



Safeguarding Protection Policy

Children and Young people (CYP)

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Young people includes everyone over the age of 18

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| Approved by: | Freddie Adu | Date: January 2023 |
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1. Important contacts

| Name | Role/organisation | Email | Phone |
|-----------------|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Rachel Thompson | Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) | Rachel.thompson@qcollege.org.uk | 020 3910 9757 07733 662739 |
| Freddie Adu | Deputy DSL | Freddie.Adu@okqma.co.uk | 020 8740 8112 |
| Addy Jacobs | Deputy DSL | Addy.Jacobs@oqma.co.uk | 07730777911 |
| Wasim Butt | Link Trustee | wasim.butt@ormistonacademies.co.uk | 0121 236 5100 |
| Kathryn Mangold | Project Search Hospital Business Liaison and DSL, Q+ Governor | kathryn.mangold@nhs.net | 07581 627472 |

H&F Safeguarding Adults

<https://www.hfsafeguardingadults.org.uk/>

If you don't need immediate help from the police or are worried about calling them, you can contact H&F Adult Social Care on freephone [0800 145 6095](tel:08001456095).

This phone line is open 8:45 AM to 5 PM, Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours, you can call [020 8748 8588](tel:02087488588).

You can also email the adult safeguarding hub at safeguardingadults@lbhf.gov.uk

To raise a safeguarding concern, use the [safeguarding adults concern form \(DOCX, 64KB\)](#).

Kensington and Chelsea Safeguarding Adults

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care-0/safeguarding-adults>

Phone: Safeguarding helpline 020 7361 3013 (office hours) / 020 7361 3013 (out-of-hours)

Email: socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk

Ealing Safeguarding Adults

<https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201275/safeguarding>

Social care customer contact centre Tel: [020 8825 8000](tel:02088258000)

Emergency duty team Tel: [020 8825 8000](tel:02088258000) or [020 8825 5000](tel:02088255000)

Westminster Safeguarding Adults

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/safeguarding-adults>

Phone: Safeguarding helpline [020 7641 2176](tel:02076412176)

Email: adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk

2. Aims and guiding principles

The College aims:

- To raise awareness of all staff and trustees within Queensmill College and emphasise the importance of safeguarding and child protection (SCP). In particular to make clear responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse.
- To ensure CYP, parents and carers are aware that the College takes SCP seriously and will follow the appropriate procedures for identifying and reporting abuse and for dealing with allegations against staff
- To promote effective liaison with other agencies in order to work together for the welfare and protection of all CYP
- To support CYP's development in a way that will foster security, confidence and independence
- To integrate a child protection curriculum within the existing curriculum, allowing for continuity and progression
- To make appropriate links and reference to policies in related areas such as discipline and bullying.
- To ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote CYP's welfare.
- To ensure all staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
- To ensure staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.

NB. This policy is used in conjunction with "Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024" copies of which are in the Head of College's office and available online: Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) which College staff and governors are advised to consult when making decisions and/or considering CP issues that arise.

This policy reflects the unique contexts of the College by considering the unique needs and specific requirements of its cohorts of complex autistic children and young people.

Please note: Interns that are based at the hospital sites will come under the hospital policies as relevant and appropriate.

The College will ensure that the principles identified below are in place:

- All CYP have a right to be kept safe and protected from abuse
- Child abuse can occur in all cultures, religions and social classes
- Staff must be sensitive to the families' cultural and social background
- Children must have the opportunity to express their views and be heard
- If there is a conflict of interest between the child and parent or carer, the interests of the child must be paramount
- The responsibility to initiate agreed procedures rests with the individual who identifies the concern
- All staff must endeavour to work in partnership with those who hold parental responsibility for the child
- Information in the context of a child protection enquiry must be treated as confidential and only shared with those who need to know
- All staff should have access to appropriate and regular training
- College management must allow staff sufficient time to carry out their duties in relation to child protection and safeguarding.

3. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#), 3 safeguarding partners, and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children.
- Section 5B(11) of the [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#), as inserted by section 74 of the [Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children.
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children.
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the [Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- [Childcare \(Disqualification\) and Childcare \(Early Years Provision Free of Charge\) \(Extended\)](#), which set out who is disqualified from working with children.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people (CYP) means:

- Protecting CYP from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of CYP's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that CYP grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all CYP to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a CYP, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a CYP's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the

CYP's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where CYP share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Young people includes everyone over the age of 19

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will plan to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA).
- A clinical commissioning group for an area within the LA.
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area.

5. Equality statement

Some CYP have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some CYP with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise CYP's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all CYP have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. As an autism-specific setting, we consider our CYP to be at particular risk given the characteristics of the condition.

We give special consideration to CYP who:

- Are on roll at Queensmill College.
- Are young carers.
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.
- Have English as an additional language.
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or

domestic violence.

- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
Are asylum seekers.
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12)
- Are missing from education.
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the College and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended College hours and off-site activities.

6.1 All staff

- All staff will read and understand part 1 and annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually in January during the College Safeguarding update.
- All staff will sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year, as part of the annual Safeguarding update to say that they have reviewed the guidance. They will also complete a quiz to ensure they have memorised key messages. Another safeguarding INSET is organised in January to reiterate key safeguarding messages but with a greater emphasis of Safeguarding within Queensmill (e.g. reflective practice within departments using case studies). For new staff joining at other times of the year, they will complete this training as well as Introduction to Safeguarding in their formal Induction. This training will make them aware of KCSIE, or core Safeguarding practice and they must sign their agreement and understanding of this. The Executive Head Teacher or the

Head of College will provide regular safeguarding updates during briefings. Those will remind staff of key aspects of KCSIE but will also discuss safeguarding e.g. within the College context.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Staff Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct, and Staff Working in a stressful Environment Policy. Staff know and understand the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies and the Behaviour Policy, and the safeguarding response to CYP who go missing from education.
- The early help process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
- The process for making referrals to local authority social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play.
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a CYP tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation.
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- In rare situations, staff should challenge any authority figure such as the police should they feel their instructions or action put any CYP at risk or should it go against children's rights as per the UN charter. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK. Section 15 and appendix 4 of this

policy outline in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

6.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is Rachel Thompson who is the Head of College. Rachel takes lead responsibility for child protection and safeguarding at the College.

Freddie Adu, Senior Principal, Ormiston Academies Trust, has responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection for all children and young people within Queensmill settings.

During term time, the DSL will be available during college hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Where the College is closed, concerns can be raised to Rachel as DSL by email: Rachel.thompson@qcollege.org.uk

When the DSL is absent, the nominated Deputy DSL's – will act as cover. If the DSL and Deputy DSL's are not available, Freddie Adu, Senior Principal, will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out- of-term activities).

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so Contribute to the assessment of CYP.
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.
- The DSL will also keep the Executive Headteacher informed of any issues, and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and Deputy DSL's are set out in their job description.

6.3 The Trustee

- A College Trustee will conduct termly Safeguarding College visits which will include checks of SCR, training records, update on Safeguarding concerns and low-level concerns.

- The Link Trustee from the Q+ charity will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Head of College where appropriate (see appendix 3).
- All Trustees will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety.
- Section 15 of this policy has information on how Trustees are supported to fulfil their role.

6.4 The Head of College

The Head of College is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:

- Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction.
- Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect.
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their CYP joins the College and via the College website.
- Ensuring that the DSL and Deputies have appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, and updating the content of the training regularly. Training will take place in January each year for all staff. New staff will receive the required statutory Safeguarding training and knowledge in their induction, whenever they join the college, as well as the annual refresher for all staff in January.
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3).
- Ensuring the relevant staffing.

7. Confidentiality

Trustees and staff at Queensmill College understand the need for confidentiality and adhere to statutory GDPR guidelines. The college approach with respect GDPR and confidentiality can be found in our policy:

Nevertheless, we are committed to the Safeguarding and protection of vulnerable children and young people and will share necessary information where it concerns Safeguarding and Child protection in a sensitive and timely manner summarised below:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- 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 CYP.
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping CYP safe.
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a CYP at risk.
- Staff should never promise a CYP that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the CYP's best interests.
- The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy). Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 15, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3.

8. Recognising abuse and taking action

Staff, volunteers and Trustees must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue. Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL (or deputy DSL)”.

8.1 If a CYP is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger:

- Make a referral to social care and/or the police immediately if you believe a CYP is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. Anyone can make a referral.
- Tell the DSL Rachel Thompson, Head of College, or any one of the Deputies listed as soon as possible if you make a referral directly. Contact Details for the DSL and Deputies can be found in the table on page 3 of this policy.

All staff at Queensmill College can make a referral to the DSL using the following means:

In person, by email: Rachel.thompson@qcollege.org.uk or telephone **07733 662739**

1. In person to the DSL or any one of the listed Deputy DSL's, on site at Queensmill College or any of its satellite resource bases.
2. Using CPOMS Online web platform – all staff are provided with a username and login to make referrals or communicate concerns.
3. Contact freddie.adu@okqma.co.uk 07850 332976_in person, by email or telephone
4. Contact the Local Area Hubs listed at the start of this policy

8.2 If a CYP discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the CYP they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they

should have told you sooner

- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to social care and/or the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process

8.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place or a CYP is at risk of FGM:

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs”. FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as ‘female genital cutting’, ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation’. Possible indicators that a CYP has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a CYP may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4 of this policy.

Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl’s physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. Due to the nature of our CYP autism and more limited understanding of the world this also applies to the over 18s as vulnerable young people.

Contact details for reporting a concern can be found below:

- > Same as any other safeguarding concern/ disclosure unless the CYP is in immediate danger (**call 999** or the anti-terrorist hotline **0800 739 321**)

After reporting to DSL, the following steps may be taken:

- Contact the Local Authority Prevent Lead: prevent@lbhf.gov.uk or call **020 8753 5727**.
- **Call the police 101.**
- Call or email DfE dedicated help-line for non-emergency concerns about radicalisation and extremism.
- **020 7340 7264**, counter.extremism@education.gov.uk
- Make a referral to Channel.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve social care as appropriate. The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a CYP is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. **Staff should not examine CYP.**

Any member of staff who suspects a CYP is at risk of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

8.4 If you have concerns about a CYP (as opposed to believing a CYP is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger):

Figure 1 below, before section 8.7, illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a CYP's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a Deputy DSL or member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with Rachel Thompson, in her role as DSL

as soon as possible.

Early help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

Rachel Thompson, as DSL, will keep the case under constant review and the College will consider a referral to local authority social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Referral

- If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.
- If you make a referral directly (see section 8.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.
- The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.
- If the CYP's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the CYP's situation improves.
- If concerns are ongoing, following a referral and initial response, concerns can be escalated to the following:

Freddie Adu, Senior Principal – freddie.adu@okqma.co.uk

Wasim Butt, Link trustee from Q+ charity –
Wasim.Butt@ormistonacademies.co.uk

Local Authority hubs listed at the start of this policy

8.5 If you have concerns about extremism:

- If a CYP is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.
- If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority social care directly,
- If appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which college staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a CYP.

You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk . Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

If you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger.
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group.
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related.

Call the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 or in an emergency, call 999.

8.6 If you have a mental health concern:

All CYP at Queensmill College have a diagnosis of autism and the majority of students attending have a complex presentation of the condition. CYP can often

present express their distress (emotional dysregulation) in a range of ways that may be considered unusual.

All staff are trained to recognise and support CYP with their autism, in a range of settings, and teach them to better manage their distress or anxiety. These 'behaviours' could be interpreted as a potential Mental health concern and the senior team, especially those with DSL responsibilities are informed about the potential differences and the most effective way to support.

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a CYP has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff will be alert to dysregulation/behavioural signs that suggest a CYP may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

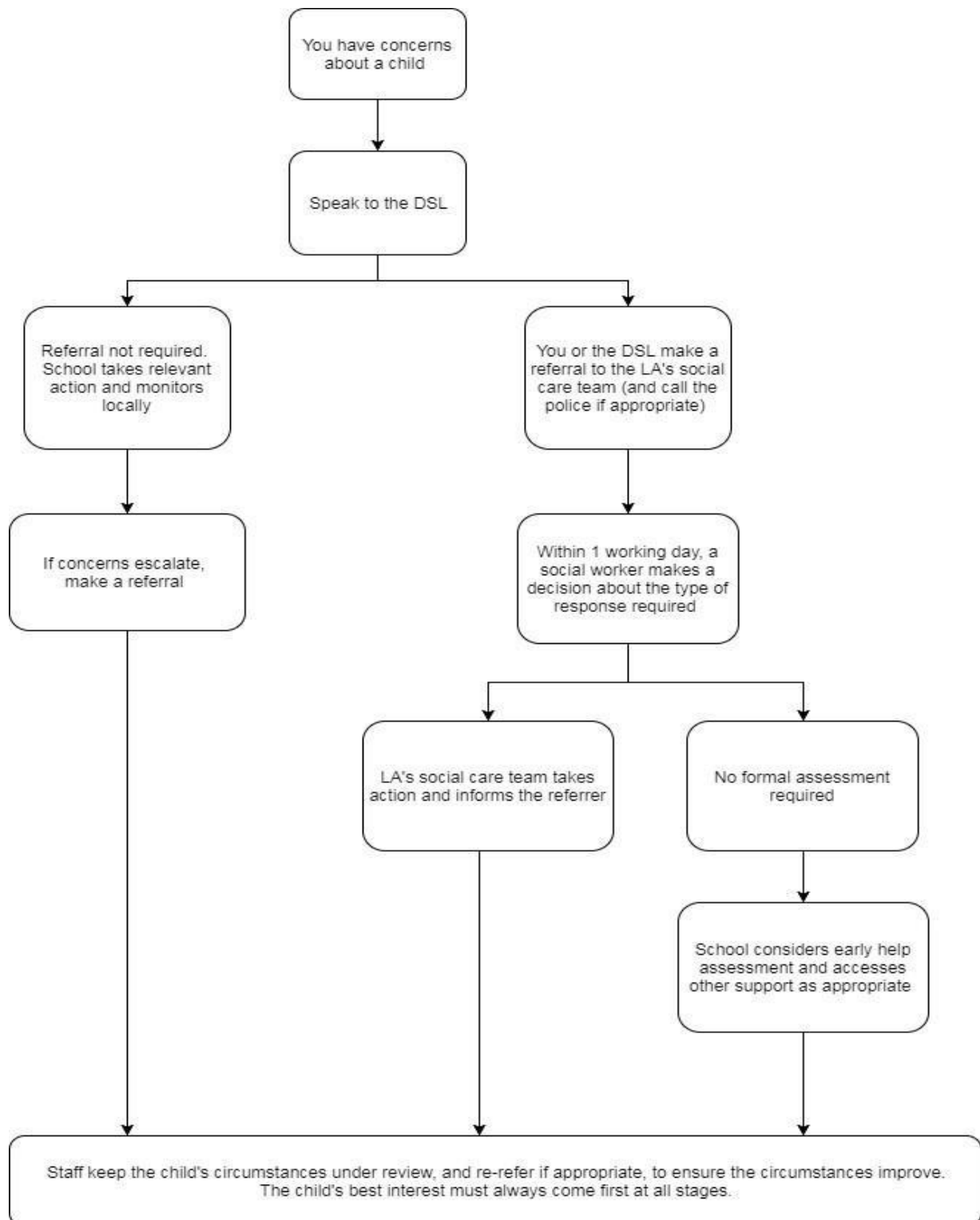
Each CYP usual autism presentation, including the ongoing strategies to support their autism and mental health needs (where this applies as further need) will be detailed in their Emotional regulation Support Plan (ERSP). Staff are informed that they must report any concerns to the DSL. The DSL will follow-up with reports/concerns but where these are already addressed within the CYP's ongoing ERSP these may not be logged as a new concern on CPOMS (the online record-keeping platform). Where this may be new information over and above that which is held within the ERSP, this will be logged as new concern in CPOMS.

- > If you have a mental health concern about a CYP that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 8.4.
- > If you have a mental health concern that is not also a safeguarding concern, speak to Rachel Thompson, the DSL, or one of the Deputies, to agree a course of action.

Further details and guidance regarding a mental health concern can be found at the Department for Education (guidance) on mental health and behaviour in schools for more information.

Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a CYP's welfare (as opposed to believing a CYP is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger).

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action. See section 8.4 for what to do.)



8.7 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor:

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the **Head of College**, as soon as possible.

If the concerns/allegations are about the Head of College, speak to the chair of governors of the Q+ LGB or Freddie Adu, Senior Principal, Ormiston Academies Trust.

The Senior Principal/Chair of Governors will then follow the procedures set out in appendix 3, if appropriate.

Where you believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) to the Head of College, report it directly to the local authority designated officer **Lara Thompson Hammersmith and Fulham LADO**

Queensmill College takes all concerns seriously and works directly with individuals communicating concerns that they may have. Details of our approach and procedure for addressing concerns that may relate to a staff member, including the senior team, can be found in our:

- **Whistleblowing Policy:** TQT-Whistleblowing - thequeensmilltrust.com
- and
- **Complaints Policy:** TQT – Complaints – thequeensmilltrust.com

Where appropriate, the College will inform Ofsted of the allegation and actions taken, within the necessary timescale (see appendix 3 for more detail).

8.8 Allegations of abuse made against other students:

We recognise that CYP are capable of abusing other CYP. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for CYP.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

We also recognize that due to their autism CYP at Queensmill may at times engage in what may be considered inappropriate behaviours or abusive, if not perceived within the context of their autism presentation. These behaviours will typically be described and addressed in the CYP ERSP as well as strategies in place to support them. The effectiveness of these strategies will be reviewed regularly and relevant safeguarding processes will be followed if this behaviour falls into the category of child-on-child abuse.

When recording concerns or within the significant incident protocols, staff can highlight a child-on-child abuse component. This will produce quantitative data and may be useful in identifying patterns. This in addition to qualitative data from knowledge of students and other source of information will inform training needs and targeted support.

Most cases of CYP hurting other CYP will be dealt with under our College's behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns.

This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence.
- Could put CYP in the College at risk.
- Is purposely violent.
- Involves CYP being forced to use drugs or alcohol.
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, up-skirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes).

See appendix 4 for more information about child-on-child abuse.

You must record the allegation and tell Rachel Thompson, the DSL, but do not investigate it. The DSL will contact the local authority social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence

The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all CYP involved (including the victim(s), the CYP against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed.

CYP at Queensmill are at heightened risk of abuse from peers or adults as a consequence of their autism. A significant number of CYP attending are non-verbal or have significant communication impairments and in addition; their deficits socially mean that they often lack the understanding and awareness of what is happening to them and whether it is wrong. Students attending the College require a high degree of 1:1 staff support and this can make them vulnerable because they can become too trusting or require support for the majority of activities within College, transitioning home (transport) or in the community generally.

Given this increased vulnerability we know that their parents and carers may be highly anxious on their behalf. It is the duty of staff within Queensmill College and The Queensmill Trust to take extra care to try to correctly interpret apparent signs of abuse or neglect. We know that there is a heightened risk among some of our CYP of 'child-on-child' abuse and we address this by educating all CYP of both appropriate and inappropriate boundaries/interactions, social safety and Sex and Relationship education using our 'SoSAFE!' curriculum. These are embedded into the curriculum of all groups (from Year 4 onwards) and is monitored by an appointed Senior Manager who is also a DSL.

First introduced in April 2016, CYP have been taught about appropriate social interactions, including consent with particular attention paid in the 'Steps to a Relationship' within the SoSAFE! Relationships programme. Where appropriate, each CYP will have access to their own 'People and Relationships' book that will help them to understand the people in their lives, their relationship with them and appropriate levels of intimacy within each social group.

Indications of abuse will be reported using the same process as the other safeguarding issues raised in this document. Staff are made aware of our agreed whole Trust policies with particular reference to our Care Practice, Health Care and Intimate Care Policy.

The College is aware that any CYP who is being abused in any way may have feelings such as guilt, anger and/or lack of self-worth. Everything we do at Queensmill College aims to help all CYP to have self- confidence and self-esteem, and to feel safe and happy, and as free from anxiety as we can possibly manage.

We do this through:

- The positive ethos of the College.
- Developing CYP's sense of themselves and their self-esteem
- Developing their communication skills.
- Developing strategies for danger-awareness and self-protection where possible.
- Developing a sense of boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, both their own and those of others.
- Developing tolerant, caring and non-abusive behaviour between CYP.
- Classroom strategies (see Teaching and Learning Policy)
- The curriculum, including the SoSAFE! programme
- Consistency of approach from well-trained staff.
- Encouragement of acceptable behaviours (see Behaviour Policy) Behaviour and Physical Intervention
- Close liaison with other agencies such as social services and EPS, as well as close communication with parents and carers ensure that all Child Protection register records follow a CYP when that CYP moves to another setting.

Creating a supportive environment in college and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse:

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

As detailed in section 8.8, all CYP receive ongoing education about social relationships and expected interactions using the 'SoSAFE!' programme, which is designed for autistic children and young people and the resources and activities are highly individualised to each child and group. We have adopted this system and approach because our CYP, as a consequence of their autism, function well below age-related expectations, especially socially and so education relating to social relationships must be more explicit, frequent and thoroughly embedded.

We also recognize that due to their autism our CYP may at times engage in

inappropriate and/or sexualised behaviours which may be considered as abusive when taken out of the context of their autism. These behaviours or sensory seeking patterns will be included in the CYP ERSP as well as strategies to support them. The effectiveness of the strategies in place will be revised regularly and relevant safeguarding processes will be followed if this behaviour falls into the category of child-on-child abuse.

When recording concerns or within the significant incident protocols, staff can highlight a sexualised component. This will produce quantitative data and may be useful in identifying patterns. This in addition to qualitative data from knowledge of students and other source of information will inform training needs and targeted support.

It is within this context that we will apply national statutory guidelines concerning child-on-child abuse.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images.
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female CYP, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys.
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate CYP about safe behaviour and consent
- Ensure CYP are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems (as described in section 7.10 below)
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
 1. How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
 2. That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in college, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”

3. That if they have any concerns about a CYP's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report.

For example:

- CYP can show signs or act in ways they hope other adults will notice and react to.
- A friend may make a report.
- A member of staff may overhear a conversation.
- A CYP's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong.
- That certain CYP may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- That a CYP harming a peer could be a sign that the CYP is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.
- The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have **any concerns**.

Should the concern fall within the CYP's usual presentation as described in their ERSP, the DSL will follow-up but may not necessarily record this as a new concern on CPOMS. The ERSP will be updated, where required, to address the inappropriateness of the behaviour, in line with the college behaviour policy.

8.9 Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes ('sexting'):

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident:

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must NOT:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a CYP to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL).

- Delete the imagery or ask the CYP to delete it.
- Ask the CYP who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility).
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the CYP(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the CYP(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Initial review meeting:

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate college staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns.

This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to CYP
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
 - If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the CYP involved which would influence risk assessment If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the CYP involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or social care if:

- The incident involves another adult.
- There is reason to believe that a CYP has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs).
- What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the CYP's developmental stage, or are violent.
- The imagery involves sexual acts
- The DSL has reason to believe a CYP is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming).

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the Executive Headteacher and other members of staff where appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

Further review by the DSL:

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the CYP involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a CYP has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to social care and/or the police immediately.

Informing parents/carers

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the CYP at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through the College Police liaison officer.

Recording incidents

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 14 of this policy also apply to recording these incidents.

Curriculum coverage

As described in Section 8.8, we use the SoSAFE programme as an overarching framework of Social Relationships, embedded within all classrooms and applied generally rather than within a specific subject area like PSHE. CYP at Queensmill have particular difficulties understanding the nuances of social interaction and function well below age-related expectations and so they are especially vulnerable. Where there may be an allegation of child-on-child abuse, sexting and the sharing of nudes, while we adhere to guidance, we will frame this within the cognitive ability and social; understanding of each individual young person.

CYP are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our So SAFE relationships and sex education programme and E-Safety policy.

Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

CYP also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

This policy on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with CYP so they are aware of the processes the college will follow in the event of an incident.

8.10 Reporting systems for our CYP

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the CYP's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring CYP feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put systems in place for CYP to confidently report abuse – this is via each CYP personalised 'People and Relationships' Book
- Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for students. Where appropriate, each CYP will have access to their own 'People and Relationships' book that will help them to understand the people in their lives, their relationship with them help them understand appropriate levels of intimacy. This book also serves as a reporting tool for non-verbal; highly communication-impaired students who will have access to photographs of peers, staff members and their roles and expected social context to aid their understanding of expected social interactions from groups (categories) of people: teachers, peers, parents, other support staff and unfamiliar/unknown people.
- Make it clear to CYP that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback

9. Online safety and the use of mobile technology

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

To address this, the Trust aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of CYP, staff, volunteers and Trustees

- Protect and educate the whole Trust community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole Trust community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

The 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

To meet our aims and address the risks above we will:

Educate CYP about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:

1. The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
2. Keeping personal information private
3. How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
4. How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring CYP are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a

victim

Details of our specific approach can be found in the following policies:

E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy

- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. All staff members will receive refresher training each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings or workshops. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
 1. Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to College for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when CYP are not present
 2. Staff will not take pictures or recordings of CYP on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all CYP, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and Trustees aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in college, use of the college's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a CYP is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, CYP and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search CYP's phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit CYP's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the Trust's IT systems
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an

annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our Trust community

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For comprehensive details about our college policy on online safety and the use of mobile phones, please refer to our online safety policy and mobile phone policy, which you can find on our website- E- Safety policy.

10. Notifying parents or carers

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a CYP with their parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the CYP, we will discuss this with the local authority social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other CYP, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the CYP involved.

11. Special circumstances at Queensmill College

All children and young people at Queensmill have a diagnosis of autism. We are a specialist setting with purpose-built facilities and resources as well as a staff body highly trained exclusively in autism. All of the work we do and approaches to managing Child Protection are viewed within the context of autism, which can often be a complicating factor. These can be summarised in the points below:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the CYP's condition without further exploration
- CYP being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other CYP
- The potential for CYP with autism, co-morbid disabilities, or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

- Emotional regulation difficulties and lack of social awareness may drive our CYP to use inappropriate language, and other behaviours which may be perceived as abusive outside the context of autism. Our CYP may also engage in unsafe behaviours (eg climbing) which may impact on their presentation – for example frequent climbing may cause bruising or small injury/marks on their body). These frequent activities like climbing or rocking are regulatory for them and if prevented, may cause dysregulation to escalate and be detrimental to their welfare. Where this is relevant for a CYP, this will be detailed in their ERSP which will describe their behaviour tendencies and self- regulation activities as well as the strategies and support in place.

We offer extra pastoral support for these CYP which includes:

- High levels of staffing often 1:1 to support CYP communicate, manage their sensory needs and help them to calm (regulate) when feeling distressed or anxious
- Sensory supports within classrooms and other purpose-built facilities for Sensory Integration
- Small groups of up to 9 or 10 CYP (sometimes smaller) according to need, to enable learning in a low-arousal environment
- Access to a range of after College and extra-curricular clubs for additional social skill development and respite for parents/carers
- Highly trained Occupational Therapists to devise and monitor sensory integration programmes and create a conducive environment for autistic CYP

12. CYP with a social worker

CYP may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a CYP's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable CYP.

Where we are aware that a CYP has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the CYP's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support
- Unique and particular problems, for example housing, that are complicated by a CYP with autism
- Access to a care package that will enable families to access respite or an autistic CYP access specialist resources and support outside college.

13. Looked-after and previously looked-after CYP

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after CYP and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about CYPs looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of CYP's social workers and relevant staff.
- Teachers will work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Teachers will work with relevant staff to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

14. Complaints, Allegations, and concerns about college safeguarding policies

14.1 Complaints or allegations against staff

Complaints or allegations against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 3).

a. Other complaints

As a Trust we take all complaints seriously and the details of our approach can be found in our Complaints Policy:

The protection and welfare of CYP is our uppermost concern and all complaints, whether they are of a specific safeguarding nature, or not, are the first of our priorities. The Complaints policy details the process by which any person may make a complaint which will be handled at various stages and will certainly come to the attention of the Head of College, Executive Headteacher, Chair of Trustees and other senior leaders within the Trust as appropriate.

We aim to work carefully and sensitively to resolve complaints and concerns as early as possible. Where this cannot be done immediately, we will involve the Board of Trustees of The Queensmill Trust or the relevant Local Authority as early as possible, according to the process explained in the Complaints policy, to resolve issues quickly for the best interests of CYP.

b. Whistle-blowing

We are committed to maintaining a positive and effective culture in which concerns raised about the welfare of CYP are thoroughly investigated. Where there are concerns relating to any member of the senior team, including the DSL, the deputies, or the Chair of Governors individuals can communicate their concerns via our Whistleblowing Policy,

All staff and trustees of Queensmill College and the Q+ Charity, will co-operate fully with Local Authority, or other appointed individuals to investigate Whistle-blowing concerns thoroughly to safeguard vulnerable CYP and the public interest.

15. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each CYP.

Staff will report concerns in person to the DSL and will also report these on CPOMS, the online archive platform for safeguarding matters. All actions, communications and relevant meeting notes will be recorded here.

If staff report a concern which falls with the CYP typical presentation of autism, as described in their ERSP, the DSL will follow-up and investigate but may not necessarily record this as an additional/new concern on CPOMS.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual CYP will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the college.

Safeguarding records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse will be retained for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry.

If a CYP for whom the College has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another provision, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving provision and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the CYP.

The College is required to keep comprehensive records for all concerns relating to Child Protection and the welfare of CYP. These are stored securely within the offices of the senior leadership team and also electronically on the CPOMS Online platform.

Access to these records is highly secure with two-step security for only authorised

personnel (the DSL or deputy DSLs). Information will be retained for until the CYP is 25 years old, in line with statutory guidance. Where a CYP moves to another setting, these will be securely transferred to that setting as required.

The DSL, Rachel Thompson, will lead liaison with the sharing of information with multi- professionals in line with local safeguarding procedures. Information will be shared confidentially with the required transparency which will be in the best interests of the young person.

In addition:

- Appendix 2 sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre- appointment checks
- Appendix 3 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff

16. Training

a. All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the college safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-trust safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
 1. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
 2. Have a clear understanding of the needs of all CYP

All staff will have training on the government's PREVENT anti-radicalisation strategy, to enable them to identify CYP at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings). An INSET in September will focus on statutory requirements and the January INSET will be more context specific and will include reflective exercises.

Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

b. The DSL and Deputies

The DSL, Rachel Thompson, and her deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years. This will be at the appropriate level to train colleagues and carry out all the duties and responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

c. Trustees

All Trustees receive training about safeguarding, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities.

As the Chair of Trustees may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

d. Recruitment – interview panels

At least one person conducting any interview for any post at the Trust will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

See appendix 2 of this policy for more information about our safer recruitment procedures.

e. Staff who have contact with CYP and families

All staff who have contact with CYP and families will have supervisions which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of CYP and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

17. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of College, Senior Principal and Link Trustee for the Q+ Charity at every review, it will be approved by the board of governors.

18. Teaching Regulation Agency

We aim to only deploy staff who are fully trained in autism for this purpose.

Where it may be necessary at Queensmill College to dismiss or ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or cease to use their services had they not left first, we will consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State, as required by sections 141D and 141E of the Education Act 2002. 334.

The Secretary of State may investigate the case, and if s/he finds there is a case to answer, must then decide whether to make a prohibition order in respect of the person.

Details about how to make a referral to the TRA can be found on GOV.UK

19. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour and Physical Intervention Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Whistle-blowing

- Policy for staff working in a stressful environment
 - Online safety
 - Mobile phone use
 - Equality
 - Policy to reduce pupils' stress
 - First aid
 - Teaching and Learning policy
 - Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Privacy notices

These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

20. Appendix 1: Types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- 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 participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

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

- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

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

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

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a CYP's basic emotional needs.

Adult safeguarding also includes the following additional six categories of abuse:

Organisational – this type of abuse doesn't have to involve physical violence. It can be something as small as insisting that a person in care must drink their tea at the same time every day. This is the sort of thing that many of us take for granted. But when the right to choose is taken away, it can count as abuse. The abuse can either be a one-off incident or an ongoing culture of ill-treatment. The abuse can take many forms, including neglect, and poor professional practices as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices in an organisation.

It can include but is not limited to

- Inappropriate use of power or control.
- Inappropriate confinement, restraint, or restriction.
- Lack of choice – in food, in decoration, in lighting and heating, and in other environmental aspects.

- Lack of personal clothing or possessions.
- No flexibility of schedule, particularly with bed times.
- Financial abuse.
- Physical or verbal abuse.

Discriminatory abuse is unequal treatment based on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex of sexual orientation.

It can include but is not limited to

- Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic
- Denying access to communication aids, not allowing an interpreter, signer or lipreader
- Harassment or deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- Substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic

Modern Slavery is defined as the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation

It can include but is not limited to

- Human trafficking
- Forced labour
- Domestic servitude
- Sexual exploitation
- Debt bondage

Financial abuse is an aspect of coercive control that restricts a victim's freedom.

It can include but is not limited to

- Missing personal possessions
- Lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service
- Failure to provide receipts for shopping or transactions carried out on behalf of the person
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts

Domestic violence – can be characterised by any of the indicators of abuse relating to physical, sexual, financial, emotional categories.

It can include but is not limited to

- Coercive or controlling behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 17 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage.

Self-neglect -is characterised by lack of self-care to an extent that threatens personal health and safety

It can include but is not limited to

- Neglecting to care of own personal hygiene, health or surroundings
- Failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs
- Inability to avoid self-harm

21. Appendix 2: safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures

Recruitment and selection process

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with CYP have received appropriate safer recruitment training.

We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of CYP.

Advertising

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

- The College's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of CYP
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children
- Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account

Application forms

Our application forms will:

- Include a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)
- Include a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders

Shortlisting

Our shortlisting process will involve at least 2 people and will:

- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
- Explore all potential concerns

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

- Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we will ask for includes:
 1. If they have a criminal history
 2. Whether they are included on the barred list
 3. Whether they are prohibited from teaching
 4. Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
 5. Any relevant overseas information
- Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true

Seeking references and checking employment history

When possible, we will obtain references before interview. Any concerns raised will

be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references we will:

- Not accept open references
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is college based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with CYP if they are not currently working with CYP
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed

Interview and selection

When interviewing candidates, we will:

- Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with CYP
- Record all information considered and decisions made

Pre-appointment vetting checks

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the College single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below. New recruits will only be offered a start date once the Quality Insurance pro-forma has been signed by the Executive Head or another

member of the Senior Leadership team who was not part of the interview panel. This process ensures that all the relevant checks have been completed (e.g. DBS, two references, overseas check when relevant)

New staff

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed, we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. Where available, these will include:
 1. For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records checks for overseas applicants
 2. For teaching positions: obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked
- Check that candidates taking up a management position* are not subject to a

prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

* Management positions are most likely to include, but are not limited to, headteachers, principals and deputy/assistant headteachers.

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising CYP; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a CYP where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or

- We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the college has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity.
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children.

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the College.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment.
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the

scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trustees and Members

All trustees and members will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information. They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity. The chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008).
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

The Chair of Trustees will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All Trustees will also have the following checks:

- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

Adults who supervise CYP on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect CYP from harm.

CYP staying with host families

Where the College makes arrangements for CYP to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where the College is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner provisions abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

22. Appendix 3: Allegations of abuse made against staff

Section 1: allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a CYP, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to CYP, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with CYP – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of college

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation. A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the Head of College, Senior Principal, or the Chair of Governors, where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity. Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a CYP or other CYP is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the College so that the individual does not have direct contact with the CYP concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with CYP
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the College so that they do not have unsupervised access to CYP
- Moving the CYP to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative provision or other work within The Queensmill Trust

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the College personnel adviser and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and social care where they have been involved.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- Discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police).
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with students at the college is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other CYP in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to social care
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working

day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the college and their contact details

- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in college and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
- Inform the parents or carers of the CYP involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the CYP involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their CYP – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a CYP, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a CYP

We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after CYP at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in

respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

If the College is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the College will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the College disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the College, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the Trust, while the College carries out the investigation
- We will involve the agency fully, but the College will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's

HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

Timescales

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the College ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the College will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the college will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the College.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the CYP and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the College will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the CYP and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the College will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Confidentiality and information sharing

The College will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference
- In these cases, the college will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with social care or the police as appropriate.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will

preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

References

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
- Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the College procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified

The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

Non-recent allegations

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a CYP to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the College that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- > Suspicion
- > Complaint
- > Disclosure made by a CYP, parent or other adult within or outside the college
- > Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of CYP.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the college may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with CYP
- Having favourites

- Taking photographs of CYP on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a CYP on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per section 8.7 of this policy
- Provide staff with training to gain a thorough understanding of autism and related co-morbid diagnoses which may impact their interactions with students and perception of the environment in general
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the College safeguarding system
- Take opportunities to review, eg Well-being surveys of staff to address concerns, areas for improvement or factors in the environment that may contribute to stress and difficulties

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Head of College or Executive Headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The Head of College or Executive Headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the College code of conduct

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the College

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance

23. Appendix 4: Specific Safeguarding Issues

CYP missing from education

A CYP going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a CYP may become missing from education, but some CYP are particularly at risk.

These include CYP who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend an education provision
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with CYP who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a CYP leaves the College without a new setting or adult social care provision being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a CYP's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

We will work with our local police force and police liaison officer to ensure photograph(s) of the missing CYP are available quickly. We will also share information of potential places they might frequent. As the vast majority our CYP have a very limited sense of danger due to their autism, and can be unduly trusting

of others, they are at particular risk and we will share information quickly with police and others assisting so that when found the CYP can be sensitively approached.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a CYP is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority social care team, and the police, if the CYP is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Criminal exploitation

Criminal exploitation (CE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a CYP into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CE can include a CYP:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing college or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation (SE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. CYP who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

SE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. SE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

In addition to the CE indicators above, indicators of SE can include

- a CYP Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects SE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Domestic abuse

CYP can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a CYP may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

A substantial number of our CYP will not be able to articulate complex feelings that may arise from witnessing or being in the environment where abuse occurs and so we must provide a range of communication supports to help them understand and express what may be happening and how they feel.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

CYP may also experience domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships. Our students are especially vulnerable to these types of abuse as an unfortunate consequence of their autism and may have particular difficulties expressing what has happened and how they feel. We will use the student's People and Relationships Book (part of the SoSAFE programme) to assist with reporting abuse or expressing feelings.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on CYP.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any CYP in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in College (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the CYP arrive at College the following day. This is the procedure where police forces are part of Operation Encompass – if your local force is not, check your local procedures and adapt if necessary.

The DSL will provide support according to the CYP's needs and update records about their circumstances.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a CYP's welfare.

The DSL and her deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a CYP has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to social care.

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a CYP being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

FGM

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

Section 8.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a CYP is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A CYP confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
 - A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
 - A family/CYP already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
1. Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
 2. Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
 3. Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
 4. Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
 5. Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
 6. Being repeatedly absent from college, or absent for a prolonged period
 7. Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
 8. Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
 9. Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
 10. Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a CYP may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider) FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:

1. Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
2. Having limited level of integration within UK society
3. Confiding to a professional that she is to have a “special procedure” or to attend a special occasion to “become a woman”
4. Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
5. Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
6. Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other CYP about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
7. Being unexpectedly absent from college
8. Having sections missing from her ‘red book’ (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the 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. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the ‘one chance’ rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a young person is being forced into marriage, they will speak to them about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the young person about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmf@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the young person to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or counsellor, as appropriate

Preventing radicalisation

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups
- **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces

- **Terrorism** is an action that:
 1. Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
 2. Causes serious damage to property; or
 3. Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

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

We will assess the risk of CYP in our college being drawn into terrorism. This

assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

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

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

Staff will be alert to changes in CYPs behaviour.

The government website Educate Against Hate and charity NSPCC say that signs that a CYP is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

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

If staff are concerned about a student, they will follow our procedures set out in section 8.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of College and online. This type of abuse is still relevant to the College age group.

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

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

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

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

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 8 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 8.8 and 8.9 set out more detail about our College approach to this type of abuse.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between students in College

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 CYP of any age and sex
- Through a group of CYP sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single CYP or group of CYP
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally).

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

CYP who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same provision. Our students are especially vulnerable to these types of abuse as an unfortunate consequence of their autism and may have particular difficulties expressing what has happened and how they feel. We will use the student's People and Relationships Book (part of the SoSAFE programme) to assist with reporting abuse or expressing feelings.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, CYP with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) CYP are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

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

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a CYP makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 8 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 8.8 and 8.9 set out more detail about our College approach to this type of abuse.

Serious violence

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

- Increased absence from college
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries

- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the CYP has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

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

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

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

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit. If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign in. Visitors to the College who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists, Trustees, and education improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out
- They will be informed that we are an autism-specific setting and given guidance as to who to approach and what to do if a child or young person invades their personal space or they witness anything else that may concern

them.

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the College any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using college facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise CYP or staff.

Non-collection of CYP

If a CYP is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

- Make contact with the parent/carer in the first instance
- Continue to occupy the CYP in our after-college club or other familiar activity
- If they typically use transport, speak with the transport team if they have any additional information from the parent
- Inform the phase leader and/or Head of College or Executive Head if attempts to contact parent/carer are unsuccessful
- Inform the duty social care desk if, after several hours, the CYP has not been collected

Missing students

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing CYP is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. Further details of our process for managing a missing CYP can be found in our policy.

If a CYP goes missing, we will inform the police and let them know the following points:

1. Where student X has gone missing from.
2. What time she/he was last seen.
3. A description of what student X is wearing.
4. Date of Birth
5. Tell the police that student X has autism and little language/communication.

6. Tell the police the name and address of the setting and ask them to inform us as soon as student X is found.
7. Where available, check tracking information if the student has a tracking device

Refer to our Missing Child Protocol for the specific CYP who has gone missing, this will include:

1. A recent photo
2. The extent of their communication
3. Places they may like to visit
4. Clothing they prefer
5. Whether they typically wear a tracking device

We will maintain regular contact with Police, parents/carers and others who might assist in finding the CYP and also communicating with them appropriately (if they are non-verbal due to their autism) when they are found.
