



Bexley Grammar School

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

### Bexley Grammar School Safeguarding Team



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## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist all staff to promote the wellbeing of all children and to safeguard and protect those who are at risk of abuse or neglect.

The policy and its associated procedures should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the *London Child Protection Procedures 2019 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*, and reflects the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021*. *Bexley Grammar School also acts in accordance with the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership local procedures.*

The safeguarding of children is everyone's business. Schools have a responsibility under *Section 175 of the Education Act 2002* and *Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004* to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes:

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

*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* defines a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The *Children's Act 2004* defines significant harm and the roles and responsibilities of Children's Social Care, the Police and partner agencies.

Significant Harm - There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child, and / or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the maltreatment.

Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm (e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning). More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development.

Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any maltreatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

The following procedures outline the action to be taken if it is suspected that a child may be being abused, harmed or neglected. There are four categories of Child Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

All staff at BGS receive INSET on these forms of abuse, specific issues such as Domestic Violence, Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Exploitation, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, and the symptoms young people may exhibit.

A child can be abused, harmed or neglected in a family, institution or community setting by someone known to them, or less commonly, by a stranger; this includes someone in a position of trust such as a teacher or other professional.

It is important for all staff to be aware of the differences between safeguarding and child protection – it is all of our responsibility to safeguard children from harm, which may or may not constitute a child protection issue. In the event that a staff member has a concern about a child but this does not present an immediate danger, it is best to adopt an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ and liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A judgement can then be made as to whether it is necessary to provide a young person with ‘early help’.

Early help – This is the process through which schools can help to identify emerging problems and contribute towards assessing a young person’s needs. In the context of Bexley Grammar School this may involve liaising with the Bexley or Greenwich Early Intervention Team, the Family Wellbeing service or a Bexley or Greenwich Children’s Services CIN plan.

Safeguarding and the promotion of a child’s welfare covers all aspects of the child’s life and the school is committed to ensuring that all of its actions in respect for a child are compatible with this aim. If there are concerns about a child’s welfare that do not meet the thresholds of child abuse the school will consider whether the *Common Assessment Framework (CAF)* approach should be considered. The early identification of concerns and the use of the CAF to develop a multi-agency plan for the child can reduce the risk of subsequent abuse. All staff may raise concerns directly with Children’s Social Care services.

### **Policy Statement**

We at Bexley Grammar School are committed to protecting children from harm. Safeguarding and the promotion of a child’s welfare covers all aspects of the child’s life; staff and volunteers in this organisation are committed to ensuring that all its actions in respect for a child are compatible with this aim.

### **2 Scope**

This policy and the following procedures apply to all staff, volunteers and governors working with or in the school.

### **3 Aim**

We will safeguard children by: -

- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

- Carefully following the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.
- Reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.
- Being aware that safeguarding incidents could happen anywhere and ensuring that staff are alert to possible concerns being raised in school.

Because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore: -

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from harm or abuse.

#### 4 Procedures

We will follow the procedures set out by *London Child Protection Procedures* and *Bexley Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People* and take account of guidance issued by the *Department for Education* to:

- Ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. *This will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team of the School.*
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding and child protection.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governor knows the name of the DSL responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse, and their responsibility for referring any concerns that they might have to the DSL responsible for safeguarding and child protection.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
- Notify Children's Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who has a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences and Core Groups.
- Keep accurate, up to date, electronic and written chronological records of incidents and concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in a secure location. An electronic filing system will be password protected and accessible only to the DSL and Deputy DSLs. Physical copies of documents will be recorded chronologically and kept in a locked filing cabinet in the DSL's office.
- Follow London Borough of Bexley procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer (see separate Allegations Policy).
- Ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed and that Senior leaders have received accredited training accordingly.

## 5 Definitions of abuse

These definitions are based on those from 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2019 and 'London Child Protection Procedures' 2019.

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.

**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.

**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 of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**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 a child 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 from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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

**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, for example, 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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

#### \*Physical abuse and physical chastisement

It is legal in the UK for a parent to use a level of physical chastisement when punishing their child without this being considered physical abuse. According to section 58 of the Children Act 2004 it is unlawful for a parent or carer to smack their child, except where this amounts to 'reasonable punishment'. Physical punishment will be considered "unreasonable" if it leaves a mark on the child or if the child is hit with an implement such as a cane or a belt. There are strict guidelines covering the use of reasonable punishment and it is not reasonable to use severe physical punishment on a child which amounts to common assault or battery. Therefore any injury sustained by a child which is serious enough to warrant a charge of assault occasioning actual bodily harm cannot be considered to be as the result of reasonable punishment and could amount to further offences against a child of wounding, grievous bodily harm or cruelty.

## **6 Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse and Neglect**

Guidance on recognising signs and symptoms of abuse can be found in *'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2019*. The following may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. This is not an exclusive list and many of the signs and symptoms could fall into more than one category.

### Abuse

Many of the signs and symptoms listed below can point towards one more forms of abuse taking place. Factors which put a child at high risk of abuse may include;

- Families with complex needs
- Parental substance use
- Poor parental mental health
- Parents with learning difficulties
- Children with disabilities
- Families with past history of childhood abuse
- Domestic Violence

Referenced from Andrew Hall's Safeguarding for Schools 2018

### Physical Abuse

- Bruising of various ages
- Bite marks
- Burns and scalds
- Fractures in non- mobile children
- Injuries in unusual areas or with well-defined edges
- Old injuries or scars
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Inconsistent explanations
- Talk of punishment which seems excessive

- Arms and legs kept covered
- Reluctant to remove clothing for swimming or PE
- The parents are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury

### Emotional Abuse

- The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child.
- Development delay
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem / continual self-deprecation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Unusual attention seeking behaviour
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Abnormal attachment to parent/ carer
- Lack of confidence
- Inappropriate emotional response

### Sexual Abuse

- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Unable to concentrate
- Become worried about clothing being removed i.e. for swimming or PE
- Aggression
- Self harming, including eating disorders
- Drawings of sexually explicit behaviours
- Promiscuity / precociousness
- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Itchy or pain in the genital area
- Sexually explicit behaviour
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses,

Sexual abuse can be very difficult to recognise and reporting sexual abuse can be an extremely traumatic experience for a child. Whilst the media often focuses on 'stranger danger', studies indicate that between 80 and 90% of cases involve a known adult.

The internet has increased the risk of non-contact sexual abuse and children must be alert to these dangers when online.

### Neglect

- Poor health
- Emotionally needy
- Persistent hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Inadequate clothing for the child's size, weather or time of year
- Emaciation / underweight for age

- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies
- Stealing food/money
- Poor school attendance
- Compulsive attention seeking

Pupils with SEND and disabilities – Pupils with learning difficulties often exhibit some of these signs (e.g. reluctance to get undressed for P.E., constant tiredness) which are not necessarily signs of abuse but symptoms of their condition. It must also be remembered that disabled children are 3 times more likely to experience abuse or neglect than non-disabled peers. At Bexley Grammar School our dedicated SEND team develop strong relationships with the pupils in their care and work hard to safeguard their wellbeing. The Deputy DSL and DSL LAC (Mrs Vicky Ellis) is also part of the SEND team and attends regular Virtual School meetings.

### Contextual Safeguarding

Staff at Bexley Grammar School are aware of the work of Dr Carlene Firmin, particularly, with regard to Contextual Safeguarding. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts. At Bexley Grammar School we have worked closely with Bexley and Greenwich Children's Services, the Serious Violence Prevention Panel, Safer Schools Officer and the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership to identify some of the issues particularly affecting our context:

- Child Criminal Exploitation / County Lines
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Drug use and supply
- Serious Violence
- Money Laundering
- Radicalisation

### Specific safeguarding issues

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example information for schools and colleges can be found on the TES website and NSPCC website. Schools and colleges can also access broad government guidance on the issues listed below via the GOV.UK website:

- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Child Missing from Education (CME) (A)
- Child missing from home or care
- Child Criminal Exploitation (B)
- County Lines (C)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (D)
- Bullying including Cyberbullying



- Domestic Violence
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (E)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Honour-based Abuse (F)
- Mental health (G)
- Missing children and adults strategy
- Peer on peer abuse (H)
- Private fostering
- Preventing radicalisation (I)
- Relationship abuse
- Serious Violence (J)
- Sexting
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (K)
- Trafficking

#### A. Child Missing from Education (CME)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect or potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage. Staff with concerns over a child's attendance should liaise with the Attendance Office and Designated Safeguarding Lead, particularly if unauthorised absence occurs on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

#### B. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines - see below), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

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

### C. County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

### D. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and noncontact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

#### E. Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genital organs are deliberately cut or injured, but where there is no medical reason for this to be done. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. It is very painful and dangerous and can seriously harm women and girls' health. Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure. Women who have had FGM may have mental health conditions as a result, and are likely to have difficulty in giving birth.

FGM can be carried out on girls of all ages but may be more common between the ages of 5 and 10. It can be known as female circumcision, cutting or by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan among other names.

Statistics published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre show that over 3,700 patients were treated for whom it was reported for the first time that the female had FGM between April and December 2015; and these are the reports made, we know that more women and girls are not yet asking for help. A report, commissioned by the Home Office and published by City University and Equality Now, shows that no local authority in England is unaffected by FGM.

#### FGM mandatory reporting duty

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to personally report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college's Designated Safeguarding Lead and involve children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

#### F. Honour-based Abuse

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA

are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubts staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA they should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers that requires a different approach (see above).

#### G. Mental Health

With the introduction of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, Mental Health is explicitly listed as a safeguarding issue for schools to be aware of. It is a safeguarding role to "prevent the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development". At Bexley Grammar School we are proud of the work that we have done in this area in the last several years, culminating with the school being given the Wellbeing Award for Schools status in 2020. However, it is important that staff remain vigilant and aware of the signs of mental health issues, such as low mood, anxiety, self harm or suicidal thoughts. They should refer any such students to the DSL or Deputy DSLs, who work closely with the school's pastoral team and counselling service.

#### H. Peer on peer abuse

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as 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;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Staff and students at Bexley Grammar School have been made aware of the school's Anti-Bullying policy, e-Safety policy and Behaviour policy, all of which make it clear that acts of abuse towards other pupils will not be tolerated and appropriate sanctions will be put in place in response to any such acts. In the event that the matter requires investigation action by the police or Bexley Children's Services such a course will be taken, whilst remaining sensitive to the views and needs of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

#### I. Preventing Radicalisation

Bexley Grammar School is committed to exposing our students to a comprehensive array of beliefs, traditions, cultures, norms and values as part of our commitment to a social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Throughout this exposure there is a dual emphasis upon the diversity of modern British multiculturalism and the traditional British values which bind our

society together. Our SMSC policy clearly outlines the school's commitment to the promotion of fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

All staff are aware of the dangers of radicalisation and the duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Our e-Safety policy gives clear guidance for students on what is acceptable internet use and staff are briefed on what to do if they suspect a young person is accessing extremist material online. There is a clear process to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will investigate and refer those concerns to the Channel Programme.

Our designated area contacts for the Prevent programme are listed below:

SO15 CTC | Local Operations

Prevent Engagement Officer

South East Cluster

Mobile 07766 364597

Address Eltham Police Station,

20 Well Hall Road, Eltham,

SE9 6SF

Bexley Borough:

Prevent Police Officer: Luke Oxlade [Luke.Oxlade2@met.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Luke.Oxlade2@met.pnn.police.uk) 020 8284 5631

For advice regarding referrals:

Clair McGarry

Community Safety Coordinator (Vulnerable People)

[community.safety@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@bexley.gov.uk) 020 3045 3990

#### J. Serious Violence

All staff should 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.

#### K. Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;

- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

### Sexual violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

### Consent

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

### Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
  - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
  - sexualised online bullying;
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
  - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and
  - upskirting.

## Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

## The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

If staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they should follow the referral process as set out from paragraph 35 in Part One of KCSIE 2021. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy (see below).

## **7 Reporting incidents and Concerns**

If you suspect that abuse may have occurred **you must report the concerns immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr H. Gilmore or in his absence, Mrs V Ellis or Mr S Elphick, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has been nominated by *Bexley Grammar School* to maintain the electronic and written records of incidents and concerns, and to report allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to: -

- Act as the confidential recipient of information from staff, governors, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns, and to record this information.
- Assess the information quickly and carefully, and ask for further information as appropriate.
- Contact Bexley Safeguarding Partnership via the Front Door (single point of contact for Children's Services). Referrals are made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the Front Door Team Tel No: 020 3045 5440 or 0208 303 7777 Fax No: 020 3045 5445.
- Contact Greenwich Safeguarding Partnership via the Front Door (single point of contact for Children's Services). Referrals are made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the Referral team: 020 8921 3172 or Emergency Duty Team (out of office hours only): 020 8854 8888
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead should make a referral to the Children's Social Care Agency or the Police without delay if there is an immediate risk to the child.
- The referral should normally be made to the Children's Social Care Agency in which the child lives e.g. if a child lives in another borough, the referral needs to be made to the Children's Social Care Department in that borough.
- A telephone referral should be made and confirmed in writing using an inter-agency referral form within 48 hours. Children's Social Care should acknowledge the referral

within one working day and should be contacted if no acknowledgement has been received within 3 working days. Any referrals that are faxed to Children's Social Care should be followed up by a telephone call to confirm receipt.

- Following referral, Children's Social Care should, within one working day, consider the next course of action, record their decision in writing and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Concerns will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (s) have not responded appropriately to your concerns, it is then your responsibility to consider contacting the child protection agencies directly. Staff members can phone Bexley Children's Care Front Door service (0208 303 7777) or Greenwich Children's Care Referral team (020 8921 3172) at any time if you are worried there is a risk of significant harm to a child or young person.

## **8 Responding to a child making an allegation/disclosure of abuse**

If a child discloses or alleges that they have been abused: -

- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking leading questions
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated
- Pass this information on immediately to your Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in his/her absence.

After a child has disclosed abuse the Designated Safeguarding Lead should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On these rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Children's Social Care to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

Particular vigilance will be exercised in respect of pupils who are the subjects of Child Protection Plans and any incidents or concerns involving these children will be reported immediately to the allocated Social Worker (and confirmed in writing; copied to the Safeguarding Partnership's Schools Safeguarding Coordinator). If the pupil in question is a Looked After Child, this will also be brought to the notice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for children in public care.

## **9 Responding to Allegations of abuse against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer**

Safeguarding or child protection allegations about adults in the school should be made directly to the Headteacher. Allegations against the Headteacher should be taken to the Chair of Governors.



These concerns will be discussed immediately with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The LADO in Bexley is:  
Sharon Ackbersingh  
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)  
Bexley Council  
Civic Offices  
2 Watling Street  
Bexleyheath  
Kent DA6 7AT  
Tel: 0203 045 3436 (LADO Team)  
Tel: 0203 045 5645 (Business Support)  
Tel: 0203 045 5543 (LADO direct)  
Mobile: 07950 562936 (LADO mobile)  
Email: [LADO@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@bexley.gov.uk)

It is important to note that the School has a duty of care to our employees. We will ensure that anyone facing an allegation is provided with effective support and a named contact if they are suspended.

The Schools' 'Allegations Policy' should be referred to for full details of the processes involved in dealing with allegations. This is written in conjunction with KCSIE 2019 and local Safeguarding Partnership procedures.

## **10 Responding to Allegations of child abuse made against another pupil**

Staff must bring any allegation to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Pupils may be harmed by other pupils, children or young people. Indeed, research suggests that up to 30 percent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18. BGS Staff are aware of the harm caused by bullying and use the school's Anti-Bullying procedures where necessary. However, on occasions a pupil's behaviour may warrant a response under Child Protection, rather than anti-bullying procedures. When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm the school should report its concerns to Children's Social Care.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the School will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the Child Protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator.

## **11 Recruitment and appointment of staff and volunteers**

In recruiting and appointing staff at *Bexley Grammar School*, we will be responsible for the following: -

- Identifying the tasks and responsibilities involved and the type of person most suitable for the job.
- Drawing up the selection criteria and putting together a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience.
- All applicants should apply in writing and their application will cover their personal details, previous and current work/volunteering experience.

- We may send a copy of our child protection policy with the application pack.
- We will make sure that we measure the application against the selection criteria.
- All applicants will sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to work with children. The *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)* requires that people applying for positions which give them "substantial, unsupervised access on a sustained or regular basis" to children under the age of 18 must declare all previous convictions and are subject to police checks. They are also required to declare any pending case against them. Prospective staff will only be offered a job subject to a 'successful' police check. This includes potential employees, volunteers and self-employed people such as sports coaches. All information furnished as part of an application will be dealt with confidentially and fairly.
- We will ask for photographic evidence to confirm the identity of applicants, normally a current passport and recent proof of address.
- We will request to see documentation of any qualifications detailed by the applicant.
- We will always interview our candidates for a job.
- We will have at least two people from the school on the interview panel one of whom must have successfully completed safer recruitment training.
- We will request two written references from previous employers. We will ask the referee to also comment on their suitability for working with children. If necessary we will also try and follow up written references with a telephone call.
- We will ensure that our successful applicant obtains an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check. We will need to see the DBS check before we confirm them in post.
- We will ensure that we are compliant with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) requirements We will ensure that all new staff are registered with the ISA and that all existing staff apply for ISA registration in line with the timescales as issued by the ISA starting with those with the oldest DBS check.
- When using supply teachers, the school will ensure that the agency has undertaken appropriate checks. The supply teacher will be asked to provide evidence before they start work in the form of two types of identification such as their photographic ID as well as a letter from the agency.
- All members of the Governing Body at BGS have been subject to a DBS check.

Refer to standard recruitment and appointment policy for staff recruitment for details of these procedures.

**12 In recruiting and appointing volunteers *Bexley Grammar School* will be responsible for the following:**

- All volunteers will be asked to provide a brief written application confirming their details, experience, etc. and why they want to work in a school setting.
- All volunteers will be interviewed.
- Currently there is discretion in respect of detailing enhanced DBS checks on all volunteers. This decision must be made by the Head Teacher and will be based on the duties that the volunteer will be involved in.
- Under ISA regulations all volunteers will be required to register with the ISA if they have frequent (more than once a month) or intensive (3 consecutive days &/or overnight) contact with children from the school. We will ensure that this is complied with as guidance on timescales is issued by the ISA.
- Whenever possible a volunteer should be asked for references. It is acknowledged that this may not be from an employer but can be a personal reference.

- All volunteers should receive an induction and be given clear written guidance on responsibilities, acceptable behaviour and limits to their role.

### **13 Supervisory arrangements for the management of out of school hours activities.**

*We will aim to protect children from abuse and team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines: -*

- All clubs independent of the school must have their own child protection policy and procedures in line with this policy.
- The club will keep a register of all children attending the activities and give a copy to the school.
- The club will keep a register of all team members (both paid staff members and volunteers) and ensure they are DBS checked and registered with the ISA.
- Registers will include arrival and departure times.
- The club will keep a record of all sessions including monitoring and evaluation records.
- Team members will record any unusual events on an accident / incident form.
- Written consent from a parent or guardian will be obtained for every child attending the activities.
- Team members should not be alone with a child, although we recognise that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful; in such circumstances another adult should be told.
- Team members may escort children of the same sex to the toilet but are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has a special need that has been brought to our attention by the parent/guardian and a care plan is in place for the child naming them as part of the care plan.
- All team members should treat all children with dignity and respect in both attitude, language and actions.

### **14 Management of Children subject to Child Protection Investigation or subject to a Child Protection Plan**

When a student is the subject of a Child Protection Conference:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will contribute to the child protection investigation and contribute to the Strategy meetings.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend the Initial Child Protection Conference to share any relevant information and provide a written report for the conference.
- If the child is placed on the Child Protection Plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that the school participates appropriately in the Child Protection Plan and attends all Core Group Meetings and Child Protection Conferences.
- Information will be shared with staff on a need to know basis; key personnel working with a child should have sufficient information to support them in their work with that child.
- If a child with a Child Protection Plan has an unexplained absence from school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the Social Worker.

### **15 Support and Training**

We are committed to the provision of safeguarding training for all our team members.

In addition to the basic safeguarding training, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contribute to inter-agency working that is provided by the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership, and attend refresher training at 2 yearly intervals to keep his/her knowledge and skill up to date. In addition to this he/she will attend at least one annual training update.

All other staff will undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, and receive refresher training and safeguarding updates at least yearly.

## **16 Record Keeping**

KCSIE 2021 requires the Designated Safeguarding Lead to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of referrals and concerns. These are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in a secure location. An electronic filing system is password protected and accessible only to the DSL and Deputy DSLs. Physical copies of documents are recorded chronologically and kept in a locked filing cabinet in the DSL's office.

Bexley Grammar School promotes high quality record keeping in respect of all concerns about children's welfare. Safeguarding records should be completed in a timely manner and include all relevant information such as dates, times, others involved, witnesses etc. All records should be signed and dated.

When making a referral, the referrer should keep a written record of:

- Discussions with child
- Discussions with parent/s
- Discussions with staff
- Information provided to Children's Social Care
- Advice given and decisions taken (clearly times, dated and signed)

The referrer should confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing within 48 hours, using the interagency referral form.

A child's confidential record should include a chronology of concerns to support the understanding of the impact of past concerns, patterns and escalation of concerns.

If a child transfers to another school or other educational establishment, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will forward the child protection file to a named person at the receiving school / establishment under separate cover from the academic records. The file should be marked '*Confidential, to be opened by addressee only.*' The Designated Safeguarding Lead will retain a copy of the child protection file, which should be stored securely and accessible only by appropriate senior staff members.

In addition to the child protection file, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will also consider if it is appropriate to share any information with the new school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Child Protection records about a pupil who has ceased to become of compulsory school age should be archived and catalogued.

The School will ensure that we keep up-to-date personal data records of all the children by regularly reminding parents to inform us of any change in family circumstances and requesting an annual update.

## **17 Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

All matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The Head teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

When considering sharing information the staff will consider the seven golden rules:

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information; it provides the framework for lawful sharing.
2. Be open and honest with the person from the outset about how information may be shared.
3. Seek advice; do not fail to share information because you are unsure what to do.
4. Share with consent where appropriate and respect the wishes of those who refuse consent unless you believe that there is a risk of harm to the child if the information is not shared.
5. Consider safety and wellbeing of the child and base information sharing decisions on this.
6. Ensure all information shared is Necessary, Proportionate, Relevant, Accurate, Timely and Secure. Ensure any third party or hearsay information is identified and that you have consent to share it.
7. Keep a record of your decision and reasons for it, record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with their parents / carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership on 020 3045 5440 or 0208 303 7777 or the Greenwich Safeguarding Partnership on: 020 8921 3172.

## **18 Whistle Blowing**

Staff should be aware that children may feel unable to express concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should therefore feel free to voice concerns about the attitude and actions of their colleagues in accordance with the school's whistleblowing policy. The NSPCC also provides a whistle-blowing helpline number (0800 028 0285) or concerns can be raised directly with the LADO – (see Section 9 for contact details).

## **19 Safer working practice for staff**

All staff, male and female, should be aware of the potential risk of false allegations when interviewing a pupil alone, particularly if the pupil has an experience of sexual/emotional abuse. Staff should follow this advice in conjunction with the BGS Professional Guidance and e-Safety policies.

### Interviewing Pupils

Interviewing individual pupils is an integral part of our work and therefore staff should exercise their own professional judgement and a degree of caution in these situations. All staff should try to ensure that they do not place themselves in a compromising position where allegations can be made against them. Suggested protective measures to consider include: -

- asking another person (teacher or pupil's friend – as appropriate to the content) to sit in on the interview.
- sit in a room where it is possible to be observed through a window or glass-panelled door:
- do not close the door of the room, if you are not clearly visible from outside the room.

### Transporting Pupils

Situations can arise which require a member of staff to take a pupil home. Where this is unavoidable:

- ensure your insurance covers business passengers
- obtain parental permission, preferably in writing
- take more than one person
- sit the child in the back
- travel directly to the destination
- keep conversation professional

### Use of Technology

All staff in our school use technology to support and promote the learning and welfare of the children. Certain principles should be remembered: -

- Bexley Grammar School operates a 'no see' policy regarding mobile phones unless at teacher direction (Years 7-11) or in designated Sixth Form areas (Years 12 -13).
- On some trips it is advantageous for staff and students to be contactable by mobile phone. When this is the case, staff will have access to a school mobile phone, the number of which will be included in the trip information sent to parents. Some staff prefer to give their own mobile number in this information in which case the risk assessment must clearly identify that this number is not to be used by parents or students after the conclusion of the trip. Aside from the above circumstances, staff will not give any child their personal mobile phone number.
- With the consent of parents, student mobile phone numbers may also be recorded for trips or for activities such as work experience when it can be the most appropriate way for the school to contact a student. When contacting a student on a mobile phone, including by voicemail or text, staff will be brief and will restrict the conversation to matters regarding the educational activity in which the student is involved.
- Staff will ensure that Bluetooth connectivity on all personal mobiles and laptops is disabled when on school premises.
- Communication by email should only be through the school's email system and personal emails will not be shared with children.
- Staff will ensure that they follow the School's 'Acceptable Internet use' policy and the E-Safety policy's relevant section about access to and use of the internet. Staff will NOT access or expose children or young people to unsuitable material on the internet.
- Staff will only use the School's digital technology resources and systems for professional purposes or for uses deemed 'reasonable' by the Head and Governing Body. Staff will only use the approved School email, or other School-approved communication-systems with pupils or parents/carers, and only communicate with them on appropriate School business.

- All computer equipment and internet access within the School will be subject to appropriate “parental controls” and Internet safety rules and pupils will sign the Acceptable Internet Use Policy.
- Staff will refer to, and abide by, the School's e-Safety Policy section 8 ‘Guidance for Staff’.

## **BGS Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures During a Partial Closure 2021**

### **Safeguarding Advice for Parents / Carers and Students**

The school's Safeguarding Team will continue to monitor vulnerable students during a period of partial closure and maintain contact with the relevant services.

If a parent / carer has a safeguarding concern to report during a period of partial closure, they should contact the school's safeguarding team via School Enquiries: [enquiries@bexleygs.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bexleygs.co.uk)

If you have an urgent concern about a young person please contact Bexley Children's Services directly on 0208 303 7777 or Greenwich Children's Services on 020 8921 3172, or the relevant branch of the emergency services.

Staff members should follow the usual safeguarding procedures, though be aware of the advice above if they are unable to communicate with a DSL or Deputy DSL during a closure or period of absence.

Should students require support for safeguarding or child protection issues during a partial closure there are a number of sources of support:

- Bexley Children's Services - 020 3045 5440.
- Greenwich Children's Services - 020 8921 3172
- <https://www.kooth.com> - a free online counselling and emotional well-being support service for young people aged 11-19 in Bexley
- [www.healtheme.co.uk](http://www.healtheme.co.uk) - Access to the Bexley and Bromley School nursing service
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 Contact professional counsellors for help, advice and support
- Childline: 0800 1111 - Free, confidential advice and support for children and young people

In the event that you are unable to gain advice and support from any of these sources and are concerned about a child's safety contact the emergency services.

### **Children who are vulnerable, part of an EHCP and / or children of Key Workers**

As was the case in March 2020, it is expected that if possible schools will remain open for the parents of those deemed to be vulnerable (subject to a CSC plan), those with an EHCP and / or the children of key workers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

The list of key workers can be found in full here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

However, it is important to note the following points within the guidance:

- Many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

- Children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as critical workers by the government can send their children to school if required.
- This is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to school if they do not need or wish to do so.
- If workers think they fall within the critical categories above they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

### **Safeguarding Advice for Staff**

#### **Remote Learning**

When educating students remotely, staff should bear the following guidance in mind:

- Use school email addresses only when communicating with students and other staff about classes, work etc.
- If using technology to stream or broadcast lessons, staff should ensure that they follow the safeguarding advice listed in the school's Virtual Learning Contingency Plan  
[Virtual Learning Contingency Plan September Working Document 2020](#)
- Staff should not use their personal phone number to contact parents or students.
- Questions regarding the work set should be from students via Google Classroom - parents have been advised to raise any concerns or queries through the School Enquiries

#### **Safeguarding Procedures**

If a member of staff has a safeguarding concern about a young person during a period of school closure, they should follow the school's usual safeguarding procedures and contact Hugh Gilmore (as Designated Safeguarding Lead) via confidential record of concern form from the school's Template Gallery:

[Sign-in](#)

If it is not practical to use the referral form an email will suffice under the circumstances.

If you have not received a response in 24 hours please contact Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, Vicky Ellis or Steve Elphick.

Any member of school staff with a concern can contact Bexley Children's Services directly on 0208 303 7777 or Greenwich Children's Services on 020 8921 3172.

#### **Safeguarding vulnerable students who are not on site during School Closure**

- **Students who are subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan**

Parents of students who have a social worker assigned by their Local Authority will be contacted by the DSL, as were their assigned social workers and other professionals working the families.

All will be made aware that the school is open to the children should it be the safest possible option for them.

They, and all other parents / carers, will also be signposted to a range of support, such as local Children's Services and Childline, via the school website.

- **Keeping in contact with vulnerable students during School Closure**

The school's DSL and Deputy DSLs will carry out a RAB (Red, Amber or Blue) assessment of those students who are part of a CP/CIN plan and also those deemed to be vulnerable



who are not part of a CP/CIN plan. This document determines the level of risk the DSL believes the students are at whilst being off school as well as outlining the recommendations actions for trying to keep them safe.

- **Guidelines for maintaining contact with vulnerable students during School Closure**

Whilst age, stage and level of risk will influence what actions are taken to keep vulnerable children safe the following principles should be adhered to:

- The DSL should ensure that the school has up to date contact details for the children identified by the RAB assessment
- The relevant LA Children's Social care professional should be kept informed of any conversations and / or developments
- Other professionals working with the child should be identified and kept informed
- Any concerns should be flagged immediately
- Contact should be once a week during the period of closure, twice for anyone identified as a 'Red' risk by the DSL
- The DSL will contact the students identified by phone using a school number only
- If the school is closed the DSL out of hours phone can be used
- All conversations and updates will be recorded on the child's safeguarding file
- The DSL should speak to the child as well as the parents

In the event that it is felt a home visit is necessary to check the welfare of individual students, the following principles should be adhered to:

- Make sure to see and speak to pupils
- Speak to them on the doorstep, or see them through a window if they're self-isolating
- Avoid close contact with them (closer than 2 metres for more than 15 minutes), in line with government advice on social distancing
- Avoid staff going to pupils' homes alone. Have two members of staff go, ideally including someone with a good relationship with the family.

### **Keeping children safe in schools and colleges**

All staff at BGS have read, and signed to acknowledge their understanding of the content of, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. Staff continue to abide by the key principles during the reopening of school and period of remote learning. To summarise some of those:

- The named Designated Safeguarding Lead, Hugh Gilmore, and / or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Stephen Elphick, are on site at all times
- The best interests of children continue to come first
- If anyone in or out of school has a safeguarding concern they should act on it immediately
- Only approved staff and visitors have access to the school site
- Parents have been well-informed of how to keep their children safe online via the school website and newsletter
- Staff should be mindful that the lockdown period may have been a very difficult one for children and their families. There may be concerns around bereavement, anxiety, domestic violence and emotional or physical abuse. Staff should refer to the main body of the policy on how to identify the signs and symptoms of these issues and respond following the usual school procedures.

