

Sybil Andrews Academy Child Protection Procedures

Date: September 2026 Next review due by September 2027

Our designated safeguarding staff

				
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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Deputy DSL	Headteacher and Alternate DSL	Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children	Safeguarding Governor
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Aim

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in keeping them safe. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals must ensure their approach is child-centred. This means that they must always consider what is in the best interests of the child.

These procedures are for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. They form part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school. They should be read in conjunction with the trust's [policies](#) on safeguarding, safer recruitment and selection,

staff code of conduct, health and safety, acceptable use of ICT and online safety, and the school's policies on behaviour (including the anti-bullying strategy and approach to physical intervention) and educational visits policy. They should also be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education). Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- a. Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- b. protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- c. preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- d. ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- e. taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Expectations

All staff and volunteers must sign to confirm they have read and agree to these procedures before they start working with us, and whenever these procedures change. These procedures, or a parent-friendly summary of the school's safeguarding arrangements, will be made available to parents and carers, including through the school website and on request. It is important for families to be aware of actions staff may take if there are any concerns for a child's safety, and for them to understand that they might not be consulted before action is taken. Knowing about child protection procedures ahead of time helps parents to engage better in the process, meaning that change is more likely to take place.

All adults working in our school who have contact with pupils are in positions of trust. Staff and volunteers should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including through early help. This means that staff and volunteers:

- f. are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions
- g. must work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- h. must acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- i. must discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- j. must apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual orientation
- k. must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children
- l. must be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

Our school promotes an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture in which racism, faith-based prejudice, faith-targeted abuse and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed as part of our safeguarding responsibilities. All staff should recognise that prejudice-based harm may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, sense of safety and willingness to seek help. Staff must remain alert to its signs and impact and ensure concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.

All staff must read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and confirm that they have understood it.

Early help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Staff should be alert to emerging needs, including changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation, family circumstances, mental health, online activity, peer relationships and wider contextual risks.

Concerns should be shared with the DSL so that appropriate support, advice, Family Help/Early Help, or a referral to children's social care can be considered. Local terminology and referral routes should be reflected in the school's early help offer below.

Mental health, self-harm and suicide

Staff should recognise that mental health concerns, including self-harm, suicidal thoughts or a significant deterioration in emotional wellbeing, may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. Any concern must be shared with the DSL immediately. Where there is an immediate risk to life or serious injury, emergency services must be contacted without delay. Mental health concerns should be considered alongside attendance, behaviour, family circumstances, online activity, peer relationships, SEND and other safeguarding information.

<https://www.sybilandrewsacademy.co.uk/wellbeing-resources-support/>

The Early Help Offer at Sybil Andrews Academy includes the following interventions:

Pastoral Officers – Work with pupils on a 1-2-1 basis who have an identified need whether it be social, emotional, behavioural or academic.

Welfare and Safeguarding Officer – Work with pupils on a 1-2-1 or small group basis with individuals who have a particular social and emotional concern. Through self-referral or at request from the pastoral team. Form Tutors – All students are allocated a

Form Tutor who they see on a daily basis. They are the first point of contact for any issues.

Heads of Year – Students are allocated a HOY who can work with students making sure they make the best academic progress.

Personalised Timetable – Students who have a particular medical need, whether linked to physical or mental health, may be offered a bespoke timetable in conjunction with advice from other agencies. This is looked at on a case-by-case basis.

School Nursing Team - School nurses are available on a weekly basis with both referrals and drop-in appointments to see students with medical or wellbeing needs. A student can attend the drop-in at lunchtime without a referral, or an appointment can be offered if a referral is made by a member of the Inclusion or Safeguarding team.

CEIAG / Careers Guidance - Particularly for students in KS4 but open to all years, all students will be provided bespoke careers advice during 1-1 interviews with our careers advisor, Christine Walton. References for additional support and advice for future careers or further education should speak to Mr King who will arrange for additional support to be scheduled.

External Agency support – The school works closely with external agencies where appropriate, for example, Nicky's Way, CISS, 4YP, Restore, Early Help, social workers, Suffolk young carer's, local police and PCSO and the Criminal exploitation hubs.

Mental Health Support Teams - These teams are made up of senior clinicians, higher level therapists and Education Mental Health Practitioner trainees (EMHPs) who will work with the school to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, as well as provide expertise to meet mild to moderate mental health needs. We also have Nathan hope who is the school's mental health first aider.

What to look out for (recognising children who are experiencing or at risk of harm)

Children can be harmed in several ways; abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or it can take the form of neglect (see Part one of Keeping children safe in education).

Children sometimes suffer more than one type of abuse at a time. Children as well as adults can be abusers; child on child abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up” (see Part five of Keeping children safe in education).

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of our wider safeguarding duties (see The prevent duty: for schools and childcare providers), and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or be being threatened. This could be due to the vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to

build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication

Attendance and children missing education

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. Staff should report concerns about absence, patterns of non-attendance, persistent absence, part-time timetables, children missing education, or children who are difficult to contact or have not been seen. The DSL and attendance lead will consider whether absence may indicate neglect, exploitation, mental health need, unmet SEND, family stress, or other safeguarding concerns.

Particular attention must be given to absence or changes in presentation involving children with SEND, medical needs, young carers, children attending alternative provision and children known to children's social care. Staff must consider whether communication needs, disability, health, caring responsibilities or placement arrangements may increase vulnerability or create barriers to reporting harm.

The school retains responsibility for safeguarding pupils placed in alternative provision. Attendance, welfare, safeguarding information and the suitability of the placement must be monitored regularly, with concerns recorded and acted upon promptly.

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Our school promotes an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture in which racism, faith-based prejudice, faith-targeted abuse and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed as part of our safeguarding responsibilities. All staff should recognise that prejudice-based harm may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, sense of safety and willingness to seek help. Staff must remain alert to the signs and impact and ensure concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.

Concerns must be considered in the wider context, including peer groups, online activity and risks outside school. The absence of a formal disclosure does not mean that abuse has not occurred.

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threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, language barriers or wider family/contextual factors. This should not prevent staff from having professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. Staff should listen carefully to children, take their views seriously, and consider what life is like for the child. Children should be helped to identify trusted adults in school and should know how to raise worries or concerns.

Contextual safeguarding and extra-familial harm

Staff should be aware that children may be at risk of harm outside the family home, including in peer groups, school, the local community, online spaces, transport, parks, parties, and through exploitation. Concerns about extra-familial harm should be recorded and shared with the DSL, even where there is no concern about parenting.

Serious violence and weapons

Any information that a child possesses, has used, has threatened to use or intends to obtain a weapon must be reported to the DSL immediately. Staff should not investigate the matter themselves. The DSL will consider the immediate safety of pupils and staff, police involvement, exploitation, peer-group and online influences, and whether a referral to children's social care or other agencies is required.

Children who are questioning their gender

Where a child is questioning their gender, staff must respond in a calm, respectful and safeguarding-led way. Any request or concern should be shared with the DSL so that the child's welfare, voice, family context, vulnerabilities and wider safeguarding needs can be considered. Decisions should not be made by individual staff members in isolation and must be considered in line with KCSIE 2026, equalities duties, safeguarding procedures and any relevant Trust guidance.

Online safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We adopt a whole-school approach to online safety to protect and educate pupils, students and staff in their use of technology, and to establish mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate concerns as appropriate. The school's online safety arrangements include appropriate filtering and monitoring systems, staff training, pupil education, and clear routes for reporting and escalating online concerns.

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This is the link to the most recent Online Safety Policy [Online Safety Policy](#)

Staff should be alert to online harms including harmful content, online sexual abuse, grooming, radicalisation, cyberbullying, misogyny, image-based abuse, deepfakes, artificial intelligence-enabled harms, and risks arising from mobile and smart technology. Concerns must be recorded and passed to the DSL in line with these procedures.

Mobile phones and smart technology

The school has a clear policy on the use of mobile phones and smart technology by pupils, staff, visitors and volunteers. This includes arrangements for the school day, trips and visits, one-to-one working, use of personal devices, image-taking, and the reporting of any breach or safeguarding concern. The policy is communicated to pupils, parents, staff and visitors and is reviewed regularly.

How will the system work?

- Students hand in their phones during line up each morning.
- Phones are stored in locked cabinets during the day.
- Devices are returned at the end of the final lesson when students return to their tutor room

Late students hand phones in at reception.

If a student is on a school trip/fixture that returns after the school day has ended, they will hand their phone to their Head of year.

Artificial intelligence and emerging online risks

Staff should recognise that artificial intelligence and emerging technologies can be used to create, alter or share harmful content, including deepfakes, impersonation, sexualised images, bullying or harassment material, and extremist or harmful content. Any concern involving AI-enabled harm should be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported to the DSL without delay.

How to respond

If you have a concern about a child's wellbeing, based on:

- m. something the child or their parent has told you
- n. something another child has told you
- o. something you have noticed about the child's behaviour, health, or appearance
- p. something another professional said or did

Pass all concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL if they are not available.

Even if you think your concern is minor, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) may have more information that, together with what you know, represents a more serious worry about a child. It is never your decision alone how to respond to concerns – but it is always your responsibility to share concerns, no matter how small.

- q. **Do not investigate.** Where clarification is essential, use only minimal, open prompts such as “Tell me what happened”, “Explain what you mean” or “Describe what happened next”. Do not ask leading, repeated or investigative questions. **Do not discuss your concerns with the parent(s) if this may increase the risk to the child.**

- r. If you have heard a disclosure of abuse or are talking with a child or parent about your concerns, let them know what you will do next. For example, 'I am worried about your bruise and I need to tell Mrs Smith (the DSL) so that she can help us think about how to keep you safe.'
- s. **Inform the DSL immediately.** If the DSL is not available, inform a Deputy DSL. If none of the designated safeguarding staff or headteacher are available, you must make the referral yourself. Details of how to do this are at the end of these procedures.
- t. As soon as possible after the event, make a written record following the school's procedures: Safeguarding concerns are logged via CPOMS. If you do not have access to CPOMS please report this to the DSL, DDSL or member of the pastoral team. If there was a disclosure, record the words of the child or parent rather than your interpretation. Include analysis of what you saw or heard and why it is a cause for concern.

Any member of staff is entitled to report a safeguarding concern directly to the local authority if they do not feel able to refer the matter to the DSL. Details of how to do this are at the end of these procedures.

Operation Encompass

Where the school participates in Operation Encompass, notifications are received by trained key adults and are considered as part of the school's safeguarding response. Information is shared only with staff who need to know in order to support and safeguard the child.

Who to pass concerns on to

Names, photos and contact details for the DSL, Deputy DSL(s), Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked after children, Safeguarding Governor, Headteacher, Chair of the local governing body and relevant trust Director of Education are provided at the beginning of these procedures. Details of how to make a referral to the local authority are at the end.

Concerns about another adult in the school

Safeguarding concerns about another adult in the school that may meet the harms threshold set out below, must be referred to the Headteacher (or whoever is fulfilling the role in their absence) without delay. If the concerns are about the Headteacher (or a relative of the Headteacher working at the school) they must be referred to the relevant trust Director of Education. They will contact the Trust Safeguarding Lead who will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), within one working day, in respect of all cases that may meet the harms threshold, i.e. in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

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

If you feel your concern has not been responded to appropriately, please contact the Trust Safeguarding Leads (TrustDsl@unitysp.co.uk)

Low level concerns that do not meet the harms threshold set out above, should also be reported to the Headteacher. If they are about the Headteacher (or a relative of the Headteacher working at the school), they should be reported to the Director of Education. If they are about a member of the trust central team, they should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer. All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing by the person to whom they are reported. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, action taken and the rationale for decisions.

The term 'low level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a nagging doubt – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff (and persons in a position of trust) code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, but that does not meet the harms threshold for referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- humiliating pupils.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that might look inappropriate but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Sharing, recording and dealing with low level concerns appropriately not only keeps children safe but also protects those working in or on behalf of schools.

Self-reporting by staff

Staff must promptly self-report any interaction, conduct, boundary issue, physical contact or incident that could reasonably be misunderstood, may have caused harm, or may have fallen below the Staff Code of Conduct. Self-reporting supports transparency and allows advice or protective action to be taken at an early stage.

Use of the school premises by external providers

Where safeguarding concerns relate to an individual or organisation using school premises, including before/after school provision, clubs, lettings or external providers, the concern must be reported to the Headteacher/DSL and managed in line with the Trust safeguarding procedures, including consideration of LADO referral where appropriate.

Data (Use and Access) Act 2025

Staff must share safeguarding information with the DSL promptly. The DSL will share information with other professionals where it is necessary, proportionate and in the child's best interests. Data protection legislation, including the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, does not prevent appropriate safeguarding information sharing. Consent is not always required where a child may be at risk of harm.

Whistleblowing

If you are concerned about poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime, these should be raised with the Headteacher or the Chair of the local governing body, in the first instance. Please refer to the Trust's [whistleblowing policy](#).

The [NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line](#) is available for those who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. You can call: 0800 028 0285. This line is available from 8:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

DSL cover arrangements

The school will ensure that appropriate DSL or Deputy DSL cover is available during the school day and for any school-arranged activity. Cover arrangements, including access to safeguarding records, confidential communications and local referral information, will be communicated clearly to staff. Safeguarding arrangements must not depend upon one individual being available.

If the DSL or Deputy DSL is unavailable during the school day staff should raise concerns with the appropriate year team.

Reviewing these procedures

These procedures are reviewed at least annually and approved by the local governing body. Copies of these procedures and supporting materials, such as Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education), are available in the staffroom and on the school's website. Hard copies may be requested from the school office.

Contact details for the local authority

Contact **Customer First (Suffolk Children's Services)** on **0808 800 4005**.
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/protecting-people-at-risk-of-abuse/mash>

If you are a professional seeking safeguarding advice, contact the **MASH Professional Consultation Line** on **0345 606 1499**.
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/protecting-people-at-risk-of-abuse/mash>

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the **Police on 999**.
<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/>

If you or your child needs urgent mental health support you can call 111 and select the mental health option.

For professionals wishing to make a referral, the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) should be submitted using the online referral portal:
<https://earlyhelpportal.suffolk.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/marf#h1>

