



Safeguarding and
Child Protection
Policy - Wirral
2020/2021

 Independent
Safeguarding
Service *CIC*
Member

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY


ISSUES AND UPDATES

| <i>Pages</i> | <i>Issue No.</i> | <i>Date</i> |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Whole document - layout and content changed and legislation updated. | 1 | August 2015 |
| Whole document - terminology relating to DSL's amended. | 2 | October 2015 |
| Title page - change of company name, logo and footers. | 3 | January 2016 |
| School phone number change | 4 | March 2016 |
| Whole document - checked and revised where necessary | 5 | August 2016 |
| Additional controls added - re: allegations and local issues | 6 | December 2016 |
| Whole document - annual review and revision where necessary | 7 | September 2017 |
| Whole document - annual review | 8 | August 2018 |
| Whole document - annual review | 9 | August 2019 |
| Whole document - logo change and annual review | 10 | August 2020 |

The following policy has been approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Executive Team.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis unless circumstances arise requiring the policy to be reviewed earlier.

Approved by Executive Team: August 2020

Board signatory: 

Planned review: August 2021

1. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Overview

- 1.1 Progress Schools - Wirral recognises the responsibility it has in identifying and responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and young people, with a specific section on protection of vulnerable adults.
- 1.2 This policy and its' associated procedures seeks to promote effective multi-agency working.
- 1.3 The policy and procedures are written in line with statutory guidance including; *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)*, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*, and *Revised Prevent Duty (2019)*.
- 1.4 We undertake work in various settings with various students. The policy and procedure for responding to concerns are incorporated in this document. Although the legislative and policy base is different when responding to safeguarding needs for adults, most of the principles and procedures for staff are the same as those for children and young people.
- 1.5 We recognise and act upon the legal duties set out in statutes, regulations and guidance, to protect our students (and staff) from harm, and to co-operate with other agencies in carrying out those duties and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- 1.6 This policy is not stand alone and should be used with other school policies including, but not limited to: Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy, E-Safety Policy, the Staff handbook and code of conduct.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 In relation to children and young people, safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare is defined in the Children Act and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance document: *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* as:
 - protecting children from maltreatment;
 - preventing impairment of children's health or development;
 - ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 2.2 Child protection is the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 2.3 It is also important to consider barriers that exist in identifying abuse e.g. students with SEND may struggle to differentiate and disclose. These barriers may include:
 - Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
 - Children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs and
 - Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming barriers.

3. Aims and objectives

3.1 The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote our students' welfare, safety, mental health, health and wellbeing by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The students' welfare is of paramount importance. We fully recognise our responsibilities for child protection and the contribution it can make to protect and support children, young people and adults. Our policy applies to all staff, the board, volunteers and visitors working in the school (e.g. supply staff). There are three main elements to our policy:

- Prevention through the teaching and pastoral support offered to students and the creation and maintenance of a whole school protective ethos.
- Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns.
- Support for students and school staff and for children and young people who may have been abused

3.2 Progress Schools aim to:

- Create an environment which is safe and secure for all children, young people and adults;
- Encourage our students to establish satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults;
- Encourage students to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- Work with parents/carers to build their understanding of a commitment to the welfare of all students.

3.3 In order to fulfil these aims, senior leaders will take all necessary steps to ensure that:

- All staff (including temporary and supply) and volunteers are rigorously checked and receive training in safeguarding as part of their mandatory induction. This includes the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures as part of the induction to the staff handbook which includes the whistleblowing policy;
- All staff are aware of Progress Schools' National Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (NDSL) and Local Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (LDSP) in each school site;
- All staff, volunteers and wider management are trained in child protection (level 2 minimum) on a regular basis with an annual refresher as a minimum;
- Progress Schools complies with the recruitment policy and undertakes all necessary checks in line with safer recruitment (DBS, barred lists, prohibition order checks and references), including the assurance that at least 1 member of the interview panel is appropriately trained for appointment of all roles;
- Procedures are in line with the Independent School Standards (ISS);
- Policies and procedures meet all new requirements for local authority safeguarding arrangements (see section 12 for lists of all local agencies worked with in this school);
- Provide staff with a referral and monitoring guidance handbook to ensure staff can access appropriate people and procedures at all times; and
- Provide staff with training on the use of reasonable force (see Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy).

4. Identifying abuse

- 4.1 Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children and young people, to prevent concerns from escalating. Staff have a responsibility to identify children and young people who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.
- 4.2 Any concern, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- 4.3 It is not the responsibility of school staff to investigate suspected or alleged abuse; this is the role of the Police and Social Services.
- 4.4 What is Child Abuse? The categories listed below are drawn from *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)*:

4.4.1 **Abuse** - a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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

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

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

4.4.5 Neglect - 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 child's basic emotional needs.

4.4.6 Who are the abusers? - abusers can be parents or carers, siblings or members of the extended family, neighbours, teachers, strangers or other students; in short, an abuser could be anyone.

Signs of abuse. All school staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. The following may help staff to be aware of possible signs of abuse - There are further sources of information such as the GDST Safeguarding Procedures and the NSPCC website. However such lists are not exhaustive - if staff members are unsure they should always seek advice and report concerns even where signs/indicators are not present.

4.5 The definition of abuse of vulnerable adults.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse may consist of single or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or omission to act or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

4.6 Signs of abuse by category.

4.6.1 Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries/burns
- Untreated injuries
- Bruises/abrasion around the face
- Bi-lateral injuries e.g. two bruised eyes
- Bite marks
- Bruising abrasions to lips, cheeks, outer ear

4.6.2 Emotional Abuse

- Excessive overreaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Excessive rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting
- Extreme compliance/aggression
- Drug, alcohol and substance misuse
- Significant peer relationship difficulties

4.6.3 Sexual Abuse

- Sexual awareness inappropriate to child's age, including provocative sexual behaviour

- Self-harm
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- Fear of undressing for gym
- Depression/withdrawal
- Drug, alcohol, substance abuse

4.6.4 Neglect

- Constant hunger, tiredness and/or poor personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Social isolation
- Poor self-esteem and/or relationship with peers
- Excessive rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking

4.7 Safeguarding Issues

There are many safeguarding issues, including, but not limited to:

- Peer on peer abuse (including bullying and cyber-bullying);
- Children missing education;
- Children missing from home or care, homelessness;
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE): County lines;
- Domestic abuse;
- Drugs;
- Fabricated or induced illness;
- Faith abuse;
- Female genital mutilation (FGM);
- Forced marriage;
- Gangs and youth violence;
- Gender-based abuse/violence against women and girls (VAWG);
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA);
- Hate;
- Mental Health;
- Missing children and adults;
- Private fostering;
- Preventing radicalisation;
- Relationship abuse;
- Sexting;
- Upskirting;
- Trafficking;
- Children and the court system;
- Children with family members in prison;
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges;
- Self-harm;

Within our school, we are aware of all types but have experience in our students in the following;

4.7.1 Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sex abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.

4.7.2 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) - County Lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity, drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered.

We have many vulnerable students for various reasons. To support in the reduction of potential risk to exploitation, we work closely with local Police teams on local issues and updates and embed protective behaviours in to our Wellbeing and SMSC curriculum.

4.7.3 Peer on peer abuse

It is acknowledged that children can abuse other children (peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying);
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- 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. This is now covered under the Voyeurism Act (2019);
- Sexting (also known as youth produced images sexual imagery); and
- Initiation/hazing type of violence and rituals.

We have a strict anti-bullying policy. We have seen an increase in the number of incidents happening outside of school so have revamped sections of our curriculum to educate students on the issues, laws and consequences around bullying and, more specifically, cyber-bullying.

4.7.4 Serious violence

Staff are to be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children

have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Local areas have seen a rise in 'turf' related incidents between different estates. Some students are also referred to us from different schools that have a history of rivalry. Alongside our own curriculum and ethos of inclusivity for all, we also work with GANGS (Get Away 'N' Get Safe') who visit our schools frequently to discuss cases and provide students with knowledge on gangs and how to stay safe. A new course in Serious Youth Violence has been provided to all staff and we work with local Police teams in relation to knife crime.

4.7.5 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Whilst all staff should speak to a designated lead with regards to FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in their profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

4.7.6 Radicalisation and Extremism

In the case of suspected radicalisation and extremism, We will refer to the *Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2015)* and utilise 'Channel' the national referral process.

4.7.7 Missing Children

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Staff should treat prolonged or repeated absence or particular patterns of absence, with no satisfactory explanation, as a potential safeguarding issue and take action accordingly.

Many of our students are referred to us with very poor attendance from their previous education setting. We engage with all people involved with the student and work on building attendance back up by providing solutions and tailor made support. Progress Schools also offer a breakfast club and non-academic teaching before 10am to ensure students are not disadvantaged. We offer parental support and home visits and also work along other professionals to provide students with every opportunity to help them succeed.

4.7.8 Domestic Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of sexuality or gender. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial; and
- Emotional

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

4.7.9 Mental Health

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals can make a diagnosis of a mental health problem but school staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Many students referred to us are already subject to EHA Plans, CIN Plans and CP plans. Many have CAMHS workers and are being supported with mental health issues. We have an area of our curriculum dedicated to wellbeing and provide the students with information, advice, access to external agencies and positive role models. This is further supported by mandatory RSHE embedded throughout.

Self-harm

A common occurrence amongst adolescent students in the local area. Categorised as someone intentionally damages or injures their body. Use of tablets, recreational drugs and cutting skin are common in our students. It is irrelevant if the injuries or damage are superficial as the action itself suggests a manifestation of a psychological or psychiatric disorder.

Drugs

Due to accessibility and peer pressure, there has been a rise in young people experimenting in drugs. We have specifically seen a rise in cannabis use and potential exploitation of young students by older adults to sell/hold cannabis. Progress Schools source local support groups, such as 'Stop Smoking Cannabis' to support in educating our students on the dangers, laws and consequences.

Sexting

This is a big safeguarding concern in all areas where our schools are situated. With ease of access to technology, young people are finding themselves more and more exposed to requests for indecent images. Progress Schools, alongside our curriculums, work closely with parents and provide them with information required to support their child at home with staying safe, specifically online. Protective behaviours are embedded throughout the timetable and various subjects.

5. National Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and Local Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

The National Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will:

- 5.1 be responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual child protection concerns are dealt with in accordance with the guidance and regulations whilst providing support for local designated safeguarding leads and all staff
- 5.2 refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the local Social Services Department in accordance with Local Authority procedures, and work with other agencies in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2020)*

- 5.3 ensure that they are aware of the latest national and local guidance and requirements and will keep the senior management, staff and volunteers informed as appropriate
- 5.4 receive appropriate training in child protection matters and interagency working, to include both national and local bodies, at least every two years
- 5.5 ensure that the management, staff and volunteers have access to and understand their role as appropriate in the child protection procedures, including but not limited to part time staff, supply staff, peripatetic staff, newly appointed staff, University students, volunteers, driving staff, and cleaning staff
- 5.6 act as a source of advice and support within school and co-ordinate action regarding referrals in relation to both children and allegations against staff.

6. Responding to disclosures of abuse

- 6.1 Children and young people are more likely to be abused by someone they know and trust than by a stranger. Staff members are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always take action in the interests of the child.
- 6.2 Staff and volunteers should make themselves available to listen and demonstrate to the student that what they are saying is being taken seriously and without criticism and should respond in a supportive, calm manner and avoid asking detailed questions. The role of the staff or volunteer is to listen, record and report; not to investigate. Staff and volunteers should take care to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm.
- 6.3 If a student reports abuse from another student or students, staff should follow the procedures in this section. All children and young people involved, whether a potential perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being ‘at risk’. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with local agencies in relation to handling any such cases which arise. A bullying incident will be regarded as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. See the Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy.

6.4 Immediate Response

If a disclosure is made, the member of staff or volunteer should:

- 6.4.1 allow the pace of the conversation to be dictated by the student
- 6.4.2 ask open questions which encourage the student to talk such as “can you tell me what happened?”
- 6.4.3 accept what the student says and do not ask for further detail
- 6.4.4 acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you and show by voice tone and/or facial expression that you are taking their concerns seriously
- 6.4.5 note carefully any clearly visible external signs of possible injury or neglect (but note paragraph 6.5.4 below)

- 6.4.6 reassure the student that they have done the right thing, that it is not their fault, and explain whom you will have to tell (the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and why.
- 6.5 The member of staff or volunteer should **not**:
 - 6.5.1 burden the student with guilt by asking questions such as “why didn’t you tell me before?”
 - 6.5.2 interrogate or pressure the student to provide information
 - 6.5.3 ask any potentially leading questions such as those that start with the words, how, what, when, where and why
 - 6.5.4 undress the child or examine clothed parts of the child’s body in an attempt to determine the nature of any such injuries/neglect
 - 6.5.5 criticise the alleged perpetrator, this may be someone they love
 - 6.5.6 promise confidentiality
 - 6.5.7 make promises that they cannot keep such as “I’ll stay with you all the time” or “it will be alright now”
 - 6.5.8 put words in the child’s mouth (i.e. finish their sentences)
 - 6.5.9 jump to conclusions or speculate about what happened or might have happened, or make accusations
 - 6.5.10 show an overly emotional reaction, such as expressing disgust, shock or disbelief
 - 6.5.11 attempt to investigate the allegations
- 6.6 If a student confides in a member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, staff/volunteers must not make promises about confidentiality. Staff must tell the student sensitively that they have a responsibility to tell the named Designated Safeguarding Person so that the child can be helped to stay safe and feel better.
- 6.7 The Designated Safeguarding Lead on each site will fully document all disclosures either made to them directly or reported by a member of staff or a volunteer.
- 6.8 We recognise that a child who is abused may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We recognise that we may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. Progress Schools have age appropriate systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback so that their wishes or feelings will be taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. However the child’s wishes or feelings cannot override the duty to refer suspected abuse to children’s social care or police.
- 6.9 We will provide continuing support to a student who has disclosed abuse through promoting a caring and safe environment and encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum and through relationships. In doing so, we will act in accordance with guidance from the relevant authorities to ensure that, for example, legal proceedings are not compromised

- 6.10 All allegations involving staff or volunteers will be referred to the Designated Officer(s) in the local authority for advice before any investigation takes place. In borderline cases, these discussions can be held informally and without naming the individual.

In any case of serious harm, the police shall be informed at the outset.

- 6.11 At times, students can disclose information that is not yet a concern or allegation but may grow into one. We use School Pod 'Child Log' to record these so they can be referred to at a later stage if required.

6.12 Recording Information

Staff/volunteers should:

6.11.1 make brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards, which record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, and what has actually been said (wherever possible using the child's exact words, even if they seem childish, rude or inappropriate), not assumption or interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated and scanned onto School Pod unless the information is inserted directly into a record of concern form on the system.

6.11.2 clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion

6.11.3 record any observed injuries and bruises

6.11.4 note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the student (do not translate into "proper terms")

6.11.5 Pass all evidence to the Designated Safeguarding Person(s) on site

6.11.6 appreciate that their records may be used in criminal proceedings or disciplinary investigations

6.12 Reporting Concerns

6.12.1 Any concerns about students must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead on site (or in their absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or National Lead) as soon as possible and at latest by the end of the school day.

6.12.2 Where the disclosure identifies a safeguarding issue, the local Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult with the National Designated Safeguarding Lead who will support them in next steps. If required, the LDSL or NDSL will report to the local Social Services Department within 24 hours and, in the most serious cases the police shall be contacted.

6.12.3 Our procedures differentiate between safeguarding children who have suffered significant harm and those who are in need of support from one or more agencies. In cases where a child is not suffering or at risk of suffering serious harm, but rather in need of additional support, an inter-agency assessment will be undertaken (led by 3 partners) to determine the most appropriate action.

6.12.4 Whilst the National Designated Safeguarding Lead will usually decide whether to make a referral, in exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, anyone can refer their concerns to children's social care directly. The NSPCC have an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns

about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college (Contact details at end of policy).

6.12.5 If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made immediately. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

7. Allegations against staff

- 7.1 We must follow the procedures for handling allegations made against staff, supply and/or volunteers set out in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)*. The aim is to deal with any allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way which provides effective protection for the child and at the same time provides appropriate support for the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- 7.2 Where a safeguarding-related allegation or cause for concern is made against any member of staff, supply staff or volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the Educational Executive who will become the Case Manager. They will liaise with the Designated Officer(s) and take advice on next steps. The case manager will speak with the member of staff concerned. If the concern is in relation to the Head Teacher or proprietor representative then the allegation should be raised with the Group Board of Directors directly.
- 7.3 If the case manager and/or the NDSL feel that the allegations are serious and they require immediate intervention by the children's social care services and/or police they shall contact them immediately.
- 7.4 In all cases immediate contact should be made with the Designated Officer(s) to discuss the allegation. A decision as to how to proceed and eventually whether or not to suspend a member of staff or volunteer will be taken by the case manager following consultation with the Designated Officer(s) (and, in the most serious cases, the police). In borderline cases discussions with the Designated Officer(s) can be held informally and without naming the school or individual. Suspension is not an automatic response and the decision will be taken according to the circumstances of each particular case. The decision as to whether or not to suspend the member of staff is taken by the case manager (having consulted the Designated Officer(s)).
- 7.5 In considering the available options, including redeployment of the member of staff or volunteer, the primary concerns are the safety and wellbeing of the students, together with the need for a full and fair investigation which will be led by the LADO. The following definitions from *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)* should be used when determining the outcome 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
 - **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
 - **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence

- 7.6 Where we cease to use the services of any person (staff member (including agency staff), peripatetic teacher, volunteer or any other person) or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services because it is considered that the person may be unsuitable to work with children, a referral will be made to the DBS promptly and in any event within 28 days in accordance with our legal duty. In cases involving teaching staff, the school will also decide whether to refer the matter to the TeCHING Regulation Authority (previously National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL)) to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.
- 7.7 Where required to do so, we will provide information requested by the DBS or TRA in respect of a member of staff or volunteer in accordance with our legal duty.
- 7.8 Communications with the community about safeguarding-related allegations shall only be made following consultation with the LADO and any investigating authorities. There are restrictions on the reporting or publishing of allegations against teachers (which apply up to the point where the accused person is charged with an offence, or the DfE/TRA publish information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case). Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity.
- 7.9 If there has been a substantiated allegation against a member of staff, we will work with the Designated Officer(s) to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

8. Roles and responsibilities

- 8.1 Every member of staff and every volunteer who assists us have a responsibility for safeguarding and should:
- 8.1.1 protect pupils from abuse
 - 8.1.2 be aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures, and read and understand Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)*
 - 8.1.3 know how to access and implement the procedures
 - 8.1.4 follow the procedures at all times
 - 8.1.5 know the identity of the National Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and the Local Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) on site and who to speak to in the absence of the NDLS and/or LDSL (Deputies)
 - 8.1.6 report all safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
 - 8.1.7 keep a record of any safeguarding concern, conversation or incident
 - 8.1.8 undertake appropriate training including regular refresher training.

9. Referring concerns to Social Care

- 9.1 The decision to make a referral which could activate a single assessment or child protection investigation, and the issue of gaining parental consent, are serious matters and require

careful judgement. These decisions should usually only be taken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s), who will liaise with the National Designated lead as appropriate, following consultation with the Designated Officer(s). In cases of serious harm the police will be informed from the outset. However, anyone can refer their concerns to children's social care directly.

- 9.2 Subject to 9.1 above and the advice of the Designated Officer(s), the consent of parents should be obtained before making a formal referral, unless to do so could place the child at risk of significant harm.
- 9.3 Where the disclosure relates to actual abuse or the suspicion of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will report the disclosure to Social Care within 24 hours.
- 9.4 In the event of school making a referral to Social Care, they should agree with the recipient of the referral what exactly the child and parents will be told, by whom and when. The National Designated Safeguarding Lead should ask to be kept informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between Social Care and the police, which will decide whether and how to investigate. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion.
- 9.5 Social Care are required to acknowledge written referrals within one working day, although you should expect a prompter response in cases which appear to be urgent. If Progress Schools have not heard from Social Care after two working days then we should contact Social Care again. A record of each contact with Social Care, including the name of the officer with whom the DSL has spoken should be kept.

10. Duty to report concerns about the management of safeguarding

- 10.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. Staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the safeguarding regime. The duty to report concerns about the management of safeguarding is part of the Code of Conduct, and the Whistleblowing Policy which are included in the staff handbook. It will also be reflected in staff training.
- 10.2 Where staff or volunteers reasonably believe that safeguarding concerns exist, or where they have concerns regarding the management of safeguarding issues, it is their duty to raise concerns.
- 10.3 The member of staff or volunteer should bring their concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in a case where the concerns relate to the actions or inaction of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to the Proprietor Lead.
- 10.4 However, where someone reasonably believes these reporting routes to be inappropriate, or has reported concerns and no action has been taken, they should contact the children's social care directly

11. Monitoring

- 11.1 The working of this Policy will be monitored by the Educational Executive and National Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) who will report as required to the Board.
- 11.2 The Executive Team will undertake an annual review of the child protection policies and procedures together with a review of the safeguarding incidents that have arisen and how they were managed. This Policy and the Safeguarding Procedures will also be reviewed as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance and practice. This process is carried out to ensure that we are continuing to provide the very highest standard of safeguarding possible.
- 11.3 Any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in this policy or in any of the school's child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.
- 11.5 The National Designated Leads will meet no less than once every quarter to discuss cases and ensure follow up action has occurred in cases that were passed on/closed.

12. Child Protection Conferences

- 12.1 In some circumstances, all professionals involved with a child will be expected to support statutory agencies and provide information relating to the welfare of a child and how to support a child/children and their parent/s or carer/s. One such example is at a child protection conference. There may be circumstances where Progress Schools Ltd may be asked to participate in Child Protection processes pursuant to the Children Act 1989.
- 12.2 Children's Services will convene an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) once a child protection enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been undertaken and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm. A review conference will take place once a child has been made the subject of a Child Protection Plan in order to monitor the safety of the child and the required reduction in risk.
- 12.3 Staff members may be asked to attend a child protection conference or core group meetings on behalf of Progress Schools in respect of individual children. Usually the person representing the school at these meetings will be the DSL. In any event, the person attending will need to have as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible; any member of staff may be required to contribute to this process.
- 12.4 All reports for child protection conferences will be prepared in advance using the guidance and template report provided by Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents before the conference as appropriate and will include information relating to the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development and the child's presentation at school. In order to complete such reports, all relevant information will be sought from staff working with the child.
- 12.5 Clearly child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we may have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open and honest way with any parent whose child has been referred to Children's Services or whose child is subject to a child protection plan. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents.

13. Safer Recruitment

- 13.1 At Progress Schools we will use the recruitment and selection process to deter and reject unsuitable candidates. We require evidence of original academic certificates. We do not accept testimonials and insist on taking up references prior to interview. We will question the contents of application forms if we are unclear about them, we will undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks where required to do so and use any other means of ensuring we are recruiting and selecting the most suitable people to work with children.
- 13.2 All new staff will only be appointed on completion of satisfactory pre-employment checks that include:
- Verification of a candidate's identity;
 - An enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list check and Section 128 checks (where necessary));
 - Verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities;
 - Verification of the person's right to work in the UK; and
 - Verification of professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- 13.3 We will maintain a Single Central Register of all safer recruitment checks carried out in line with statutory requirements.
- 13.4 We will ensure that those responsible for recruiting staff have completed appropriate 'safer recruitment' training. At all times we will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with our statutory requirements.
- 13.5 For those staff who have new or historical entries on their DBS that may raise concerns of a safeguarding nature but not exclude them from being able to undertake their role, a risk assessment will be completed and kept on file outlining any measures that will be in place to manage any assessed risk.

14. Online Safety - Filtering and Monitoring

- 14.1 We operate filtering systems within all our schools which is designed to restrict access to inappropriate sites and sites that are not needed as part of students' education. This is monitored regularly as some develop ways around these safeguarding blocks. We also have a computer use strategy where all students are supervised when using our computers/tablets/interactive whiteboards. Filtering systems to not 'overblock' content to ensure effective teaching around online safety can take place. Where students access sites through VPN etc. these are reported to CNS (IT Support) immediately to be blocked.
- 14.2 The use of social networking sites is not permitted in school on school equipment so as to ensure these sites are not used to bully/harass others.
- 14.3 Students are taught E-Safety golden rules throughout the curriculum, as outlined in the E-Safety policy.
- 14.4 Staff are vigilant during use of social networking sites/technology and will monitor for potential risks including;
- Harassment or online bullying ("cyberbullying") on the part of the student or others'
 - Posting information about themselves that: a) could be used to embarrass or manipulate them; b) could cause psychological harm; c) could be used by criminals

to steal their identity or property or - though very rare - determine their physical location to cause physical harm

- Damage to reputation or future prospects because of young people’s own behaviour or that of their peers - unkind or angry posts, compromising photos or videos, or group conflict depicted in text and imagery
- Spending too much time online, losing a sense of balance in their activities
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Potential for inappropriate contact with adults (parents/carers need to ensure that social networking does not lead to offline contact unapproved by them and other caring adults in their children's lives).
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) which can start on Social Media.

15. Key Contacts

15.1 National key personnel from Progress Schools

| Role | Name | Contact Number | Email |
|---|------------------|----------------|--|
| Educational Executive and National Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - (Allegations against staff) | Charlotte Barton | 07860 946 841 | charlotte.barton@progress-schools.co.uk |
| Deputy National Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) | Tom Whitlock | 07860 946 842 | tom.whitlock@progress-schools.co.uk |
| Chief Executive Officer | James Madine | 0151 559 1867 | James.madine@progress-schools.co.uk |

15.2 National Websites for reporting and support

* Report Child Abuse to Your Local Council - <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

* NSPCC - help@nspcc.org.uk Tel: 0800 028 0285 (Mon-Fri 8am - 8pm)

* NSPP When to Call the Police Guidance - <https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf>

15.3 Local Key Contacts for Progress Schools and Local Authority

Local Designated Safeguarding Lead = LDSL

| Site/Region | Role | Name | Contact Number | Email |
|-------------------------|------|----------------------------|---|--|
| WIRRAL | LDSL | Angela Dixon | 0151 705 8033 or 0151 541 1968 | angela.dixon@progress-schools.co.uk |
| Wirral Social Care Team | | Integrated Front Door Team | 0151 606 2008 (Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm) 0151 677 6557 (out of hours) | ifd@wirral.gov.uk |
| | LSCB | LADO | 0151 666 4442 | lado.referrals@wirral.gcsx.gov.uk |

16. Associated Documents

- 16.1 Working together to safeguard children (HM Government) (2018)
- 16.2 Keeping children safe in education (DfE) September (2020)
- 16.3 Revised Prevent Duty Guidance (HM Government) June 2015
- 16.4 Channel Duty Guidance (HM Government) April 2015
- 16.5 Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings (Ofsted) (2019)
- 16.6 The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- 16.7 Progress Schools E Safety Policy (2020)
- 16.8 Progress Schools Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy (2020)
- 16.9 Progress Schools Referral and Monitoring Guidance (2020)
- 16.10 Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- 16.11 The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- 16.12 'Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation - procedural information', Home Office (October 2015)
- 16.13 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- 16.14 Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- 16.15 Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young

People in Education Settings' (October 2015)

16.16 What to do if you're worried a child is being abused', DfE (March 2015)