



# **New Vision Trust**

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding policy**

**Date approved by Trustees**

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*This policy is available on the New Vision Trust website and also on request from the Trust office.*

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# Child Protection and Safeguarding policy for the New Vision Trust

## 1. Introduction

The Trust is committed to develop and sustain a strong safeguarding culture which supports us all to safeguard children and creates a positive and respectful learning environment in which everyone can flourish.

*“Trusts and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone’s** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means they should consider at all times, what is in the best interests of the child”.*

*(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, September 2021)*

This **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** is for all Trust and agency staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider Trust community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for The Trust and should be read along with our policy for:

Safer Recruitment, Staff Code of Conduct, Physical Intervention, Anti-Bullying, Equality, Behaviour, Attendance, Health and Safety, Educational Visits, Online / Mobile Phone / Social Media / Photography Policy, Whistleblowing/Complaints Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with **Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2022** (KCSiE22) and with reference to the **Education Inspection Framework, Ofsted 2021**.

Also see the **Newham Joint Position Statement on Everyone’s Invited – Safeguarding all our children and young people in Newham, LBN 2021**. (Appendix 1).

All staff should read

- Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022, together with Annex B of KCSiE 22, and
- DfE statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’, and
- ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners’ (DfE March 2015).

**Sensitivity to language : The Trust staff say, ‘targeted child’ instead of ‘victim’, because a child may not see themselves as a victim. We say, ‘actor’ when investigating incidents, rather than use labels like ‘bully’ or ‘perpetrator’. All these words and other terms are used and examined thoroughly for their meaning and impact as part of the safeguarding curriculum in The Trust.**

**Safeguarding** is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 as:

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

## **2. Statutory framework and content/location of embedded safeguarding**

2.1 The Education Act 2002 Section 175, (*Section 157 for Independent Trusts*) places a statutory responsibility on the Trustees to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the Trust.

2.2 The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in the London Borough of Newham are the responsibilities of the Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in the London Borough of Redbridge are the responsibilities of the Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP).

### **2.3 The Trust works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:**

Trusts; Covid- 19 Operational Guidance (DfE 27 August 2021)  
London child protection procedures <http://www.londoncp.co.uk/>

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (HMG, 2018)

Education Act 2002 Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Modern Slavery Act 2015

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act](#) (HMG, 2015)

[The Prevent duty Departmental advice for Trusts and childcare providers](#) (DfE 2015)

[Prevent Duty Guidance for Further Education Establishments in England and Wales](#) (HMG 2015)

[Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)

Sexual Offences Act (2003) Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019

Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. (DfE July 2018)

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR)

[Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (DfE, 2018); Use Of Force DfE current guidance.

Children Act 1989 Children Act 2004

Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (DfE, 2017),

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)

**2.4:** Please note that guidance [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in Trusts and colleges \(DfE, 2017\)](#) has now been incorporated throughout the DfE guidance document (Sept 22).

**2.5** Our Trustees will ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

Relevant topics will be included within Relationships Education (for all primary pupils), and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all primary and secondary pupils). Colleges may cover relevant issues through tutorials.

Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-Trust or college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, bi-phobic and sexual violence/harassment. The Trust has a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of Trust life. These are underpinned by the Trust's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

Our programme is inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities).

### **3. Trust roles and responsibilities**

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment that enables them to learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are identified key adults in Trusts and in the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in The Trust with these specific responsibilities are shown on the front cover sheet of this policy. All staff in The Trust are familiar with the Early Help Offer. See Appendix 2.

#### **3.1 The Trustees**

The Trustees ensure that a strong Safeguarding culture is embedded within the Trust, that our commitment to keep our children safe is explicit and understood by all in the Trust community and that our practice reflects the Trustees' vision and values.

The Trustees ensures that all required policies relating to child protection and safeguarding (including Covid-19) are in place and that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda of all Trustees' meetings. The policy is reviewed at least annually.

The Trustees ensures that the policies, procedures, practice and professional development and training in The Trust are effective and comply with the statutory requirements at all times. The Trustees will ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

The Trustees ensures that there is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead in place, that they have their safeguarding role explicitly within their job descriptions and are appropriately

trained for their role, as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. The link trustee for safeguarding meets the Trust DSL regularly for meetings with the DSL. The DSL reports directly to the Trustees on issues arising from their role which impact on the Trust.

The Trustees check that safeguarding is included in trust policies such as **Behaviour, Online and all related policies including the staff Code of Conduct** and is highlighted in all policies as the overarching responsibility of all staff at all times, particularly in procedures involving sanctions or searches.

The Trustees ensures that all the schools contribute fully to inter-agency working in line with statutory and local guidance and uses the appropriate referral pathways. It ensures that information is stored and shared appropriately and in accordance with the statutory requirements as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with GDPR requirements.

The Trustees ensures that all trustees, governors, staff members and volunteers undergo appropriate safeguarding and child protection training that is regularly updated, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and up to date knowledge to keep all our children safe.

The Trustees ensures that all staff have the knowledge, skills and understanding of children who have an allocated social worker. It recognises their additional vulnerabilities with those of looked after and previously looked after children and monitors Trust action with all these children to keep them safe.

The Trustees ensures that children are taught to keep themselves safe, including on-line, making sure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place in each school. This responsibility includes children who are accessing on-line learning from each school, at home. Our children will also be taught how to keep themselves safe through teaching and learning opportunities in RSHE and through each school's practice led by staff as part of the provision of a rich and balanced curriculum.

The Trustees and Trust leadership team are responsible for maintaining robust safer recruitment procedures in each school that help to deter, reject or identify people who may abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the Trust's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It also ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in Trust.

We will conduct background checks through an online search as part of due diligence when shortlisting candidates; undertake a risk assessment and use our professional judgement when deciding whether to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate for any volunteer undertaking unregulated activity.

### **3.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)**

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in the Trust take the lead responsibility for child protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures in each school. This includes a whole-school staff responsibility to support children affected by child on child abuse in all its forms, by following our protocol for listening, reassuring and reporting to allow the child to move on. The Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) will ensure that everyone in each school, including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times.

**New Para 19, DFE Guidance:** *All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their*

*experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and **speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) if they have concerns about a child.** It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.*

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a source of advice and support to other staff on all child protection matters and makes sure that timely referrals to Newham/Redbridge – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are made in accordance with current London Child Protection Procedures. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) works with the local authority, the Channel programme and other agencies as required. If for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will act in their absence.

The Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) will also be alert to the additional vulnerabilities of children with a social worker, ensuring that staff know who those children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for these children. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will also support staff to identify the challenges that children in this group may face and any additional support and/or adjustments that can make to best support them.

In addition, in most cases homelessness would be considered in the context of children living with their families, however the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be alert that some children may be homeless independently and this will require a different level of intervention and support.

### **3.3 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher in each school works in accordance with the requirements upon all Trust staff. In addition, the Headteacher ensures that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Trustees are followed by all staff.

The Headteachers will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding themselves and their peers, including e.g. the emotional impact of on-line nude image sharing, sexist abuse, body shaming or the sexual targeting of children with SEN or protected characteristics, as part of the broad and balanced curriculum. This includes covering relevant issues through Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and through other curricular opportunities.

The Headteachers ensure that all pupils, individually or collectively through school councils representatives are encouraged to promote the responsible use of social media, practical safety around the Trust and responsibility for their own and others' wellbeing, as an explicit, valued and integral element of a strong Trust safeguarding culture.

The Headteachers ensure that there is immediate access to an individual member of staff, appropriately trained, to listen, reassure and provide practical support to move on, for children at need within the Trust.

The Headteachers will make sure that they are satisfied that any children placed with an alternative education provider can meet the needs of the child and obtain written confirmation that the appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out.

### 3.4 All Trust staff – safeguarding children’s futures

Everyone at The Trust has a responsibility to provide a learning environment in which the children can feel safe to learn and to ensure that every child has access to learning, even if circumstances preclude their physical presence in the Trust.

Staff are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand their role and responsibilities within this process. This includes identifying any emerging problems so appropriate support may be provided and in liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Leads in each school (DSL) report any concerns. All staff members are aware of and follow Trust processes as set out in this policy and are aware of how to use the portal to make a referral to the Newham or Redbridge MASH when there is a need to do so.

All staff should be able to reassure targeted children that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A child should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a child ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect children. Our Safeguarding culture in each school depends upon every member of staff being proactive in recognising opportunities to promote and support the development of these protective factors.

This includes the use of appropriate forms of online communication directly from staff to children. We use the functions through the platform for online learning – such as Google classroom, Purple Mash. The use of social media (WhatsApp, Twitter, FB etc) for this purpose is inappropriate and would be regarded as a serious breach of professional boundaries.

All staff engage with, and support, children in promoting responsible use of social media, safety around the Trust and responsibility for their own and others’ wellbeing, as an integral element of a strong Trust safeguarding culture.

### 4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

*All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another” [...] All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of Trust or college and /or can occur between children outside of these environments”.*

***Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021)***

The four main types of abuse referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education are:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Each school is aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. Within those four main types of abuse there are a number of specific types of abuse to which we are aware and especially alert.

#### **4.1 Child on child abuse**

The schools in the Tst may be the only stable, secure and safe place in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. However, on occasions their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children.

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying); on-line verbal abuse; gender-based abuse; verbal sexist abuse; unwanted, unthinking or coerced nude or semi-nude image sharing; or sexually harmful behaviour. We do not tolerate any bullying, abuse or harmful behaviour in Trust and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs.

Each school uses the curriculum and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Staff are pro active and vigilant in recognising when a child may need to tell an adult of their choice about what is happening to them, will acknowledge how they feel and support them through the next steps of reporting to MASH, if that is what it takes to keep them safe. The Trust staff understand the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.

**Consensual image-sharing between older children of the same age may require a different response as it may not be abusive but the children still need to know that it is illegal and risky to maintain privacy as well as jeopardising future job searches, for example.**

#### **4.2 Sexual Violence and Harassment**

Sexual violence and harassment can occur between children of any age individually or in groups. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing, and in all likelihood will adversely affect their educational attainment. The Trust takes all victims seriously and they will be offered the appropriate support.

Predatory behaviour or a dismissive attitude towards sexual harassment may be prevalent online or feature in the children's lived experience of home, friendship groups or society at large, but it is not indicative of respect for other pupils and therefore it is unacceptable at New Vision Trust.

An example of such harassment is 'Upskirting', which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Anyone of any gender can be a victim and it is a criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019.

The Trust culture of safeguarding ensures that the message that abusive behaviours are unacceptable is explicit through each school's curriculum, the schools' environment and staff modelling appropriate language and respectful relationships. We do not accept that it is 'just part of growing up' or a joke. Each

school manages such incidences in the same way by considering the need to undertake an immediate risk and needs assessment and as with any other child protection concern we will follow the same procedures. Pupils initiating such abuse or sexualised behaviour will be subject to an AIM risk assessment / Brook Traffic Lights (for EY and KS1) which will inform a safety plan for everyone involved, including themselves.

#### **4.3 Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**

The Trust understands that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. The Trust recognises that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- Instances of peer on peer sexual abuse where the perpetrators are children will always require safeguarding support and a significant subgroup of these children will have SEND;
- Children with SEND and /or protected characteristics are statistically more likely to be identified as targets for bullying or sexual abuse by their peers;
- Communication barriers that make telling an adult difficult;
- The requirement of personal or intimate care.

The Trust takes into consideration these additional vulnerabilities and challenges and staff are proactive in safeguarding all our vulnerable children.

#### **4.4 Children Missing from Education (CME)**

As part of our safeguarding role we ask parents and carers to provide a minimum of two contact details and we will regularly ask parents and carers to ensure that they are kept up to date.

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. The Trust recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. We ensure contact is made on day 1 with parents who do not contact us first. Where contact is not successfully made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Attendance Management Services, Social Care or Police).

Each school will inform the relevant local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more in line with the requirements for Children Missing Education.

## 4.5 Contextual safeguarding

All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school and can occur between children outside of the school environment. The **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)** and all staff will consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families.

[Contextual Safeguarding](#) is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm and risk beyond their families. It recognises that the relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, Trusts and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers may have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

The Trust staff need to engage with individuals and groups who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and we recognise that risk assessment of, and intervention with, such sources of influence on our students are a critical part of our safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of our child protection systems in each school in recognition of the fact that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

Contextual abuse takes different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including but not limited to sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence. If we are concerned a child is being exploited in an extra-familial context, as previously outlined, we will follow the procedures set out in this document and consult or refer to the MASH, from where they are likely to be referred to the PCEHH.

### 4.5.1 Newham PCEHH – Preventing Child Exploitation and Harm Hub

The PCEHH is a weekly multi-disciplinary meeting chaired by the Director of Early Help and Children's Health. The PCEHH helps to identify and engage with children and young people who may be potentially at risk from any form of exploitation by responding to earlier 'critical moments' indicated via referrals from MASH. The PCEHH forms part of Newham's understanding and response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Missing, Criminal exploitation / gangs and county lines, serious youth violence (SYV), harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) and modern slavery in the borough.

It is well documented that focusing on prevention, early identification and intervention helps disrupt activity that might increase the probability of children and young people being exploited. Where there are low or emerging risks of child exploitation with no safeguarding concerns but heightened vulnerabilities, the child or young person is referred to the PCEHH for a multiagency discussion to agree a co-ordinated package of support for the whole family. Involving all family members can be a key determinant in supporting children and young people to remain safe and achieve good outcomes.

The PCEHH sits within the Early Help service, which works with the whole family. This means that the PCEHH also considers both inter-familial as well as intra-familial concerns as part of a co-ordinated and contextual safeguarding approach. All cases must have followed existing child protection procedures prior to being discussed at the PCEHH, including strategy meeting/discussion where appropriate.

#### **4.5.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including County Lines**

Both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This can happen to children and young people from any background or community. This power imbalance can also be due to a range of factors including age, gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources.

In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the child needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals, groups, males or females and children or adults. Abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve enforcement or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Children can be exploited even when the activity appears consensual.

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of County Lines criminal activity; drug networks or gangs grooming and exploiting children and young people to carry drugs, weapons and money for them. Key to identifying potential involvement may be 'missing episodes' when the child may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs, weapons or money. The Trust will consider a referral using the Newham pathways or a direct referral using the National Referral mechanism for human trafficking.

#### **4.5.3 Serious Violence**

There are a number of indicators, which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from Trust, a change in friendships, or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change of attitude or well-being or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

#### **4.6 Honour Based Abuse**

So-called honour-based abuse (HBA) encompasses abuse committed to protect or preserving "honour". It often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can involve multiple perpetrators. This includes Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and such practices such as breast ironing.

##### **4.6.1 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse.

We know that if a teacher in the course of their work discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, staff must and will report this to the police. The DSL will advise/support staff in this position and work with appropriate colleagues and agencies to support the girl and liaise with the family. The Newham Attendance Service has produced guidance on FGM for staff dealing with families who announce that they are going abroad which is available on Connect.

#### 4.6.2 Forced marriage

A forced marriage is one that is entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

#### 4.7 Prevention of radicalisation

Children can be vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Protecting children from this risk is similar to protecting them from other forms of harm and abuse. The [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\) Section 26](#) places a duty on schools in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the PREVENT duty.

It requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion;
- be safe spaces in which children and young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas and;
- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues.

CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism. All staff understand how to identify those who may benefit from this support and are aware of relevant agencies to contact in circumstances where an individual demonstrates indicators of concern, as well as how to make a referral using the Newham referral pathways.

#### 4.8 Mental Health and Wellbeing

All staff are aware that mental health can in some cases be an indicator that a child has or is suffering from or at risk of abuse. Staff are able to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health issue. Where there are mental health concerns about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken following the Trust child protection policy.

The Trust works to protect the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase a child’s vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in a child’s life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to promote further growth and resilience. It is recognised that some children in The Trust may be suffering from mental ill-health and are at risk of self-harm or suicide but may present in Trust as making good progress and achieving well. It is therefore vital that we work in partnership with parents and carers to support the mental health and well-being of our children. It is equally important that parents share any concerns about the well-

being of their child with Trust, so that appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented in partnership.

Where there are concerns that a child may be self-harming, it will be taken seriously as this may indicate an increased risk of suicide either intentionally or by accident. If a child discloses self-harm or found to be self-harming the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will take the time to establish any underlying concerns. The child will be supported to access services using the appropriate Newham referral pathways.

#### **4.9 Domestic Abuse See New Para 43**

Domestic abuse is defined as *“any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 and over who are, or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical, sexual; financial and emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour”*

**The Domestic Abuse Act 2021** introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of peer on peer abuse is sometimes referred to as ‘teenage relationship abuse’. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of ‘domestic abuse’ (if one or both parties are under 16).

The Trust recognises that where there is Domestic Abuse in a family, the children/young people will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, the greater the risk of significant and enduring harm, which they may carry with them into their adult life and relationships. Domestic Abuse can also affect children in their personal relationships as well as in the context of home life.

Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of Domestic Abuse arise. The Trust will vigilantly monitor the welfare of children living in domestic abuse households, offer support to them and contribute to any Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) safety plan as required.

**Operation Encompass** operates in London Boroughs of Newham and Redbridge, and each school will use the information shared to ensure that our children are supported and kept safe.

## **5. Procedures**

**5.1 All staff members** have a duty to identify and respond to suspected and actual abuse or disclosures of harm. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to The Trust who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

(DSL) or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns about a child at risk of radicalisation or extremism will be raised with the PREVENT and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

**5.2** All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines – Pan-London Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

**5.3** Where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer from harm, a child will be referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub through the MASH Portal, immediately. Time-sensitive referrals may be telephoned first in case the child needs to be kept in Trust, pending a Section 47 Strategy meeting when a social worker will come to the Trust. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will also be referred via the Portal for consideration of Early Help support as appropriate. The police will be called directly if the risk is assessed as acute and immediate.

**5.4 Practice when Police are called to a school.**

Before calling police to a school, the DSL and senior staff will reflect upon the proportionality of this response, being aware of the child's rights under the Equalities Act and Human Rights Act and if necessary, identifying and addressing concerns such as adultification if it is suspected of being present in staff decision making processes thus far.

**Best practice for staff considering police intervention to be necessary:**

- **To consult the DSL and Head Teacher/Deputy about the reason to involve the police.**
- **To consult the Safer School Officer before contacting police directly, unless the risk is considered to be escalating at a rate that precludes contacting the SSO.**
- **This Trust will prioritise contacting the SSO for advice before asking for other officers to attend.**
- **A child will not be searched on site by police at all, or taken offsite to a police station without an appropriate adult (DSL, DH) being present if their parent cannot accompany them.**

In the event that a child is interviewed on site by police, the DSL will act in loco parentis at that interview to provide support to the child. Parents/carers will be informed directly that the police have been called to the Trust in connection with their child, *subject to the safeguarding guidelines below*. A suitably trained Appropriate Adult must be present if the child is subsequently arrested and/or taken to a police station and the DSL will ensure that arrangements for such support are in place before the child leaves the Trust premises, with the reason for the arrest and the name of the appropriate adult concerned, confirmed.

[Appropriate Adult | Youth Justice Legal Centre \(yjlc.uk\)](#); [DRAFT GUIDE FOR \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) (*role and responsibilities of an Appropriate Adult*).

No child / student may be subject to a search by police on Trust premises. Any such search should be carried out at the police station with an AA in attendance to the search.

Wherever possible, each school will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to the MASH with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child

at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to seek advice from the MASH or the Police in making decisions about when it is appropriate to share information with parents or carers.

**5.5** If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should press for re-consideration of the case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will escalate the concern as appropriate.

If, for any reason, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the Trust to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may refer to the Newham MASH where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child. All staff should be aware of how to access the portal.

If a child resides outside the borough in which the school is located the DSL will be aware of the need to refer to the MASH in their LA. If unsure, always refer to the Newham MASH who will forward to appropriate areas.

### **Early Help:**

All staff should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child
- has a parent/carer in custody

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

When new staff, agency staff, volunteers or regular visitors join The Trust they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy and how to share concerns with them. **Appendix 2 Early Help pathway in Newham.**

## **6. Training**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy undertake child protection training appropriate to the role at every two years as a minimum. The Headteachers, all staff members and governors receive appropriate child protection training that is regularly updated. In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff and governors.

The Trust ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy also undertake training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

**6.1** Positive Handling and de-escalation practice keeps children and staff safe in Trust. This is refreshed every 3 years and is undertaken by all staff in a rolling programme which builds a collegiate responsibility for everyone's safety and wellbeing.

**6.2** All agency staff must complete the safeguarding induction programme before starting work in the Trust, which prioritises safeguarding practice and appropriate language to be used in Trust. Certificates for Positive Handling training and the date of the last refresher are part of the recruitment process.

## **7. Professional confidentiality**

A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or children) or promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy and may require further referral and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

## **8. Records and information sharing**

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Trust staff must have due regard for the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) The Trust is confident of the processing conditions that allow us to store and share information for safeguarding purposes. This allows us to share information without consent, if it is not possible to gain consent or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. The Trust is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within The Trust, the status of such records and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible on Safeguard noting what was said or seen, using a body map to record if appropriate, (see Appendix 4) with the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed, with the name printed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy, who will decide on the appropriate action and record it accordingly.

Any records related to child protection are kept in an individual child protection file for that child, separate to the pupil file. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the child's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school or educational setting. We acknowledge the guidance for transferring records as below.

Where a child transfers from one school to another school or educational setting including colleges, their child protection records will be forwarded or transferred electronically to the new educational setting with notice given to the receiving DSL. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will need to provide a receipt, which is recommended to be an email. If paper files are sent they will be securely sealed and sent, under arrangements for immediate return if delivery to the receiving school's DSL/Head Teacher is not possible. A receipt is expected.

Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. In addition to the child protection file, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives. *(Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022)*

**Transferring settings do not need to keep copies of child protection files**, but if they do they must be kept in accordance with data retention (and for the shortest practical time).

In CP cases where there may be ongoing involvement from transferring settings, for example **if any siblings still attend your setting**, DSLs may wish to take copies of chronologies. Electronic systems may have an option to link this information.

If a child who is subject of a child protection plan leaves your setting and you are unaware of the name of the child's new education placement, you should contact the child's key worker from Early Help or Children's Social Care to discuss how records should be transferred.

*(Newham LA Safeguarding)*

Where a child joins a school, they will request all child protection records from the previous educational setting. If none are received within the statutory time, we will renew the request and report this to the Education Safeguarding Officer.

## **9. Inter-agency working**

The Trust will be pro-active and prioritise inter-agency working to contribute to safeguarding children. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that the Trust is represented at and a report is submitted to any child protection conference or core group meeting for children on the Trust roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) and/or carer(s). Whoever represents the Trust will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the Trust has and will be prepared to contribute to the discussions and planning at the meeting(s).

If a child is subject to a child protection or a child in need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure the child is monitored regarding their Trust attendance, mental health and emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure the school prioritises attendance at core group meetings and provide appropriate information to contribute to

the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the child protection plan and/or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless waiting for the next meeting would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

When we become aware that a child who is being, or is going to be, privately fostered The Trust has a duty under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 to inform the Local Authority to ensure the appropriate safeguards are in place. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will make an appropriate referral using the Newham referral pathway.

## **10. Allegations about members of the workforce**

The aim of The Trust is to provide a safe and supportive environment that secures the well-being and best learning outcomes for children. All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Handbook. We do, however recognise that sometimes allegations of abuse are made and when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all. We also understand that some allegations are genuine and that there are adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children. Each school takes all possible steps to safeguard our children and ensure that the adults in the Trust are safe to work with children.

Supply staff, whilst not employed by a school are under the supervision, direction and control of the board of governors when working in a school. If we receive an allegation about an individual that is not directly employed by the Trust for example, supply teachers we will discuss with the employer/agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher or to redeploy them to another part of the Trust, whilst they carry out an investigation. We will usually take the lead in collecting the facts from children and other staff and work in partnership with the employer and LADO to manage the process.

We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer in Newham (LADO) by telephone 0203 373803 or email [cppt.lado@nwham.gov.uk](mailto:cppt.lado@nwham.gov.uk)

or in Redbridge by telephone 020 8708 5350 or email [helen.curtis@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:helen.curtis@redbridge.gov.uk)

If an allegation is made or information is received about any member of staff or volunteer who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

The member of staff receiving the information should inform the Headteacher immediately. This includes concerns relating to agency and supply staff. Should an allegation be made against the Headteacher, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors. In the event the Chair of Governors is not contactable the same day, the information must be passed to the Vice Chair. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will seek advice from the LADO within one working day. No member of staff will undertake further investigations before seeking advice from the LADO.

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the Trust or college **low-level concerns policy**. Further details can be found in our Recruitment Policy and in Part four of the DFE guidance on Safeguarding.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise concerns within the Trust should contact the LADO directly. Please refer to section 11 of this policy.

The Trust has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person from regulated activity. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at The Trust, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or the HR department.

## **11. Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is defined as *'making a disclosure in the public interest'* and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider Trust community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example pupils in the Trust or members of the public.

All staff members are made aware of the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of staff in line with the Trust's Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing policy.

We want everyone to feel able to report any child protection or safeguarding concerns. More information is available called Advice for Whistleblowing in Maintained Trusts (DfE 2014). However, for members of staff who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Parents or others in the wider Trust community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and the case manager should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate.

Our Recruitment policy refers to outcomes to protect staff when allegations against them have been found to be false or unfounded (paras 419 410 KCSiE 22).

## **Appendix 1: Newham Joint Statement on Everyone's Invited**

[Joint position statement on Everyone's invited | Newham Connect](#)

## **Appendix 2 Early Help Offer**

[http://www.newhamscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/04892-Pathways\\_A4-HIRES.pdf](http://www.newhamscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/04892-Pathways_A4-HIRES.pdf)