.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the learning and social, physical, and moral development of the individual child. We recognise our privilege of being in a position to identify concerns as early as possible, ensuring that the child and their family receives the right help at the right time, ultimately aiming to make sure that we prevent concerns from escalating.

Our core safeguarding principles are.

- We provide a safe environment in which children can learn, feel safe, secure, valued and are encouraged to talk and always listened to.
- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.
- Safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- Ensuring that all children know where there is and can access an adult in the school who they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- That we acknowledge that working in partnership with other agencies, protects children and reduces

¹ Wherever the word “staff” is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self-employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc, and governors.

risks and that we will proactively engage in partnership working.

- Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review. The whole school community will be involved in the policy review process.

The aims of this policy are:

Ethos and approach

- To ensure a child centred and co-ordinated, whole-school approach framework for safeguarding and child protection is taken by all staff and that the welfare of the child remains paramount in doing so they will meet their statutory responsibilities.
- To ensure the school provides an environment in which all children feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to, taken seriously, be supported and kept safe.
- To ensure that everyone in the school, who comes into contact with children and their families, irrespective of whether this is direct or indirect contact, know the role they play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action to report possible cases of abuse and understand that it is essential that they take responsibility to fulfil this role.
- To maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” and that all staff always act in the best interests of the child, ensuring that the welfare of the child remains paramount.
- To maintain a “zero-tolerance” approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, but ensure that we take into account the Autism needs of all children involved and acknowledge that difficulties in social engagement may impact on behaviours and responses.

Training and Knowledge

- To make sure that all staff can identify the forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and the symptoms or signs that may indicate that this may be taking place.
- To make sure that regular training is provided to all and encourage all staff to exercise professional curiosity when considering a child’s presentation or circumstances.
- To ensure that all staff are aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and that in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.
- To make sure that all staff are aware of what the Early Help process is and how to make a referral.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of technology being a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and that abuse can take place on line as well as face to face.

Working with others

- To ensure that the school works with social workers to undertake any necessary Section 47 (child protection) or Section 17 (Child in Need) assessments and to seek parents' consent to do so, where applicable.

Safer Recruitment and Safer working practices

- To ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications (including a prohibition check for Qualified Teachers), and a satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance), and that a Single Central Record is kept for audit. The school will carry out the procedure and process as

identified in regulations 3 and paragraph 7 of Part 1 and The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. This will also include social media checks prior to an offer of employment.

Policies and procedures

- To ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures to report their concerns of possible abuse and that they do so in a timely manner, and can use the school's system of recording using "My Concern" (See appendix E and F on how to refer internally and externally).
- To ensure that all staff understand that it is their responsibility to take action to protect a child and not to assume that someone else will share the information and that staff can refer directly to social care or the Police themselves. The school will provide staff with information on how to do this. (See Appendix F).
- To ensure that all staff understand that if a child's situation should not appear to be improving, after a referral is made, that they are able to follow the local escalation procedures to ensure that their concerns have been addressed and most importantly, that the child's situation improves. (See Appendix F).

Effective monitoring and review

- To ensure a systematic means of monitoring children known, or thought to be at risk of harm, is in place and that we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- To ensure that the school reviews safeguarding issues in a wider context and look beyond the school gates when evaluating risks.
- To recognise that at Heathermount School staff may also be working with students who, because of their age, come under Adult Safeguarding.

2. Responsible School, Responsible leaders

We will ensure that all members of the Board of Governors and Board of Directors and the School Leadership Team understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely to ensure that:

Policies and procedures

- There is a Safeguarding policy in place as well as guidance for Safer working practice guidance and/or Staff Handbook for all staff at the school to refer to and follow.
- There is an E-Safety/Online Safety policy in place for staff to refer to and follow.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually and that the Safeguarding policy is available on the school website and in hard copy.
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of the whole school regarding safeguarding & child protection procedures through publication of the school's Safeguarding Policy.
- All visitors, on entry to the school, are to be provided with a copy of and required to read the school's safeguarding leaflet outlining the schools' safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding Responsibilities and information

- A senior leader has Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsibility.
- on appointment, ensure the DSLs will undertake specific safeguarding training and DSL 'new to role' training and an 'update/refresher' course every 2 years.
- Any weaknesses in Safeguarding or Child Protection are remedied immediately.

- The DSL will provide students and staff involved in child protection issues with appropriate support.
- Arrangements are in place to safeguard those children who go missing from education, especially those on repeat occasions. All staff should refer to the school Attendance Policy 2024-2025 for further guidance and advice.

Safer Recruitment and Managing allegations/ Low Level concerns

- The school operates under safer recruitment procedures and ensures that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed Safer Recruitment training.
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff, supply staff and volunteers and will make a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have, had they not resigned.
- Should a member of staff, about whom an allegation has been made, is deemed to have met the “threshold of harm” we will ensure allegations against that adult follow the procedure indicated in our “Allegations against staff and Low Level concerns policy September 2025” and those laid out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025) and are referred to the RBWM LADO² and a case manager appointed to ensure that the matter is investigated fully.
- That any member of staff found “not suitable to work with children” will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)³ for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, as in the case of a volunteer.
- That when any member of staff, about whom a concern has been raised, does not meet the “threshold of harm” we will follow the guidance as set out in our “Allegations against staff and Low Level concerns policy (Sept 2025)” and address any unprofessional behaviour as quickly as possible to correct it at an early stage. There will also be a requirement to address the identification of any weakness in the schools safeguarding system.
- That where it is deemed that a child has been harmed then the school will contact Children’s Social care and/or the Police.
- Gary Balcombe (Compliance Director - Cavendish Education) is nominated to liaise with the Local Authority on Safeguarding & Child Protection issues in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Headteacher.
- Enhanced DBS checks are in place for all members of the governing body.

Training of staff

- That all staff have read and understood at least Part one and Annexe B of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025) guidance.
- All members of staff and volunteers are provided with Safeguarding & Child Protection awareness information at induction.
- All members of staff have awareness training at least annually regarding safeguarding and child protection and receive regular updates in all matters that can put children at risk of harm.
- safeguarding training will also include an awareness of the “early help” process and the role of staff, as well as the process to make referrals to children’s social care. These should include section 17 and section 47 processes, ensuring that all staff understand the need to look beyond the school gates for potential risk of harm and explore “contextual safeguarding” risks.
- A proposed list of scheduled training for each academic year will be attached to the policy.

² LADO Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations against staff.

³ Contact the LADO for guidance in any case.

- All members of staff can recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers, including online and that the school policy and procedure with regards to child on child abuse is available in a separate document “Child on child Abuse” Policy and Procedure (September 2025), which includes responses to sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- All members of staff and volunteers know how to respond to a student who discloses abuse in any form.
- The name of the designated members of staff for safeguarding & child protection (DSL/DDSL) will be clearly advertised around the school and identified on the school website.
- All new members of staff will be given a copy of our Safeguarding policy, with the DSL’s names clearly displayed, as part of their induction into the school.
- Ensure that all staff acknowledge and understand that the Safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility.

Training of governors

- That all governors have received safeguarding training and have read Part 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025) to establish their roles and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding.

Curriculum

- Consideration is given as to how children may be taught about safeguarding - this may be part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health and economic education (PSHE), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and ICT sessions covering how to keep safe online.
- The school will use guidance provided by DfE in regards to the RSE curriculum in guidance which is currently in draft but does not come into effect until 1st January 2026.

Effective monitoring and review

- The Board of Directors and Governors, regularly reviews the effectiveness of school filters and monitoring systems. The school currently uses Smoothwall as its filtering system. The Board of Directors should ensure that the Senior Leadership team and all relevant staff are aware of and understand the systems in place, how to manage them effectively and how to escalate concerns when identified.

3. Responsibilities – Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes lead responsibility for all aspects of Safeguarding and Child Protection (including on-line safety) and this lead responsibility will not be delegated. A list of the specific roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies is identified in “Annexe C of KCSIE Sept 2025” but can be summarised as:

- Managing referrals and providing support to staff who may make referrals to social care and/or to the Channel Programme.
- Liaising with the head teacher regarding ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations and be aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult in relevant circumstances.
- Working with others external to the school, including taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings.

- Training of safeguarding in various formats to staff and also students (where appropriate). to also include making staff aware of training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements.
- Raising awareness of safeguarding for both students, families and staff.
- Sharing of information with regards to safeguarding. and ensuring that the school knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
- Maintaining and managing the child protection files to include their transfer.
- Be available and a support to all staff, as a minimum, during school hours and term time to discuss any safeguarding concerns and ensure that all staff have access to at least one contact point outside of school hours and term time to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- Understanding the views of children and to ensure that they feel heard and understood
- Ensure that a culture of listening and believing children is demonstrated throughout the school and that children are building trusted relationships with all staff that facilitate communication.
- As required, liaise with the “case manager” and the local authority designated officer (s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member.
- Liaise with the senior mental health lead, and where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.
- Promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.

3.1. Heathermount Safeguarding Team

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Julie Swann and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are David Stewart, Craig Drummond, Lily Claridge and Jacqueline Snipp. All of the safeguarding team are trained to the same level as the DSL. In the event of any long term absence of the DSL, one of the deputies will assume all the functions of the DSL as listed above.

The DSLs who are involved in recruitment and at least one member of the Governing Body will also complete “Safer Recruitment” training, which will be renewed every 3 years or sooner if required.

Role	Team Member	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Julie Swann	01344 875101 or 07764 261727
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	David Stewart Craig Drummond Jacqueline Snipp Lily Claridge	01344 875101 or 07971 752727 01344 875101 or 07887 456800 01344 875101 01344 875101 or 07356112309
Prevent Lead	Craig Drummond	01344 875101 or 07887 456800
Looked after/Previously looked after Child Lead	Craig Drummond	01344 875101 or 07452 947240
E-safety Co-ordinator	Jacqueline Snipp	01344 875101
Safeguarding (Board of Directors)	Gary Balcombe	g.balcombe@cavendisheducation.com
E-safety Governor (Board of Directors)	Gary Balcombe	g.balcombe@cavendisheducation.com

4. Supporting Children

We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. It is important for staff to understand that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as being harmful.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

Our school will support all children by:

- Ensuring that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including on-line safety through the PSHE, SMSC and RSE curriculum. This will include on-line safety embedded into IT sessions and Computer Science to ensure that children understand about the four areas of risk. Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce. In terms of content it will be essential to ensure that children are also taught about misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories (KCSIE Sept 2025). We will utilise the resources available from Educate against Hate who highlight approaches to take within schools in this important area.
- Ensuring that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place when pupils are learning online, without blocking to the extent that unreasonable restrictions impact on what children can be taught online and safeguarding. The school will follow the guidance provided in the DfE Meeting Digital and Technology standards in schools and colleges (March 2022) updated (March 2025)
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school and not condoning aggression or bullying of anyone within the school community.
- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum and by demonstrating positive and nurturing relationships within the school community.
- Using a clear protocol and procedure to enable children to speak out and disclose possible abuse, with input and guidance from our wider services such as speech therapy and clinical psychology.
- Ensuring that staff are able to reassure victims of abuse, that they are taken seriously and believed, and that support will be provided and they will be kept safe.
- When there is a safeguarding concern, providing a system and process in which children can express their views and wishes and these are considered in determining what action is to be taken and what services to provide.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Ensuring that referrals are carried out in a timely manner and that any child who is at immediate risk is referred urgently.
- Referrals are made that are factual and provide key information about the child, which should incorporate relevant contextual safeguarding issues.
- Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns, who leaves the school, by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the child's new setting and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

4.1 Mental Health & Well-being

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. Whilst only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, school staff are often well placed to observe children day to day and identify those whose behaviour may suggest that they might be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Staff should be aware of the whole school approach to positive mental health and well being and have read the school's Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy (Sept 2025).

Children who have suffered abuse and neglect or other adverse childhood experiences (ACE), can suffer the effects throughout their childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is essential that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their behaviour, education and overall mental health and how to respond to ensure that the child feels understood, supported and safe.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child, they should in the first instance record their concern on the school's safeguarding "My Concern" system. The safeguarding team will then review and decide a course of action, which may involve the wider school staff and/or therapy team available within the school or may require specific intervention from external services or both. The team will refer to the procedure identified in the Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy (Sept 2025).

4.2. Children who may be particularly vulnerable to abuse.

Some children have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can face additional safeguarding challenges.

Heathermount School is an independent specialist setting for pupils aged 5-18 whose primary need is Autism. Heathermount and its staff are aware and have received on-going training regarding the potential indicators of abuse. However, we recognise there is the potential to fail to recognise a change in behaviour as abuse, due to the fact that the behaviour, mood or injury could be assumed to be related to the child's Autism. Children and young people with Autism can have significant issues expressing their feelings, including disclosures of abuse. Therefore, we will adopt a range of strategies that identify the indicators of abuse within our school population, considering the pupil's profile of Autism and support disclosure of abuse effectively.

These could include:

- Ensuring a range of communication methods are available to the child and that staff are supported by specialist speech and language staff to ensure that children who find communication difficult and/or have limited communication capabilities, associated with either their Autism, age or communication skills, are appropriately supported.
- Regular communication with parents/carers happens to ensure that any changes to behavioural presentation is identified quickly.

- Regular reviews of the child's Behaviour and Risk assessment plan (BARA), student support plan (SSP) take place at least annually.
- Engaging other key professionals around behaviours and presentation such as clinical psychology and/or the school's inhouse therapy team.

4.3 Looked after children and previously looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep "Looked after & previously Looked After" children safe.

Key staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child.

The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care. (See appendix H for list). This will also include the support of children in kinship care.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.

When dealing with looked after children or previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children.

The school has an appointed Designated Teacher for Looked after and previously looked after children: Craig Drummond

4.4 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, gender questioning, (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm.

Unfortunately children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced, and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

At Heathermount we recognise that some children may be questioning their gender and this may lead to increases in vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, together with their additional diagnosis of Autism. The school will take a cautionary approach in supporting children who are questioning their gender and will refer to the DFE Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children, when deciding how to proceed.

We will encourage families/carers to seek clinical help and advice when making decisions about support for gender questioning children and work in partnership with those families/carers to ensure that those children who are pre-pubertal are seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience.

4.5 Children who are absent from Education

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored by the school's senior leadership team and governing body. A child being absent from education for prolonged periods, unexplainable and/or on repeat occasions, and a child going missing from education can act as a vital warning sign of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation or abuse, mental health problems or child criminal exploitation - particularly County Lines.

The DSL will work alongside the attendance officer and Senior Leadership team, to monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children are absent or go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. It is important to act when problems first emerge but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care, such as those on Child Protection plans or Looked after child, where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or local community. The school will work with children's services, where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns and will follow the guidance on school attendance in "Working Together to improve school attendance (DfE August 2024)

Staff must be alert also to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. (See appendix C)

5. Confidentiality/information sharing

We recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection are confidential.

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should discuss their concerns only with the DSL or Head teacher or Gary Balcombe (Cavendish Education Director of Compliance). The Head teacher or DSLs will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information and work with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the relevant local authorities' Safeguarding and Child Protection teams.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. "My concern" electronic forms and other written information concerning safeguarding or child protection issues will be

stored in a locked facility. The school uses safeguarding software via “My Concern”, which is password protected and has accessibility limits embedded within the system. Full access to these records is restricted to members of the Safeguarding Team within the school. All external electronic information is password protected and only made available to relevant individuals. Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil’s school file.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Head Teacher or DSL.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR does 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.

We will be guided by ICO guidance ‘For Organisations’ for information about how to comply including protection of personal information and providing access to official information. In addition we will be guided by the DfE Data Protection guidance for schools (February 2023)

6. Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSLs and to seek further support as appropriate. Staff will be further supported by the guidance within our Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy (Sept 2025)

7. Allegations against staff

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards a student is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be beyond reproach. Staff understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for any person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a student under 18 may be a criminal offence.

The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with students. Staff found to be in breach of these rules, may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults

as per the 'Lone working Policy', staff code of conduct and Safer working practice guidance. (See Staff Handbook)

All Staff should be aware of the school's own "Safer working practice" guidance" and Behaviour Policy (Sept 2025) . In addition, further guidance should be obtained from the Staff Handbook for reference to conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff, supply staff and volunteers. Further guidance will be given at induction.

We understand that a student may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation, or who is made aware of the information, will immediately inform the Headteacher in person. The Headteacher on such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the wider Safeguarding Team and follow the school's "Allegations against staff and Low Level concerns policy" Sept 2025. The school may need to refer the allegation to RBWM's LADO and/or refer any actions to the schools in the "Allegations against staff and Low Level concerns policy" (Sept 2025)

Under no circumstances will we send a child home, pending such an investigation, unless as a result of a consultation with the LADO.

Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and Cavendish Education's Chair of Governors and Director of People, prior to any action taken.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform Gary Balcombe who will consult with RBWM LADO, without notifying the Headteacher first. In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by Gary Balcombe with advice as above. In such instances the Chair of Governors will be informed immediately of such action.

8. Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of safeguarding & child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. Staff should follow the protocol identified in the "Allegations against staff and Low Level concerns policy Sept 2025 or refer to their line manager.

If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak, in the first instance, to the NSPCC helpline.

NSPCC Helpline Tel: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday to Friday and 10am and 2pm at the weekends. However, you can email at any time: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Any whistleblowing concerns regarding the Headteacher should be made to Cavendish Education's Compliance Director Gary Balcombe. The contact details for the Compliance Director are:
g.balcombe@cavendisheducation.com

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline details **are** displayed in the staff room and the Head Teacher's office.

9. Physical Intervention

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, causing damage to property or compromising good order and discipline or to prevent injury to another person. At all times the minimum of force is to be used and for the least amount of time.

Such events should be recorded using a Level 5 negative slip on the school's behaviour management system, currently "Arbor". The slip is then automatically sent to the Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers who check at the end of every day and ensure that all appropriate action has been taken. The head teacher may be required to notify Cavendish Education to record further actions. There may be occasions whereby the Head Teacher will be required to notify the child's local authority.

In all events, where physical intervention has been necessary a member of the SLT will be required to notify those with parental responsibility that a physical intervention has been required and the circumstances surrounding the action taken. All school Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in the school's physical intervention process – the MAYBO technique. They will receive annual updates, refreshers and re-training every two years.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safer working Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries. Where it has been necessary to carry out restraint on a child or young person, this action should be reviewed by the SLT and, should it be considered necessary, to be further documented in the child's Behaviour & Risk Assessment document (BARA).

10. Anti-Bullying

Our school policy on Anti-bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms of cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying.

The school will keep a record of known bullying incidents on the School Information Management System, currently "Arbor" These incidents are forwarded to our Anti-bullying Coordinator (Priya Pillay) as per the school's behaviour management procedure.

All staff are made aware, through training sessions, that children with SEND and/or differences/perceived differences can be more susceptible to being bullied / victims of child abuse and Child on Child abuse.

11. Racist Incidents

We keep a record of racist incidents on the school Behaviour Database and My Concern log. Incidents of racism are dealt with in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy (September 2025)

12. Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

- Work to maintain and improve an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to and believed.
- Work proactively to develop established relationships with children in order to readily identify any potential signs of abuse or harm in respect of changes to behaviour or presentation.
- Include regular consultation with children e.g., through safety questionnaires, participation in Anti-Bullying week and the Student Council and ensure that all children know that all adults in the school can be approached, if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Acknowledging that some children may have “preferred adults” who they are more comfortable with and wish to speak to and we will ensure that this is facilitated, wherever possible.
- Include safeguarding and child protection across the curriculum, including PSHE, RSE and SMSC. opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm, including radicalisation and to know to whom they should turn for help. This will also include anti-bullying work, e-safety, road safety, and travel training.
- Ensure all staff are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.
- Adopt and follow Safer recruitment procedures that help deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children. These will include checks and evidence, including criminal record checks (DBS), barred list checks and prohibition checks, together with references, applications and interview information. The school will maintain a single central register and engage in regular updates of school DBS checks of staff as identified in regulations 3 and paragraph 7 of Part 1 and in line with “The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- Ensure that all staff recognise that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college. This is known as contextual safeguarding and means that assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

13. Child protection procedures

13.1 Recognising abuse

To ensure that our students are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. KCSIE September 2025, refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix A along with indicators of abuse.

13.2 Taking action

Any child, in any family, in any school, could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”. Key points for staff to remember for acting are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child (including dialling 999)
- Report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- Do not start your own “investigation”
- Share information on a need to know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family.
- Complete a log on My Concern – the school’s electronic safeguarding system
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

Guidance on how to report a concern and what to do if a student discloses to you, please refer to Appendix E.

Further guidance on the school’s referral process, local authority external process and a contact list of local authority referral teams are identified in Appendix E and F.

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns with the students parents or carers. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

Our paramount concern is the safety and well being of the student. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from Children’s social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

14. Health & Safety

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children physically within the school environment and when undertaking school trips and visits. All staff should refer to the school’s Educational Visits policy (July 2024)

The Health & Safety team will report regularly to the head teacher and the Senior Leadership team and will provide a status to the safeguarding team at least once each half term.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and our procedures for safeguarding will be monitored and evaluated by:

- Governing Body visits to the school and scrutiny by the Safeguarding governor.
- SLT 'drop ins' and discussions with children and staff
- Student Council
- Scrutiny of Attendance data
- Scrutiny of Behavioural data, to include bullying and any peer-on-peer abuse incidences
- Scrutiny of "My concerns" data
- Scrutiny of a range of risk assessments to include BARA
- Scrutiny of bullying/racist/behaviour incidents.
- Review and analysis of responses to any parental concerns and analysis parent and student questionnaires
- Student voice via the school council
- Annual internal safeguarding audit by the DSL and Safeguarding governor
- An external safeguarding audit is carried out by an agreed external safeguarding company at least annually, or when significant changes are made to key legislation and/or following a request by the Governing Body, Cavendish Education or Safeguarding team.

16. Safer Recruitment

Heathermount school complies with the requirements of KCSIE September 2025 and the local safeguarding partner arrangements by carrying out the required checks and verifying any applicant's identity, qualifications and work history. The school's staff recruitment process is set out in full and can be found in the Staff Handbook. At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that supply staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked and are suitable to work with children.

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

16.1 Volunteers

Volunteers, including governors, will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with students and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

16.2 Contractors

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks, where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

17. Site security

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children, or who are dropping off medication or paperwork, do not need to sign in but must buzz into the building and remain in the reception area. All visitors are expected to observe the schools safeguarding and health and safety regulations and are provided with a visitor leaflet outlining these regulations on arrival. The head teacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

18. Extended school and off-site arrangements

All extended and off site activities are subject to a thorough risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site on our behalf, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our students attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will check that effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements are in place.

19. Equalities statement

With regards to safeguarding, we will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and our general and specific duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty. General duties include:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Appendix A

1. What is abuse?

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse, exploit or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical, as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant for example in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children (child on child abuse).

Categories of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Abuse of Children may be indicated by non-specific signs such as, but not limited to:

- Unexplained changes in behaviour
- Uncharacteristic anger or sadness, or becoming withdrawn
- Aggressive or attention-seeking behaviours
- Suspicious bruises or marks with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self esteem
- Isolation or lack of social skills and few friends, if any
- Self-injury
- Depression or anxiety
- Age-inappropriate sexualised behaviours both physical and verbal
- Knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- Poor bond or relationship with their parent or carer
- Running away or high/unexplained absence from school

2. Recognising physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Physical abuse indicators could include:

- bruises
- broken or fractured bones
- burns or scalds
- bite marks.

It can also include other injuries and health problems, such as:

- scarring
- the effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning.

Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse so it's important to be aware of these. Visible signs include:

- swelling
- bruising
- fractures
- being extremely sleepy or unconscious
- breathing problems
- seizures
- vomiting
- unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly.

3. Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse. The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g., anxious, indiscriminate or non-attachment
- Aggressive behaviour towards others or struggle to control their emotions and have extreme outbursts
- Scape-goated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a "loner" – difficulty relating to others
- Use language, act or know about things that you would expect them to know for their age
- Few or no friendships
- Lack of social skills

4. Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, engaging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse or harassment of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and is highlighted in Appendix D and is known as Child on child abuse.

Recognition of sexual abuse can be difficult unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g., for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain, bleeding, discharge, or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Bruises
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

Some emotional indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know
- Nightmares or bed wetting
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Self-harm
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in their mood, feeling irritable or angry or something that is out of the ordinary for them

5. Recognising 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, for example, as a

result of maternal substance abuse. Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene, and medical care. The child may appear dirty or smelly or be in clothes that are not washed or the wrong clothing for the weather.
- A child being hungry or not provided with money for food.
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent, or the child demonstrates alcohol or drug misuse
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods or taking on the role of carer for other family members.
- Frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants
- Poor muscle tone or prominent joints, weight or growth issues
- Medical or dental issues or missed medical appointments such as vaccination, or regular illness or infections
- Thin or swollen tummy
- Anaemia, tiredness, skin issues such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- Repeated injuries or untreated injuries
- Living in an unsuitable home environment for example no heating
- Aggressive, depressed or anxious or clingy
- Displaying obsessive behaviours or being withdrawn
- Self-harm
- Unable to concentrate or take part in activities

6. Other harms

There are several other issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sharing of consensual or non-consensual nudes in various formats, put children in danger, which all staff need to be aware of. All staff should refer to Annexe A of KCSIE (September 2025) which provides additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. All harms should be considered that may exist beyond the school gates and outside the home environment.

We would refer all of our staff who work directly with our students to Annex B of KCSIE (Sept 2025) as this contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues, with links to key organisations for further support, guidance and advice.

Appendix B

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. Some specific forms of CCE can include activities that involve the child being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence against others. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Perpetrators can threaten the victim, or their families with violence or coerce them into debt. Criminal exploitation is taking place even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

The exploitation of girls can be very different to that of boys and the indicators differ.

Some indicators for all children can include:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions.
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late.
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.
- Children who carry knives.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and /or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child Sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact. It can also occur through non-contact activities such as in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. It is important to note that this can affect any child, including those who are 16 and 17 years old, who can legally consent to have sex. Some children do not realise they are being exploited and believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive, but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation.

Signs could include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeated sexually transmitted infections

- in girls, repeated pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality. The abuse can be:

- Psychological.
- Physical.
- Sexual.
- Financial. and
- Emotional.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. The abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see or hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

It is essential that police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children and families who have experienced forms of Domestic violence. Operation Encompass is the national network whereby when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and where there are children who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult in school before the child arrives in school. The key adult is usually the DSL.

Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or are involved in serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school or college.
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups.
- a significant decline in educational performance.
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing.
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Unexplained gifts could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these and refer to the Home Office "Preventing youth violence and gang involvement".

County Lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. drug networks or gangs from and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these and refer to the Home Office "Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: a county lines guidance."

Homelessness

Being homeless or at risk of being homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority (LHA) so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at a risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Although a referral and, or discussion with the LHA should be progressed as appropriate, this does not and should not replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Whilst most schools will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, it should be recognised in some cases that 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently of their parents or guardians, and they will require a different level of intervention and support.

Children who are absent from education

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will, together with the school's attendance officer and school leadership team, monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Appendix C

The Prevent Duty

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

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism which is a vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Also included are calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

There is no single way of identifying a person who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help and protection. All school staff must be aware of the three key aspects of extremist ideology and radicalisation: Extremism, Radicalisation and Terrorism. All school staff must also familiarise themselves with the support available to children who may be susceptible or involved in either one of these activities. They should familiarise themselves with the purpose of and the referral process to the Channel programme and also be provided with information of additional support and organisations available nationally such as Educate against Hate.

At Heathermount, staff have been issued with a copy of the Prevent Duty and new staff are issued with it once they start with us. Staff receive mandatory training and regular updates as they become available. Heathermount refers to "Prevent Duty Guidance (September 2023).

Honour-based abuse (HBA)

'Honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Staff should be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. A forced marriage is one entered without full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. In England and Wales, the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

What is FGM?

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

4 types of procedure:

Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris

Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora

Type 3 Infibulation - entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out?

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women and is illegal in the UK.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases, may face disciplinary sanctions.

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued

- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinary tract infection
- Disclosure

Teachers **must personally** report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to be carried out but also report to the school's DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

This duty does not apply where there is a risk or suspected case of FGM, or where the person is over 18. In these cases, teachers must apply the school's safeguarding procedures.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemen, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage.

APPENDIX D

Child on Child abuse

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children, often referred to as Child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.
- Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment
- 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.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images or videos
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

All staff should be aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or harassing a single child or group of children. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

All staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will never be tolerated and is not a part of growing up
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys” and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. It may also be that the behaviour is “acting out” which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educational inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity includes any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

Assessment

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- Equality – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies.
- Consent – agreement including all the following:
 - Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
 - Knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
 - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
 - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
 - Voluntary decision
 - Mental competence
- Coercion – the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide. Further guidance and advice on the management of allegations of child-on-child abuse, which includes sexual violence and sexual harassment, is provided in the school’s Child on child abuse policy and procedure (September 2025)

APPENDIX E

All students at Heathermount School must be able to place their trust and confidence in any adult working in the school. They must feel sure that they can speak about any worries or concerns they may have and that they will be listened to, taken seriously and responded to appropriately. They must not be made to feel that their disclosure is creating a problem nor that they should feel ashamed for making the report.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

All staff must therefore know what to do if someone chooses to talk to them about any matter which raises safeguarding concerns. When listening to an allegation of abuse, staff must:

- **Listen** without interruption or judgement to what is being said
- **Avoid** using leading questions. Open questions and phrases should be used as much as possible
- **Wait** to seek help until after the disclosure has been made
- **Respect** the person's right to privacy but do not promise confidentiality
- **Reassure** the person making the disclosure that he/she has done the right thing in sharing
- **Explain** to the person that in order to keep him/her safe from harm the information that has been shared must be passed on to the DSL

Then:

Report what has been disclosed to the DSL as soon as possible, or in their absence, one of the DDSLs either in person or via the school "My Concerns" safeguarding system.

Remember that if there is a risk of **immediate serious harm** to a student a referral can and should be made to social care immediately and that anybody can make a referral.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Julie Swann – Tel: 07764 261727

Appendix E (Cont/d)

School Internal Referral process

Wherever a member of Heathermount School staff suspects abuse, or witnesses an incident that appears to be abuse, or whenever a disclosure is made to a member of staff, that person must report it to the DSL as soon as possible for advice and guidance. In their absence they should inform a member of the school Safeguarding Team. The school uses a software system “My concern” to record concerns that staff may have regarding a potential safeguarding issue.

Staff log onto “My concern”

Each staff member has their own log in and will add the information as per the sections raised such as child name, date of concern, description of the concern and any action they have taken. In addition, they are able to add if the concern involves other students.

For reporting events concerning allegations against staff, all staff should follow the procedure outlined in the school’s “Allegations against staff and Low Level concerns policy June 2024” and speak to the Head teacher without delay.

“My concern” initiates an email to all DSL’s at the school informing that a concern has been raised.

The DSL will “triage” adding a category of concern and proceed with the concern.

This may involve seeking extra information from the reporter of the concern and adding tasks for other staff members to carry out.

The DSL will consider and consult, where applicable, with the school’s Safeguarding team (DDSL) and/or local MASH teams in the region of the child’s residence.

The concern is then either dealt with “in house” by the school and all actions recorded or the matter is then referred to MASH and the local authority External referral process takes place.

Appendix F

Local Authority External Referral Process.

Please find below the contact details for all our local authority MASH teams. Please note that each local authority has its own local procedure for making a referral and this information can be found on each authorities website.

Alternatively staff can refer to [GOV.uk](https://www.gov.uk) webpage for reporting child abuse to the local council:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

Local Authority Safeguarding Referral Teams Contact details as of 1st September 2025.

Region	Telephone	Email
RBWM MASH referral team	Telephone 01628 683150 01344 786543 (Out of hours- Emergency Duty Team)	E-mail: MASH@achievingforchildren.org.uk
Surrey MASH referral team	If you have a concern about a child, young person, or adult, please contact the Surrey MASH: Phone: 0300 470 9100 Out of hours: 01483 517898	Email: mash@surreycc.gov.uk
Bracknell Forest MASH referral team	Tel: 01344 352005 01344 786543 (Out of hours- Emergency Duty Team)	Email: mash@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Wokingham	Phone us: <u>0118 908 8002</u> 01344 786543 (Out of hours- Emergency Duty Team)	Email: triage@wokingham.gov.uk
Hounslow	Telephone: 020 8583 6600 option 2 Out of hours: After 5pm weekdays or weekends Telephone 020 8583 2222 and ask to speak to the duty social worker	Email: earlyhelp@hounslow.gov.uk or Email: childrensocialcare@hounslow.gov.uk
Slough	01753 875 362 . The operating hours (for this team only) are 9am to 5pm For emergencies outside these hours call the Emergency Duty Team on 01344 786543 or dial 999 . If the child or young person requires immediate protection, please call the Front Door Hub on 01753 875362	send the electronic multi-agency referral form (MARF) to sloughchildren.referrals@scstrust.co.uk Emergency duty team email: EDT@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Reading	Phone: 0118 937 3641 (includes out of hours contact details) If a child is in immediate danger call the police on 999.	cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Bucks	Telephone: 01296 383962 Option 1 Out of hours: 0800 999 7677	E-mail: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gov.uk
Hampshire	Tel: 0300 555 1384	E-mail: csprofessional@hants.gov.uk

	Out of hours: 0300 555 1373	
Hillingdon	Tel: 01895 556 633 Out of hours: 01895 250111	E-mail: lscb@hillingdon.gov.uk

APPENDIX G

Safeguarding Training Programme for academic year 2025-2026 for all staff.

Heathermount School is committed to provide all staff with a range of safeguarding sessions throughout the academic year and a programme of training for the current academic year is in place.

These safeguarding sessions and updates may be provided in the format of online training, designated group sessions, staff noticeboard updates or whole school email notifications.

All staff are required to read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and acknowledge through the My Concern portal that they have read and understood. Should any member of staff have any questions arising from this they will be expected to contact the DSL to discuss.

All staff will participate in the annual Safeguarding update provided during our September **2025** INSET training.

All staff must complete the following mandatory safeguarding training:

- **Reading of Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025)**

Schedule: (please check with safeguarding team as these dates and timings could be subject to change):-

16.9.2025	Whole school session on KCSIE (Sept 2025) and Part 1 knowledge check
14.10.2025	Whole school session - TBC

Appendix H

In addition to their statutory duties, the role of virtual school heads was extended in June 2021, to include non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker.

Contact details for local authority Virtual heads for “looked after children”:

Local Authority	Name	Telephone	E-mail
Bracknell Forest	Kashif Nawaz	01189 366431	kashif.nawaz@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Buckinghamshire	Penny Todd	01296 387126	ptodd@buckscc.gov.uk
Hampshire	Anwen Foy	01962 835227	anwen.foy@hants.gov.uk
Hillingdon	Lisa Fenaroli	01895 556287	lfenaroli@hillingdon.gov.uk
Hounslow	Sue Thompson Katie Elliott	020 8583 4645	sue.thompson@hounslow.gov.uk kate.elliott@hounslow.gov.uk
Reading	Claire Houlton	07941 532568	Clare.houlton@reading.gov.uk
RBWM	Jenny Lockwood	01753 690725	jenny.lockwood@rbwm.gov.uk
Slough	Anna Bunce	01753 690725	anne.bunce@scstrust.co.uk
Surrey	Maria O Shaughnessy	07772 194740	maria.oshaughnessy@surreycc.gov.uk
Wokingham	Shan Ratcliffe	01189 746108 / 07711 856200	shan.ratcliffe@workingham.gov.uk
West Sussex	David Collier	07595 445827	Davidj.collier@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendix I

Associated Policies, Procedures & Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Education Act 2002 and 2011, "The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and in line with government publications:

- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children Dec 2023'
- 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' 2000,
- 'What to do if you are worried a Child is being abused' March 2015,
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (September 2018)
- Information sharing (2018)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
- Prevent Duty Guidance (September 2023)
- The use of social media for on-line radicalisation (July 2015)
- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Safeguarding Partnership Procedures Manual
- Working Together to improve school attendance 2024
- Meeting Digital and Technology standards in schools and colleges (DfE March 2022)

The policy also reflects the statutory guidance as outlined in "Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025"

In addition the school refer to the following in-house associated policies:

- Anti-bullying policy September 2025
- Child on Child Abuse policy and procedure September 2025
- Behaviour policy September 2025
- Health & Safety Policy June 2025
- E-safety policy May 2025
- First Aid Policy April 2024
- Relationship & Sex Education Policy April 2023
- Whistleblowing Policy June 2023
- Mental Health & Well being Policy September 2025
- Supporting pupils with medical needs and administration of medicines policy February 2023.

Please note that changes in legislation and guidance require short notice amendments to the in-house policies so please ensure that you check that you are reading the most up to date associated policy. These are kept and updated on the staff shared drive under "Staff documents/Policies" If you are unsure, please contact the DSL or Heathermount Administration Team.

For further information and guidance staff should refer to the school's Staff Handbook or speak to their line manager or the Safeguarding Team for support.