



*Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service has provided this policy structure guide to assist schools when annually reviewing their Child Protection Policy in preparation for ratification by the Governing Body or Trustees. If schools decide to use this policy structure guide, then they should ensure that the resulting policy is individualised and tailored to the school setting. It is for the school to decide on the final form and content of this policy. The responsibility remains with the Governing Body/Board of Trustees/Proprietor to ensure that the school's Child Protection Policy is effective for their school setting.*

# ‘MODEL’ CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STRUCTURE GUIDANCE

[Document subtitle]

September 2025

## Structure Guide Colour Code



Updates for 2025/26



Sections for schools to complete or take note of (highlighted in yellow if new since last policy issue)



Text that needs deleting



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At Harbinger, our values are 'Togetherness, Well-being and Learning'. These values underpin everything that we do at Harbinger. Our priority is to support and protect every child entrusted into our care.

Action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm is everyone's responsibility. 'Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. Keeping Children safe in Education, September 2025.

Harbinger is a vibrant school that serves a diverse population including all religions, faiths, cultures, family models and backgrounds. Staff working in our school cannot make assumptions based on their own experience of life to date. They must maintain an open mind whilst being vigilant to what is in the best interests of the child, and they must maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

At Harbinger we recognise that no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

This policy has been developed to ensure that all adults in Harbinger School are working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. It describes the management systems and arrangements in place to create and maintain a safe learning environment for all Harbinger Primary School pupils and staff. It identifies actions that should be taken to address any concerns about pupil welfare.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, the member of staff deputising for them, has the ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils goes beyond implementing basic child protection procedures. It is an integral part of all the activities and functions of Harbinger Primary School. Under the Education Act 2002 schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils. Procedures within the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy apply to all staff, including agency, volunteers and governors and have been written in accordance with guidance set out in:

- Keeping children safe in education, September 2025
- Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership supplementary guidance (THSCP)

- The London Child Protection Procedures, London Safeguarding Children Board 5th Edition 2015
- 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' 2015
- Safeguarding disabled children practice guidance, July 2009

At Harbinger we have a clear set of values that describe the virtues that we hope all children and adults involved in the school community will observe. These include Togetherness, Well-being and Learning. In implementing these we strive to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all pupils and adults feel safe, secure and valued and know they will be listened to and taken seriously. The school implements policies, practices and procedures which promote safeguarding and the emotional and physical well-being of pupils and staff.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Early Help Strategy, continuum of need and thresholds guidance, Education Health and Care Plans (EHC) and the Early Help Assessment (EHA) are embedded into everyday practice and procedures when responding to pupils' needs.

Pupils have access to appropriate curriculum opportunities, including emotional health and well-being, to support the development of the skills needed to help them stay safe and healthy, develop their self-esteem and understand the responsibilities of adult life, particularly in regard to child care and parenting skills.

Harbinger School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy can be found on the school website so that all stakeholders involved in the school, whether staff, governors or parents, can access it and familiarise themselves with it.

For staff it is also saved on Microsoft Teams in our All Staff Team and at the start of the academic year all staff attend an INSET training session on this. In addition, throughout the year we run termly training sessions and provide regular safeguarding updates in our weekly staff briefing.

A hard copy can also be obtained from our school office upon request.

The Governing Body's responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond pure child protection. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies, procedures and curriculum initiatives including:

#### Acceptable Use and Internet Safety

- Anti-bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour and Relationships
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints procedure

- Confidentiality
- Equal Opportunities
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety
- Looked After Children Policy
- Managing allegations against staff
- Educational Trips and Visits
- Online Safety Policy
- PSHE: Personnel, Social, Health Education
- Positive Handling
- Safer Recruitment
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Single Central Record
- Special Educational Needs
- Whistle Blowing

Most of these can be found on the school's website: [www.harbinger.org.uk/policies](http://www.harbinger.org.uk/policies)  
Unless they only apply to staff in which case that can be found in the policies folder on the 'All staff' shared One Drive as detailed above.

Safeguarding policies will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head Teacher and Governing Body, unless new legislation or guidance calls for an immediate need to review in between times.

At Harbinger Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place for responding to situations in which we believe that a child has been harmed/abused or is at risk of harm/abuse, including procedures to cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, causing harm/abuse. This includes:

Maintaining children's welfare as a paramount concern – at all times we consider what is in the child's best interests;

- Providing an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected, confident to talk openly and sure that they will be listened to;
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that pupils know how to approach adults if they are experiencing difficulties or are worries;
- Including opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise, and stay safe from, abuse; Raising the awareness of all teaching, non-teaching staff and volunteers of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse;
- Ensuring all staff are able to recognise, and are alert to, signs of abuse;
- Ensuring all staff know they must report any concerns or suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputies, listed in this policy;

- Ensuring there is an effective structured procedure in place to be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse;
- Providing a systematic means of monitoring children who have been identified as “in need” or at risk of harm;
- Keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals;
- Ensuring procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers;
- Establishing effective joint working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children and ensuring that the school contributes effectively to external assessments of need and support plans;
- Operating safer recruitment procedures and making sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff who work with pupils (see Safer Recruitment Policy);
- Ensuring that all adults (including other community users of our facilities) have been checked as to their suitability;
- Ensuring that all staff agencies are aware of the school’s safeguarding procedures and policy and are made aware of any safeguarding concerns in relation to agency staff.
- Working with parents to build an understanding of the school’s duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, including the necessity for child protection policy and procedure, information sharing and work in partnership with other

The procedures within the Child Protection Policy apply to all staff, volunteers, visitors and governors. All procedures have been written in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and reflect local safeguarding arrangements including the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Supplementary Guidance documents on Child Protection Procedures and the Management of Allegations and Concerns that do not meet the Harm Threshold.

## 1. CORE SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of the child is paramount and underpins all discussions, decision making, and actions taken at the school.
- All concerns shared and reported by children will be taken seriously.
- All children have the right to have a life free from harm, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, all have equal rights to protection. This includes children’s lives in digital and online environments.
- The child’s wishes and feelings will always be taken into account at the school when determining what action to take and what support to provide.

- All staff including supply staff, contractors and volunteers have an equal responsibility to act immediately on any suspicion or concern shared that may suggest a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all pupils and staff involved in safeguarding and child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

These 6 core principles are embedded within the school's safeguarding arrangements; underpin the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and systems; and pervade the whole school approach to safeguarding at Harbinger Primary School.

## 2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

- To ensure all pupils on the school roll are effectively safeguarded including those pupils in Alternative Provision placements.
- To provide all staff with key information to enable them to identify safeguarding concerns and know what action to take in response.
- To ensure consistent good practice throughout the school.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment to safeguarding to the whole school community: pupils, parents/carers and other partners.

## 3. SAFEGUARDING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The following legislation and government guidance have informed the content of this policy:

### Legislation

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (Local maintained schools only)
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- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

### Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (HM Government December 2023, Updated [12<sup>th</sup> June 2025](#))
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) (Department for Education, [1<sup>st</sup> September 2025](#))
- Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (Department for Education, 2015, Updated May 2024)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015 (Department for Education, March 2015)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework [for group and school-based providers](#) ([Updated 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024](#))
- The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Department advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities (May 2014)
- The Teacher Standards 2012

#### 4. PAN LONDON & TOWER HAMLETS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP GUIDANCE

The following Pan-London and Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance has informed the content of this policy:

- London Child Protection Procedures revised 7th Edition (London Safeguarding Children Board, [31<sup>st</sup> March 2025](#))
- Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership [Levels of Need Guidance](#) (September 2023)
- Tower Hamlets SCP Supplementary Guidance for Schools and Education Settings on Child Protection Procedures - [September 2025](#)
- Tower Hamlets SCP LADO Procedures and Flowchart re Allegations made against staff working in the children's workforce - Information about reporting and managing allegations
- Tower Hamlets SCP Supplementary Guidance for Schools and Education Settings on Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff and Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold – [September 2025](#)
- Tower Hamlets SCP Multi-Agency Escalation and Resolution Policy

## 5. TOWER HAMLETS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

The Children Act 2004 as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 has brought about the establishment of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP). The Partnership coordinates the work of all agencies and ensures that this work is effective in achieving the best outcomes for Tower Hamlets children. The three statutory safeguarding partners have published arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. More information about the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership can be found on the website: [www.thscp.org.uk](http://www.thscp.org.uk)

In accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*, the school is a protective factor for all children especially the most vulnerable and has a pivotal role to play in local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The school's contribution, insight and co-operation are vital to the successful delivery of these arrangements. The school has been named as a 'relevant agency' and as such is under a statutory duty to cooperate with the THSCP multi-agency arrangements. This includes responding to safeguarding audits of quality and compliance, as requested by the local authority and/or local safeguarding partners.

The school is committed to engaging with the THSCP multi-agency safeguarding training offer and the borough's Designated Safeguarding Leads Forums, participating in THSCP/LA's Section 175/157 School Safeguarding Audit Cycles, providing key information about children relevant to keeping children safe, participating fully in the Rapid Review process and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and supporting the agreed safeguarding priority areas for 2025-2027, which are Think Family and Adolescent Safeguarding.<sup>1</sup>

## 6. LOCAL AUTHORITY STRATEGY

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Rapid Review process, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Child Death Reviews, Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023 Chapters 5 and 6 should be consulted. Working Together 2023 paragraphs 76-81, 125-130, and 230-233 provide more information on the expectation of school's role within the safeguarding partnership arrangements. For further information on the THSCP's priority areas, please visit [www.thscp.org.uk](http://www.thscp.org.uk)

In recognition of the school's pivotal role in the local safeguarding system, the implementation of this Child Protection policy and other related policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, will support the school's continued central contribution in driving improvements in outcomes for children in the borough, an overall objective set out in council strategy including:

- [TH: Is Accelerate: The Tower Hamlets Children and Families Partnership Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Tower Hamlets Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Tower Hamlets Early Help Strategy 2023-25: Leaving No Families Behind: Supporting Access for All](#)
- [VAWG and Women's Safety Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Tower Hamlets Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategy](#)

## 7. KEY DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is:

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

The phrase 'child protection' refers to the processes followed to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, carers, foster carers, and adoptive parents.

Staff refers to all those who work for the school or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

## 8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body have the strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements at the school. As a collective body, the Governing Body must have regard to all relevant statutory guidance issued, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, ensuring that school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the current Child Protection Policy, are compliant with legislation and statutory guidance, reflect local safeguarding arrangements and are effective for the education setting.

In accordance with the statutory requirement for a named member of the Governing Body to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding at the school, the Safeguarding Link Governor is Father Tom Pyke.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the school's Child Protection Policy and other safeguarding policies are communicated to all staff, understood by all members of staff, and followed by all members of staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding arrangements within the school on a day-to-day basis,

including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Fiona Keogh, Deputy Headteacher  
[fkeogh@harbinger.org.uk](mailto:fkeogh@harbinger.org.uk) and 07960 512 752
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Nimesha Nagahawatte, Headteacher [NNagahawatte@harbinger.org.uk](mailto>NNagahawatte@harbinger.org.uk)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jackie Garner, Early Years Leader  
[jgarner@harbinger.org.uk](mailto:jgarner@harbinger.org.uk)
- SENDCO: Jade Ellis  
[Jellis@harbinger.org.uk](mailto:Jellis@harbinger.org.uk)
- Safeguarding Governor and Online Safety Governor: Father Tom Pyke  
[tom.pyke@parishioid.org.uk](mailto:tom.pyke@parishioid.org.uk)
- Chair of Governors: Martin Young [martin@harbinger.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:martin@harbinger.towerhamlets.sch.uk)

In the absence of Fiona DSL, contact Nimesha DDSL on 07974266981, this also applies to out of school hours/term activities.

The DSL takes the lead on supporting pupils during standard and non-standard transition points and ensuring that relevant information for the safeguarding of these children is shared. This includes ensuring that safeguarding files are sent separate from the main pupil file to the new school within the first 5 days of the child starting there and that appropriate follow-up is done if the school is not receiving safeguarding information from the previous school the child attended.

If the school has not received the safeguarding records for new pupils within the first 5 days of the pupil starting during standard and non-standard transition points, then the school will proactively reach out to the previous school for the transfer of safeguarding files.

All staff should recognise that as frontline workers they are in a **vital** important position to identify concerns early, provide help and support to children, promote children's welfare, and prevent concerns from escalating.

All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL.

- Complete a pink CP Concern form. Hard copies can be found in: Fiona's/Nimesha's/Sajna's/Early Years/Reception Offices/Staffroom or online on the All Staff Team >Safeguarding – CP concern form
- Immediately speak to the DSL or DDSL in person **and** hand-in or e-mail concern form to: [fkeogh@harbinger.org.uk](mailto:fkeogh@harbinger.org.uk) and copy in [NNagahawatte@harbinger.org.uk](mailto>NNagahawatte@harbinger.org.uk)
- E-mails are accessed by the Safeguarding Team every weekday.
- You will be advised of receipt of the CP form.
- Any other information provided will be on a need-to-know basis.

All members of staff take responsibility for writing up clear and comprehensive safeguarding concerns using the school's safeguarding record system. Through the DSL's oversight safeguarding records include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy DSL).

If in doubt about any safeguarding matter, staff should **always** speak to the DSL.

All staff are expected to keep the school values at the core of their daily conduct and understand that they have a legal duty to safeguard the child. Ultimately, the best interests of the child must be at the centre of all decision making, behaviours and actions taken in relation to children.

## 9. RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The school upholds the Human Rights of the child in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.<sup>2</sup> It is unlawful for schools to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. Specifically, the school embeds and upholds the following Convention rights of the child across its safeguarding policies and procedures:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to education.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics). **Further information can be found on the school's Equality Policy** The school is committed to supporting and taking positive action towards children with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race- who may be at a disadvantage and be disproportionately vulnerable.

In fulfilment of the school's Public Sector Equality Duty, the school has due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights>

advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Within the context of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, the school pays particular attention to supporting pupils with protected characteristics – including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race. The school takes positive actions such as attending Para SEND sports events on a termly basis; the school works closely with parents of children with SEND so that the children can take full part in all the activities on offer in school. As part of our reasonable adjustments the school has parents attending residential visits and day school visits to enable all children to take part in the full experience on offer at school.

As evident through the Serious Case Review Child Q's findings, the school is aware that children from ethnically diverse groups are at risk of adultification whereby their vulnerability as a child is reduced or set aside because of racial bias and stereotypes impacting professional judgement.<sup>3</sup> All staff share in the whole school's commitment to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion remain at the centre of the school's safeguarding culture, so that all children receive the care, support, and protection they have the right to receive.

The school shares the London Borough of Tower Hamlet's commitment to being an anti-racist borough and to tackle and eliminate race discrimination. The council's Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission (2021) concluded that racism still exists within institutions and structures in the borough and has developed an action plan to achieve race equality at pace.<sup>4</sup> The action plan recognises that schools have a powerful and significant role in changing narratives and bringing about social change through education. Harbinger is signed up to the Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist curriculum (TARC) project and we are soon to enter our fourth cycle (Year 4) of this. We have a steering group made of staff from across the school. We have coordinated staff meetings and INSET dedicated to this and all the school took part in a whole school audit in Summer 2025. In school, we have revised our Literacy and Humanities curriculum using an anti-racist lens, this mean texts have been changed to reflect this. The school, along with other safeguarding partners, is fully committed to implementing the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership's Anti-Racist Charter (2025) across its safeguarding practice.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://chscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Child-Q-PUBLISHED-14-March-22.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community\\_and\\_living/Inequality-Commission/Black-Asian-and-Minority-Ethnic-Inequalities-Commission.aspx](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/Inequality-Commission/Black-Asian-and-Minority-Ethnic-Inequalities-Commission.aspx)

## 10. CHILDREN WHO MAY BE POTENTIALLY MORE AT RISK OF HARM

All staff should recognise that all children are vulnerable but that some children may be more vulnerable than others and at more risk of harm. Children known to a Social Worker, Looked After Children and Care Leavers are likely to have suffered abuse at some point in their childhood and may be more vulnerable to further abuse including exploitation. Staff need to be aware that other children who may be potentially more at risk of harm include

A Child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care; and
- is at risk of so-called honour-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child;
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

Staff must be more vigilant in their day-to-day work with children when the above vulnerabilities are known and report all concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## 11. CHILDREN IN NEED OF A SOCIAL WORKER

Children who have been allocated a social worker may have experienced abuse including neglect and belong to a family that has many complex circumstances. Staff should recognise that these children will have experienced adversity and trauma that can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged, and have a negative impact on their attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

When making decisions about safeguarding, carrying out a risk analysis, making a safeguarding response to concerns such as unauthorised and persistent absence, and providing pastoral and academic support, the school will take seriously the fact that the child in need of a social worker will require enhanced pastoral and academic support alongside that provided by

statutory services. School is also committed to providing further pastoral and academic support to children who have had historic contact with a Social Worker, in recognition that the abuse and trauma is likely to have an impact on the child beyond the duration of the involvement of statutory services. The school will co-operate with the Tower Hamlets Virtual School, which now has a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children known to a social worker.

**Staff must be more vigilant in their day-to-day work with children when the above vulnerabilities are known and report all concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff should expect to provide more thorough feedback either verbal or written on children who are known to a Social Worker**

## 12. CHILDREN REQUIRING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

All staff have an important role in supporting the mental well-being of children and to identify behaviour that may suggest a child is experiencing mental

health problems.<sup>5</sup> All staff need to recognise that mental health may be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should be aware of the trauma and mental health impact on a child who has had adverse childhood experiences including abuse, bereavement and separation of parents. Staff should also be aware that the pandemic has had a negative impact on the mental health of many children, some of whom have never previously experienced difficulties with their mental health. However, all staff should be clear that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health difficulty.

If staff have a mental health concern that is not also a safeguarding concern, they will clearly record any concerns they may have, regarding the mental health of the child, and refer to the Safeguarding Leads at Harbinger, to agree a course of action. This will include close liaison with parents / carers of the child and might include referring the child to the school's Learning Mentor, or a referral to CAMHS. In addition, at Harbinger there are 4 trained Nurture Mentors who will also be available to provide support for the child once a course of action has been agreed with the parents / carers and the child. The school will appoint a Senior Mental Health First Aid Leader.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child which is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken, following the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and speaking to the DSL or a Deputy DSL. (The DFE has published advice and guidance on Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools). If there are already safeguarding concerns, then the school might refer to MAST for advice.

At Harbinger, we continue to work with Tower Hamlets Education Well-being Service (THEWs) and also achieved Silver status as a Trauma Informed School. We have a Mental Health and Emotional Well-being policy in place so we can develop a whole-school level approach to positive mental health.

### 13. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN, PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN & CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE ARRANGEMENTS

The most common reason for children becoming looked after by the Local Authority is as a result of abuse including neglect.

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<sup>5</sup> For further information staff should read relevant government guidance including [Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#) (2022) and [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (2018)

Staff need to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to safeguard Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children in recognition of their heightened vulnerability.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Teacher will work **together alongside** relevant agencies and take immediate action to safeguard and provide support to this vulnerable group of children. The Designated Teacher will work with the Tower Hamlets Virtual School to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan.

Harbinger's Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked After Children is Nimesha Nagahawatte and, as part of the role, she attends the borough's training for this and has had specific training in conducting PEP meetings and completing ePEPS. In previous years when the school has had LAC children, the DT has worked closely with the Virtual School to set a personal budget for the child and to agree on additional support for the child both pastoral and educational.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with the Local Authority's Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support Care Leavers, so that any issues or concerns affecting the care leaver can be explored and effective support put in place.

**The school will work with the Tower Hamlets Virtual School to promote and champion the attendance, attainment and progress of children in kinship care arrangements. Since September 2024, the Virtual School has a non-statutory responsibility to promote the education of children in kinship care arrangements regardless of whether the children have been previously looked after by the Local Authority.** [Kinship Care](#) is any situation in which a child is being raised in the care of a friend or family member who is not their parent. The arrangement may be temporary or longer term. Examples of kinship care arrangements include Private Fostering Arrangements, Special Guardianship Order, and Child Arrangements Order, where the child is being cared for by a relative or friend who is not a parent.

## 14. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or physical health issues can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers

can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

- professionals and other adults making assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities or certain medical conditions being vulnerable to experiencing peer exclusion and isolation and being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying (including prejudice-based bullying), without outwardly showing any signs
- children not understanding that what is happening to them is abuse;
- communication barriers when reporting abuse and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

For some disabled children, their dependency on parents and carers for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate personal care, may increase their risk of exposure to abusive behaviour. Some children may also have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. Looked After Disabled Children may be particularly susceptible to possible abuse because of their additional dependency on residential and hospital staff for day-to-day physical care needs.

Further information on safeguarding SEND children is available in the non-statutory guidance [Safeguarding Disabled Children](#) (2009); [NSPCC Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) (May 2022), and [NSPCC Safeguarding d/Deaf Children and Children who have disabilities at greater risk of abuse](#) (June 2024). Staff should speak with the DSL and SENDCO in the first instance.

All staff are regularly trained to understand and be aware of the additional barriers that exist when safeguarding children **with SEND**. All staff need to be aware that children **with SEND** may be more vulnerable when online and using digital platforms, and it is important that Online Safety lessons and related advice are tailored to their individual needs.

At Harbinger, we have increasing numbers of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities. To address these challenges, we

have enhanced pastoral support for these children in place, with teams around each child maintaining regular and effective communication about their needs and ongoing progress.

## 15. CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION & CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

The school closely monitors attendance, absence, suspensions, and exclusions. A child absent from education, whether prolonged or on repeat occasions, can be a vital warning sign of a wide range of safeguarding issues and is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, and child criminal exploitation (county lines).

In accordance with the DfE's [statutory guidance \*Working together to improve school attendance\*](#), the school follows up on absences and addresses persistent and **severe** absence as part of its safeguarding duty. Such an

approach prevents the risk of these children becoming children missing education in the future. Staff address daily absence and persistent absence as soon as these problems emerge as part of school's early help response. Staff should be alert to children already known to be vulnerable especially Children known to a Social Worker and Looked After Children, since absence from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

At Harbinger, there is a robust system in place in relation to children's absences:

- The School Office team make daily absence calls to parents / carers from the first day a child is absent from school. This information is then inputted onto the school MIS system.
- In addition to this, we have an Absence Communication Channel on Microsoft Teams dedicated to the sharing of this key information with the DSL and Headteacher.
- If we are unable to make contact via telephone with the family, we will email and, if deemed necessary, we will conduct home visits to establish the reason for the absence. The school's Attendance Policy can be found on our [website](#).

When a pupil does not return to school and the whereabouts of the child and their family are not known, the school will make reasonable enquiries and refer the child to the Attendance & Welfare Advisor to support with those enquiries

to ascertain the child's whereabouts and, only after these steps have been taken, refer to the Local Authority using a Missing Children referral form.

Contact: LBTH CME Officer, Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service, [Saadia.Anwer@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Saadia.Anwer@towerhamlets.gov.uk) 020 7364 3426 / 07562 431 817

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

## 16. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

The school recognises that parents have a legal right to electively home educate their child at home; however, it is expected that the parents' decision to do this is made with their child's best education and best interests at its heart. Staff should be aware that even though most home educated children have a positive experience, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

When a parent informs the Headteacher of their intention to electively home educate their child, the school will convene and coordinate a meeting between the LA, relevant school staff, parents and all key professionals currently working with the child and family. In accordance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and LBTH Policy, this meeting has to occur before any final decision is made by the parents, to ensure that the best interests of the child have been taken fully into account and carefully considered. The occurrence of this meeting is especially important when the children have known vulnerabilities including Children known to a Social Worker and children [with SEND](#).

## 17. WHISTLEBLOWING

All staff members have a responsibility to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in any aspect of the school's safeguarding arrangements and staff should feel confident that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

All staff at Harbinger are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the school's Whistleblowing Policy (available on All Staff -> General -> Policies on Teams).

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should consider other channels available to employees as set out in [Government's guidance on whistleblowing](#). To raise whistleblowing concerns externally school staff are advised to report to the Prescribed Bodies in the [Government's List of Prescribed Bodies and Persons](#), which includes for safeguarding related concerns the NSPCC: Whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285 which is free & anonymous, more information can be found at [nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing](http://nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing).

## 18. REPORTING OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF & CONCERNS THAT DO NOT MEET THE HARM THRESHOLD

Allegations of harm may indicate that a person who works with children might pose a risk of harm to children if they continue in that role. When an allegation is made against a member of staff including supply staff and volunteers, the school's Managing Allegations Procedures should be followed, and all action taken needs to be in line with [KCSIE 2025](#) Part 4 and the THSCP Supplementary Guidance- Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff – [September 2025](#).

An allegation is made against a member of staff including supply staff, volunteers, contractors and governors, when an individual has:

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

All staff must report all allegations, irrespective of the source, directly to the Headteacher and ensure that it is put in writing, signed and dated. If the subject of the allegation is the Headteacher, then the allegation should be directly reported to the Chair of Governors.

On receipt of a report of an allegation, the Headteacher will make immediate contact with the Local Authority Designated Officer for an initial discussion. If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors shall make contact with the LADO.

When an allegation is made against a supply member of staff, the Headteacher will be the case manager and take the lead in contacting the LADO.

When schools receive a report of an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or external organisation was making use of the school premises for activities involving children, the Headteacher should seek the advice of the LADO.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

**LBTH Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** Melanie Benzie

**Email:** [Melanie.Benzie@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Melanie.Benzie@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or  
[LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 0207364 0677

In accordance with the Early Years Framework, registered Early Years settings must notify Ofsted of serious allegations of harms and the actions taken by the setting as soon as is reasonably practicable but no longer than 14 days. A registered provider who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.

Concerns about staff that do not initially seem to fulfil the allegation criteria set out above are known as Concerns that do not meet the Harm Threshold, sometimes called low-level concerns, not because they are insignificant but because they do not initially seem to meet the harm threshold. Staff should report and self-report such concerns in accordance with the school's procedures, which are found in the school's Staff Code of Conduct. Contact will be made with the LADO for advice and guidance when appropriate as part of the Headteacher's or Chair of Governor's response to the report.

The school's Staff Code of Conduct can be found on our All Staff Team, which has a section on Concerns about staff that do not meet the Harm Threshold: [2025.26 Safeguarding Code of Conduct and Safe Working Practices.pdf](#)

All staff should understand their responsibility to report ***all concerns*** about staff conduct which has taken place at the school or outside of the school, including online environments, no matter how small or insignificant they might be perceived to be.

## 19. STAFF SAFEGUARDING TRAINING INCLUDING TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS

School staff and Governors are required to have compulsory safeguarding training as part of their induction and to maintain their knowledge through regular safeguarding training and updates. The safeguarding training at induction, and indeed as part of continuous professional development, should include Online Safety covering, among other things, an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring systems in place at the school. Through regular safeguarding training and updates staff are given the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively and governors/trustees will be empowered and equipped to provide strategic challenge and gain assurance that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

All staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, as well as online safety, at least annually. Additionally, all staff will receive safeguarding and child protection updates throughout the year, via staff briefings, staff meetings and by email.

Governors also receive yearly training and further updates via termly reports. Induction training for new staff includes:

- AUP
- Staff Handbook
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct • our procedures for managing children who are missing from education and the staff code of conduct.
- Signs and symptoms of abuse (emotional, physical and sexual) and physical neglect
- How to manage an allegation from a child as well as when and how to record a concern about the welfare of a child.

All staff are allocated time within directed hours to read Part 1: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

This is done in the first Safeguarding INSET training at the start of the academic year, the DSL/DDSL will organise mini KCSIE quizzes through the year to ensure all staff have a full understanding of this.

A record will be kept ensuring that all staff receive safeguarding induction training. For those who miss training, additional training opportunities will be arranged asap.

The DSL and DDSLs will receive refresher training every two years as well as further higher-level training and termly updates.

## 20. VISITORS

Harbinger's Visitors' Guidance and Visiting Speaker's Policy can be found on the [school website](#). The School Office Team have specific training time with the DSL around the protocols on having visitors on site.

All visitors:

- Are met on arrival at Reception where they sign in and an ID badge is issued.
- If applicable, the visitor's ID information and DBS details are checked.
- Are accompanied by a member of staff to and from Reception.
- Are provided with an overview of Child Protection safeguarding procedures and named staff/contacts (if working with children)
- If concerns are raised regarding the visitor, the DSL will take action to address the concern in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Harbinger School appreciates and values the educational benefits of outside speakers visiting the school to address children and/or staff. However, we recognise our responsibilities to the pupils in our care and require a number of Safeguarding procedures to be followed. These procedures are detailed in our Visitors' Guidance.

Briefly:

- The Headteacher must be informed in writing, in advance, that a Visiting Speaker is to be invited to the school.
- The Headteacher can then give outline authorisation for the Visiting Speaker to be booked.
- The Headteacher then initiates the vetting process. The Visitor Guidance and policies are sent to the Visiting Speaker in advance.
- If the Visiting Speaker does not have a DBS, a risk assessment should be in place i.e. the visitor is accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

- Final clearance for the Visiting Speaker can then be granted by the Headteacher.
- If the school has any concerns during the vetting process, we will pass any relevant information to the Local Authority Prevent officers.
- The member of staff responsible for booking the speaker must ensure the Visiting Speaker agreement form is read and signed prior to the presentation, when at least one member of staff will be present at all times.

When a Social Worker, Police Officer or another professional visits the school to meet with a child as part of statutory investigations or other work, the ultimate safeguarding responsibility remains with the school. The school is aware of the need for the child to have an appropriate adult when interviewed by the Police in accordance with the [PACE Code C statutory guidance](#).

The school will inform parents if a Social Worker, Police Officer etc. requests to meet a child.

## 21. ALTERNATIVE PROVISION PROVIDERS

When the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider in the best interests of the child, the school will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will take action to be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

In accordance with KCSIE and the statutory guidance [Arranging Alternative Provision](#), as a minimum, the school will have a written record of where a child is based during school hours, the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend. The school will regularly review at least half termly the alternative provision placements to obtain assurance that the child is regularly attending, and the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the school will immediately review the placement and consider termination, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

In fulfilment of its safeguarding responsibilities towards the pupil placed there, the school will obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the Alternative Provider, for example, the checks that schools would otherwise perform on their own staff. The school will also obtain written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the school of any

arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

## 22. EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFF-SITE ARRANGEMENTS

At Harbinger, we have a Breakfast Club to provide an affordable, early drop-off childcare facility for parents/carers; helping to improve attendance and punctuality and provide children with a nutritious breakfast at the start of the day in a pleasant and relaxed environment.

We have a separate Healthy Eating Policy which clearly states procedures in place for safer recruitment, safeguarding and health.

Briefly:

- In accordance with Safeguarding arrangements, all staff involved in the running of the Breakfast Club, either in a paid or voluntary capacity have current DBS (CRB) clearance. These records are held in the School Office.
- Breakfast Club staff follow existing school policies and procedures for safeguarding, child protection and the code of conduct.
- Where ICT equipment is used, they also follow the school's Online Safety policy and procedures.
- A separate risk assessment has been completed for Breakfast Club sessions and activities.

Harbinger School has a detailed Educational Visits Policy which addresses risk assessment for both extended and off-site activities. This can be found on staff shared area under 'Policies'.

In brief it specifies that:

- A risk assessment will be carried out at least two weeks in advance of the visit to identify hazards.
- First Aid provision will be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For all trips, a qualified first aider will attend the trip and First Aid kits must be taken on all visits. Special consideration is expected to be made for those with medical needs.
- Recommended ratios for adult: children are:  
-Nursery and Early Years 1:3

-Key Stage One 1:6

-Key Stage Two 1:8

- In practice, the ratio should be determined by factors such as type of activity, any SEN or medical needs, experience of the staff, venue, transport and weather conditions.
- An aspect of a trip carrying the highest level of risk is the use of public transport. The Visit Leader must exercise extreme care when the children are getting on and off public transport.
- All Children will wear high vis vests over their coats for the duration of any travelling. If you are travelling with pupils or staff who require a wheelchair, make sure that you make arrangements in advance with Transport for London, for ramps.
- Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Children with SEN or behavioural issues will be provided with support in terms of preparing for the change of routine and managing behaviours (this might come from the SENDCO).
- Every effort will be made to support pupils with SEND and medical needs, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures which may need to be addressed at the planning stage
- Residential trips will be planned well in advance and arrangements will be overseen by the Headteacher. Parents will be invited to a briefing session to discuss the details of any residential trips and to meet the staff attending. The Visit Leader should be an experienced, senior member of staff.
- Visit leaders need to notify the Headteacher of any parent volunteer at the point that the risk assessment is being submitted for authorisation. Those volunteers who are not DBS checked will not be alone with children and must be guided by school staff at all times.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another organisation outside of normal school hours, the school will seek assurance that the organisation has effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are pupils on the school register. The safeguarding standards expected of non-regulated external organisations are set out in the Department for Education's [After-School Clubs, Community Activities and Tuition: Safeguarding Advice for Providers \(September 2023, Updated 29 May 2025\)](#). The school will ensure that all safeguarding requirements are set out clearly in the lease or hire agreement with the organisation, as a condition of use and occupation of the school premises; and that failure to comply would lead to the termination of the agreement.

## 23. IDENTIFYING ABUSE

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be carried out by adults and other children.

The school is aware that children can be at risk of abuse, harm and exploitation outside of the family home. Such extra familial harms include sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, and abuse that occurs on digital and online platforms. All staff, especially the DSL and Deputy DSLs, must consider whether children are at risk of harm and exploitation in environments outside the family home. All staff should therefore apply a Contextual Safeguarding approach when safeguarding pupils, which includes applying a Contextual Safeguarding approach in the school context.

[For further information on Contextual Safeguarding, the school may wish to signpost staff to the [Contextual Safeguarding Program](#), which also contains self-assessment resources for schools namely the [Beyond Referral Toolkit: Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#) and [Beyond Referral Toolkit: Extra-familial harms in schools](#). The council's Exploitation Team is providing training sessions for School DSLs on Harms outside the Home. To book please contact THESS]

## 24. INDICATORS OF ABUSE

**Physical** - 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Sexual** - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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.

[Further guidance and resources for schools on Child Sexual Abuse can be found on the [Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse website](#) which includes the guidance documents [Communicating with Children for Education Professionals](#) and [Communicating with Parents and Carers](#).]

**Emotional** - 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.

**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 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.

The DSL is aware of the borough's [LBTH Neglect Guidance toolkits](#) and all school staff understand their important frontline role in identifying children who may be suffering from Neglect.

## 25. VOICE OF THE CHILD

All those with a responsibility to safeguard children need to recognise that it takes great courage for a child to share a concern and speak up about any form of abuse especially child sexual abuse.

There are many reasons why children are not able to articulate what they are experiencing. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are currently being threatened by the perpetrator of abuse. Also, children may not feel ready or know how to tell a trusted adult that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. They may not even realise that their experiences are harmful.

The barriers preventing a child communicating their concerns may be connected to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, or language. The child's behaviour including misbehaviour may be the first sign that a child has experienced harm. Staff will therefore exhibit professional curiosity and understand that a child may be communicating a concern through their actions and behaviours and take a safeguarding approach when responding to behaviours.

Staff need to be aware of and promote the systems in place at the school which enable children to share their concerns and report abuse confidently. Children need to be assured that their concerns will be taken seriously by staff and action will be taken to safeguard and protect them. It is also important that staff determine how best to build safe and trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitates communication and the sharing of concerns.

[KCSIE 2025 Part 2 requires schools to have a Child Protection Policy that refers to the systems in place to facilitate children voicing their concerns and reporting abuse. According to KCSIE these systems need to be accessible, understood by all children and promoted throughout the school. School needs to insert here a paragraph on what these systems look like in their setting and how they are accessible, understood by all children and promoted throughout the school]

At Harbinger Primary School, the following systems are in place to facilitate children voicing their concerns and reporting abuse. These systems are accessible, understood by all children and promoted throughout the school:

- The 'Connection Box', or equivalent, in classrooms where children can write anonymous concerns and highlight for the attention of teachers.
- DSL posters visible around the school and DSL / DDSL have an open-door policy.
- Children are aware of systems through assemblies, circle time sessions, as well as engagement from our school's Learning Mentor and Nurture Mentors.
  - In addition to this, on the school's website there is a space under the Safeguarding section to report in safeguarding concerns. This can be used by older children if they wish.

## 26. SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

### 27. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child 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. Apart from age, other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation include gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

CSE can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and 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).

CSE 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. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, as they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. Children may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Staff should be vigilant and be aware of the following indicators of CSE, which is by no means an exhaustive list, and report all concerns immediately to the DSL:

- Children who are in possession of multiple phones and overly anxious to check their phones
- Children who experience sudden changes in behaviour e.g. looking agitated, children who want to leave the school premises at lunchtime
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;

- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- 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.

Through the school's PSHE and RSE curriculum, staff are able to communicate the risks associated with CSE with children.

For further information staff can read the [Home Office Statutory Guidance](#) on Child Sexual Exploitation as well as speaking to the DSL. [The Children's Society has provided useful guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation.](#)

## 28. CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION INCLUDING COUNTY LINES

Child Criminal Exploitation (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 through County Lines, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children

involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to

All Staff should be aware that girls as well as boys can be risk of CCE. It is important for staff to note that boys or girls being criminally exploited are at higher risk of being sexually exploited.

Staff need to be aware of some of the indicators of CCE:

- Children who are in possession of multiple phones and overly anxious to check their phones
- Children who experience sudden changes in behaviour e.g. looking agitated, children who want to leave the school premises at lunchtime
- 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.

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell 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 (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Many of the indicators of children involved in County Lines are as described above under CCE. However, in addition they can include children who:

- go missing from education and/or home and subsequently found in areas away from their home;
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime);
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs;
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection;
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'traphouse or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity;
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters;
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office and The Children's Society [County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#). Metropolitan Police information leaflets raising awareness about Cuckooing are available from the [council website](#) in English, Bengali and Somali.

When referring children at risk of Exploitation to MAST, the school will give consideration to completing an Exploitation Screening Tool to support the Local Authority's assessment of risk to the child.

[N.B. Primary schools should be alert to the increase vulnerability of children under 10 years old being exploited because they are under the age of criminal responsibility]

## 29. SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE

All staff are 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 well-being, 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.

## 30. ONLINE HARMS

Children should have the right to explore the digital environment but also the right to be safe when on it. However, technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm, and the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Examples of which include child sexual exploitation; child criminal exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation/grooming; and forms of child-on-child abuse such as cyberbullying and nudes and semi-nudes. **The Online Safety Act 2023 among other things makes cyberflashing, threatening communications and the promotion of self-harm criminal offences.** Artificial Intelligence is the current technological innovation evolving with speed, which will benefit society including the education sector but also generate great risks and challenges compromising the safety of children, for example, Generative Artificial Intelligence is being misused to create sexualised images and videos of children especially girls.

[Schools are signposted to the Internet Watch Foundation's [Professionals Guide: Understanding and Responding to AI-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material](#) and the IWF's [Report and Remove Tool](#) that may be useful for pupils]

In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse other children online, which can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content. In accordance with Behaviour in Schools Advice for Headteachers and school staff (September 2022), the school promotes as part of its culture of excellent standards of behaviour that the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline, and that every pupil should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk that should form the framework for school's approach to Online Safety:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, racism, prejudice-based

content, misogyny, **misinformation, disinformation, conspiracies, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism;**

- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention of grooming or exploiting them for sexual, criminal; financial or other purposes;
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual or non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes), and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. When pupils are at risk of phishing, school can reports concerns to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

School is committed to reviewing and implementing its Online Safety Risk Assessment to keep staff and pupils safe when using technology including the use of Artificial Intelligence.

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer).

When there are concerns about a child in this area, staff should notify the DSL, who will consider referring the child into the Cyber Choices programme (cyberchoices.uk), which provides early intervention where children are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

In accordance with the Prevent Duty, the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place when children access the internet via school devices and when using the school network. The school meets the Department for Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standards through

- identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- reviewing filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.

having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs.

At Harbinger, we ask that all staff take statistics into consideration when observing children's online behaviour as well as when delivering the Online Safety and RSE Curriculum each year. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school to protect and educate the whole school community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate. As a school, we encourage our parents / carers not to give their children mobile phones especially before Year 6 and in Year 6 only if they independently travel to and from school. This is because most young children are not yet ready to manage themselves safely with such easy access to the online world. All staff must read and sign the Acceptable Use Policy before using any school ICT resource. We have a separate Online Safety Policy which addresses online use and safety. Staff are expected to read it in partnership with this policy. It addresses how we seek to protect children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material and behaviours with appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. We recognise that access to the internet creates a whole new world of risk for children. Issues around cyber bullying which are associated with emotional abuse are considered in our Anti Bullying Policy as well as in this. If you have any concerns, make sure they are recorded in writing, discuss with a DSL asap and follow the staff safeguarding procedure

Harbinger Primary School is committed to ensuring that Online Safety is a running and interrelated theme throughout its safeguarding arrangements including policy and procedure, the curriculum, staff training and induction, the role of the DSL, and parental engagement. This includes promoting an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring systems in place when children access the internet via school devices and the school network.

As part of a whole school approach the school is committed to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to be empowered and upskilled in keeping children safe online through the sharing of Online Safety information, advice and guidance including the offer of workshops to support parents for example in installing safeguards on to their children's digital devices.

[School to cross reference to school's Online Safety Policy, Pupil Behaviour Policy, and the school's Acceptable User Policies for staff and pupils. Online Safety guidance and resources can be found on [THESS's resources page](#) and the [THSCP's website](#).]

The school has an Online Safety Policy which addresses how social networking, social media and personal publishing be managed for the safeguarding of both pupils and staff. Briefly:

- Harbinger Primary School will block/filter access to social networking sites.

- Pupils will be advised never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them and / or their location. Examples would include real name, address, mobile or landline phone numbers, school attended, IM and e-mail addresses, full names of friends, specific interests and clubs etc.
- Pupils should be advised not to place personal photos on any social network space.
- They should consider how public the information is and consider using private areas.
- Staff should be advised not to store photos or videos of current/ex-pupils on their personal phones/devices. Staff should use school-approved technology i.e. school iPads and school laptops.
- Staff should be advised not to communicate or ‘friend’ current/ex-pupils on social media in private use.
- Advice should be given regarding background detail in a photograph which could identify the student or his/her location e.g. house number, street name or school.
- Pupils should be advised on security and encouraged to set passwords, deny access to unknown individuals and instructed how to block unwanted communications. Students should be encouraged to invite known friends only and deny access to others.

In accordance with Department for Education’s guidance, Mobile Phones in Schools (February 2024), the school prohibits the use of mobile/smart phones throughout the school day as set out in the Behaviour Policy.

Harbinger school has an Online Safety policy, Behaviour and Relationships Policy and the school’s Acceptable Use Agreement for staff and pupils. The school does not permit children the use of mobile phones within the setting.

Staff should report Online Safety concerns about pupils to the DSL as with all other safeguarding concerns. When it comes to the safety and well-being of the child, the response to the risks and harms that children may experience in the online or digital environment should be no different than the offline, face to face world. For most children there is little distinction between the online and face to face interactions as the two environments often intersect with one another in their daily lives. Staff should recognise that children’s experience of abuse in the digital environment may be even more pronounced, where the identity of the abuser is unknown and the abuse can continue 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The school has a Remote Learning Policy too to support children and staff to work safely online and on Microsoft Teams. The school continually reviews and responds to the potential harms and risks of Online Safety and seeks to update policies and teaching for children accordingly.

Staff should be aware that children with known vulnerabilities such as SEND, LAC and PLAC children and Children known to a Social Worker, may be more vulnerable to harm and exploitation in the online and digital environments.

### 31. DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse recognises that domestic abuse may occur in different types of relationships, including ex-partners and family members and is not restricted to the family home. According to the definition, the person perpetrating the abuse and the person to whom the abusive behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and be “personally connected”. Domestic Abuse may involve a range of abusive behaviours, which may be a single incident or a pattern of abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse, and coercive and controlling behaviour.

Staff should be aware that all children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home because of the abuse. Children can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as ‘teenage relationship abuse’.

In response to safeguarding reports received about children involving Domestic Abuse, the school will make contact with Children’s Social Care for advice and guidance. Where appropriate school will complete a DASH Risk Assessment with the individual reporting as a victim of Domestic Abuse.

The school has signed up to the Metropolitan Police’s Operation Encompass project. Operation Encompass ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, and where there are children in the household, the police will notify the school’s DSL before the child arrives at school the following day, so that the school can provide ‘silent support’ to the child and follow up with Children’s Social Care where appropriate.

[Schools can contact the Tower Hamlets Violence Against Women and Girls Team for support required on any of the VAWG strands including training needs and workshops for parents. Please contact the Prevent Training Officer: [Amy-Kate.Garwood2@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Amy-Kate.Garwood2@towerhamlets.gov.uk). Schools can also sign up to the VAWG Pledge.]

## 32. SO-CALLED HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

So-called 'Honour'-Based Abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or 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. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of so-called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. 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 who might be at risk of Honour Based Abuse or who has suffered from Honour Based Abuse, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will follow local safeguarding procedures.

### Female Genital Mutilation

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, FGM is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

[School to reference the [HM Government Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on FGM, Updated 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020](#)]

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 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 may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining pupils or students. Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. However, teachers should notify the DSL of this action as well as reporting the disclosure of FGM in line with school's safeguarding procedures.

The duty on teachers to report to the police 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 and report concerns to the DSL. If in doubt, staff should speak to the DSL.

## Forced Marriage

In England and Wales, the practice of Forced Marriage is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages. Schools and colleges play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

School and college staff should contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email [fmu@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fcdo.gov.uk)

[School to reference the Forced Marriage Unit's Statutory Guidance and Multi Agency Guidelines [The Right to Choose](#) Updated April 2023]

## Virginity Testing and Hymenoplasty

The government has made it illegal to carry out, offer or aid and abet virginity testing or hymenoplasty in any part of the UK, as part of the Health and Care Act 2022.

It is also illegal for UK nationals and residents to do these things outside the UK.

In response to any reports of a child/young person being subject to or at risk of virginity testing or hymenoplasty, the DSL will take action in accordance with the government's non-statutory guidance [Virginity testing and hymenoplasty: multi-agency guidance](#) (July 2022).

### 33. RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is part of the school's safeguarding approach.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

At Harbinger, staff are always encouraged to refer to the Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty 2023 (Updated March 2024). Paragraphs 141-207 pertain to Education. Reference should also be made to The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation. Support for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities (Department for Education, October 2022).

The school has completed a Prevent Risk Assessment, which was reviewed in July 2023, in collaboration with the then borough's prevent officer Eleanor Knight. The school self-assessed and gave itself a RAG rating of green which was authorised by the Prevent Officer. The school will review this again in September 2024, as part of the regular reviews on all the safeguarding policies.

The role of the curriculum:

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to express themselves through discussions, debates and consultations. The R.E. and PSHE provision is embedded across the curriculum and underpins the ethos of the school and British values of democracy, rule of law, respect, tolerance and liberty. Children learn about other faiths, visit places of worship and are taught about how to stay safe when using the Internet.

### **Staff Training:**

Through INSET opportunities in school, we will ensure that our staff are fully aware of the threats, risks and vulnerabilities that are linked to radicalisation; are aware of the process of radicalisation and how this might be identified early on. We continue to book Prevent training for staff, parents and children in the new academic year and VAWG training.

In LBTH the Prevent Education Officer is Iona Karrman-Bailey: [Iona.Karrman-Bailey@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Iona.Karrman-Bailey@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

In LBTH, all Prevent referrals related to children should be made through the Multi Agency Support Team.

## **34. CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE**

Staff must be aware that children may be harmed by other children.

Child-on-child abuse can happen both inside and outside of school, including online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse.

Staff should treat all reports of child-on-child abuse very seriously and make it clear that all forms are unacceptable. As with all forms of abuse the occurrence of child-on-child abuse is an infringement of a child's human rights. Abuse is abuse and will never be dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. The school adopts a Zero Tolerance Approach to child-on-child abuse.

All staff should recognise that even though there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse among pupils, such abuse may still be taking place and that it is simply not being reported.

Staff should be aware that it is more likely that boys will be perpetrators of child-on-child abuse and girls will be victims of child-on-child abuse. However,

all forms of child-on-child abuse are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the school.

Staff should recognise that child-on-child abuse can take many forms and may be facilitated by technology, including:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- physical abuse such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling
- sexually harmful behaviour and sexual abuse including inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault or rape
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos
- teenage relationship abuse – where there is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- upskirting – taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge and/or permission with the intention of viewing their buttocks or genitals (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification. It is a criminal offence.
- initiation/hazing - used to introduce newcomers into an organisation or group by subjecting them to a series of trials and challenges, which are potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusive.
- prejudice and discrimination - behaviours which cause a person to feel powerless, worthless or excluded originating from prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, for example, prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

Although a child identifying as LGBTQ+ is not in itself a safeguarding concern, such children may be more vulnerable to forms of child-on-child abuse. This includes children who are perceived to be LGBTQ+ even though they do not identify as such. The school is committed to providing a safe space for LGBTQ+ children to share any concerns they may have and in ensuring an inclusive culture is maintained. **In the support that is provided to children**

questioning their gender, the school will adhere to any specific guidance issued by the Department for Education.

At Harbinger Primary School, we seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse through the implementation of our curriculum and associated policies:

- Our policy on the prevention and management of bullying acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.
- Our Relationships and Sex Policy/PSHE Scheme outline how the school prepares the children for age appropriate relationships and physical contact.
- See the curriculum section earlier in this policy re. Online Safety and behaviour.

In particular, at Harbinger Primary School, our relentless focus on our school values strives to enable children to be respectful of one another and to be responsible for their 'positive' impact upon one another in a safe way. We are clear, however, that abuse is abuse, it could happen here, but if it does, it will not be tolerated. Part of our duty for safeguarding is also teaching the children appropriate behaviours/language to avoid safeguarding matters escalating for them. 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 you are concerned about potential child-on-child abuse, you must report it to the DSL using the school's CP pink, confidential form and attending to Safeguarding procedures for staff.

If you suspect that children are involved in sexting – please refer to the guidance produced by the UK Council for Children Internet safety.

In partnership with you, the DSL will decide what further action to take which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Discussions with alleged victim and perpetrator to understand the extent of the harm;
- Discussions with the alleged victim and perpetrators' parents regarding the extent of the harm and a support plan to respond;
- The use of restorative practices to enable children to fully learn about and understand the extent of the harm that has been committed and to empower them to take responsibility for their actions;

- A support plan may include a referral to the school's Learning Mentor, SENDCO or Nurture Mentors;
- Discussions with MAST may be sought to determine what support could be sought by both the alleged victim and perpetrator. This is likely to be appropriate if the abuse may have stemmed from a lack of structured time outside of school.
- If it is suspected that a device may contain inappropriate images, the school will follow the DfE's guidance on 'Searching, screening and confiscation, January 2022' to seize the evidence.

[Schools are signposted to THESS's [safeguarding resource webpage](#) that contains links to key organisations that can support schools in their response to forms of child-on-child abuse]

## 35. CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All staff must be aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex and it can happen in any environment including schools, the family home as part of intra-familial abuse and via online platforms. It can also occur when a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or a group of children. The abuse may be perpetrated by a younger child towards an older child because of an imbalance of power caused by factors such as height difference or cognitive ability.

As part of school's wider safeguarding culture, staff should maintain an '**it could happen here**' approach in regard to child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment and understand that children in the school and the local community may be experiencing such forms of child-on-child abuse, including that facilitated by technology, regardless of the number of reports the DSL receives.

In response to reports of child-on-child abuse school will reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. As part of the reassurance to children, it will be made clear to children that the law is in place to protect them from abuse rather than to criminalise them.

Staff should be aware that some groups of children are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- 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 physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting upskirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours will help to normalise them.

Sexual violence offences are defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003

**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. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

**Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

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.

All Staff need to be aware of the following:

- children under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this will be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. In parallel to this the school will make a referral to Children's Social Care via the Multi Agency Support Team.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual Harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. 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.

Sexual Harassment may include the following:

- 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 such as:
  - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos.
  - sharing of unwanted explicit content;
  - upskirting
  - sexualised online bullying
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
  - sexual exploitation, coercion and threats

On a case-by-case basis the school will liaise with Children's Social Care and the Police as well as specialist services as part of the immediate response to child-on-child sexual harassment and the ongoing support for all the children involved.

## **Harmful Sexual Behaviours**

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. School recognises that Harmful Sexual Behaviours can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. It is therefore important for all staff to address inappropriate behaviours to help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma.

School takes seriously its duty to respond appropriately to all reports and concerns about children's sexual behaviours both online and offline, in and outside of the school, including reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The DSL has completed relevant training in responding to and managing harmful sexual behaviours and will draw upon appropriate resources such as the AIM Checklists and Assessment Tools. The DSL will liaise where appropriate with Children's Social Care, the Police and other specialist services.

[School to describe here what response and actions school will take when reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment are brought to the attention of the DSL in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education

2025 Part 5. The paragraph should focus on Record Keeping, written Risk Assessments, the Ongoing Response and Support for Victim and Perpetrator.]

At Harbinger, any concerns about sexual violence and sexual harassment must be recorded factually and without personal judgement and reported to the DSL/DDSL immediately. In determining how to proceed, the DSL, who will have the complete safeguarding picture, will refer to the detailed guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Part 5. In particular, the DSL will consider the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. We recognise that victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered.

Each report will be considered on a case-by-case basis and is likely to result in one or more of the following:

- Internal management inline with behaviour and bullying policies, with follow-on pastoral support;
- A referral for Early help services;
- A referral to children's social care;
- In partnership with children's social care, a referral to the police.

We recognise that both the victim and the perpetrator will require follow-on support. The perpetrator more than likely will have unmet needs. A risk assessment will need to be undertaken to minimise further risk to others as well as harm to the perpetrator themselves. Partnership with agencies outlined above will be essential in guiding our response to each individual case.

[Schools may find the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's [Shore Space](#) resource useful for teenagers worried about sexual behaviours]

To support its overall prevention of and response to harmful sexual behaviours, the school will give consideration to the best practice resources such as that available through the [Contextual Safeguarding Program](#) in particular the [Beyond Referrals Toolkit: Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#)

## 36. YOUTH PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery is one of the terms professionals use to describe the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by children and young people under the age of 18 online. The term 'nudes' is used by children and covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children include 'dick pics' or 'pics'.

The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes can happen publicly online, in 1:1 messaging or via group chats and closed social media accounts. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline. Nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams may include more than one child or young person.

Incidents may also occur where:

- children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer
- children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online
- images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame. Such images can be shared via web pages and social media accounts called 'Bait Out' pages/accounts.

Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal.

When handling reports of Youth Produced Sexual Imagery, **staff must be aware that it is illegal for staff to view or share such imagery**. Staff should immediately inform the DSL who will act in accordance with KCSIE 2025 and non-statutory guidance, [Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes. Advice for Education Settings working with Children and Young People](#) (Updated March 2024).

[School to give a brief outline here of the school's response to Youth Produced Sexual Imagery in accordance with UKCIS's non-statutory guidance, [Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes. Advice for Education Settings working with Children and Young People Updated March 2024](#)]

Harbinger's response to Youth Produced Sexual Imagery will be in accordance with UKCIS's non-statutory guidance, [Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes. Advice for Education Settings working with Children and Young People Updated March 2024](#). The response will be decided on an individual case-by-case basis.

## 37. BULLYING (INCLUDING CYBERBULLYING)

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through the school's Anti-Bullying Policy/ Behaviour and Relationships Policy/Safeguarding Policy, in accordance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) and Behaviour in Schools. Advice for Head teacher and School Staff (September 2022).

At Harbinger, we have an Anti-Bullying Policy and all staff should refer to this when responding to incidents of bullying/cyberbullying.

## 38. HOMELESSNESS

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

The DSL will raise concerns at the earliest opportunity about a family at risk of homelessness through the [Tower Hamlets Homeless and Housing Options service](#).

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. However, it is also recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local Authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and should be contacted in the first instance. For general enquiries about support for young people who might be at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the borough, please contact Tower Hamlets Housing Options: [Host@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Host@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## 39. CHILDREN AND THE COURT SYSTEM

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed.

The DSL will ensure that the children concerned are supported and where appropriate make use of the guides provided by the HM Courts & Tribunals Service for [children 5-11-year olds](#) and [12-17 year olds](#).

Making child arrangements via the family courts following parental separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children too. Where appropriate parents can be signposted to the Department of Justice's [information toolkit](#) for families on making child arrangements which sets out each party's responsibility including the importance of putting the needs of the children first in the process.

## 40. CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON

An estimated 310,000 children every year have a parent in prison in England and Wales and 10,000 visits are made by children to our public prisons every week. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health.

The DSL will draw upon the resources and guidance offered through [The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders](#) (NICCO) to support the children involved and mitigate negative consequences for those children.

## 41. PRIVATE FOSTERING

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer.

Staff should be vigilant about children who are in private fostering arrangements and report concerns to the DSL, who will notify the Local Authority through a MAST Request for Support Form, as set out in the [THSCP Multi-Agency Private Fostering Guidance](#) (January 2022). The Local Authority will check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child in accordance with the [Private Fostering statutory guidance](#).

## 42. YOUNG CARERS

A young carer is a person aged 18 or under who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member. This can include, but is not limited to a person with:

- a long-term illness or condition
- a physical or learning disability
- a substance misuse condition
- a mental health condition

The support provided by a child can vary based on the condition of the person they are caring for, but typically young carers provide a combination of personal (such as helping to dress or bathe them), practical (such as cooking, cleaning and shopping) and emotional care (such as talking through their concerns with them).

It is estimated by the Children's Society that 1 in 5 children are young carers and many are hidden and unidentified.

No young carer or young adult carer should take on caring roles which are inappropriate, excessive, or which negatively impact their life opportunities, health or well-being.

The school is committed to raising awareness about young carers, among staff, pupils and parents/carers, so that young carers can be identified and receive the support they need. The school will utilise the Young Carers in Schools program resources provided by the Carers Trust and the Children's Society: <https://youngcarersinschools.com/> alongside the Tower Hamlets guidance for schools, '[Young Carers in School: A guide for education practitioners to identify and support young carers in schools](#)' and other resources available from [THESS's safeguarding resource webpage](#).

The DSL will take the lead for Young Carers at the school and ensure that there is a whole school approach to improving the outcomes for young carers.

When young carers are identified, the DSL or Deputy DSL will have a conversation with the child using if helpful the [Tower Hamlets Young Carers Identification Tool](#).

School recognises that in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 young carers have the right to an assessment by the

Local Authority to identify needs and support and the person they are caring has the right to have a reassessment of their needs.

If the school thinks that the child or young person or a member of their family requires more support than the school alone can provide, the DSL/Deputy DSL should refer to the [Tower Hamlets Multi-Agency Support Team \(MAST\)](#), so that a Young Carers Assessment can be undertaken. This assessment can help to identify what additional support can be provided from other services including housing and adult social care. Schools should complete the [Tower Hamlets Young Carers Identification Form](#) and attach it to the MAST referral form that is sent.

## 43. CHILD ABDUCTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY INCIDENTS

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a child from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

All incidents of Child Abduction should be reported immediately to the Police and Children's Social Care.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst staff, children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. All incidents that occur during the school day should be immediately reported to the DSL, and steps taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the children involved.

## 44. MODERN SLAVERY

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer to the National Referral Mechanism is available in the [Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance](#).

The DSL will refer all potential child victims of modern slavery to the Local Authority via MAST.

## 45. TAKING SAFEGUARDING ACTION

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “**It could happen here**”. Key points for staff to remember are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child (including calling 999)
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, no later than the end of the day, **preferably as soon as you come to know of the abuse.**
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern **on a pink CP form, found in Fiona's/Nimesha's/Sajna's/EYFS offices/Staffroom**
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

## 46. EARLY HELP

All staff are trained and prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help, which is providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. This can be support provided through school's internal pastoral system and resources and/or Local Authority services and other external agencies.

The Tower Hamlets Early Help Strategy recognises the important role schools have in identifying children and families who are at risk of poor outcomes without early intervention.

All staff need to recognise that all children may benefit from Early Help at any point in their childhood, but some children may benefit from Early Help more than others. These are children with known vulnerabilities, which are listed on page 9 of this policy.

**[The Think Family approach, which is a current priority area for the THSCP, will be a core part of the early help practice.]**

At Harbinger, the class team around the child provide the initial and daily early help at all times, for any child in their class. If there is a child with known vulnerabilities, then this child will be referred to the school Learning Mentor or

Nurture Mentors. This will all be under the guidance and instruction of the Pastoral Lead and DSL.

If it is deemed necessary, the school will contact THEWS or MAST. This could lead to communication with the Early Help Hub or services such as CAMHs.

It may also be helpful to complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and hold regular Team Around the Child/Family meetings. This will be monitored and reviewed; if it is felt that progress is not being made at this level then the DSL will contact MAST to seek advice about the next steps.

**The Think Family approach, which is a current priority area for the THSCP, will be a core part of the early help practice.]**

The DSL will contact the LBTH MAST for support and advice if required: 020 7364 5006 (Option 3) 020 7364 3444/5601/5606/5358/7796

When an EHA has been completed and a Team Around the Family is in process, the school can refer to the borough's Social Inclusion Panel in support of a co-ordinated and targeted plan to bring about improvement in the child's outcomes.

The DSL will apply the THSCP Levels of Need Guidance to decide what level of safeguarding response is required as part of the Early Help response. If in doubt about the level of need the DSL will telephone the LBTH Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) for a discussion.

**MAST:**

020 7364 5006 (Option 3) 020 7364 5601/5606/5358/7796

**Child Protection Advice Line**

020 7364 3444

If a child has been receiving Early Help support from the school and other agencies and there is no improvement in the child's outcomes, then the DSL must refer the child to Children's Social Care.

## 47. HANDLING THE REPORTING OR SHARING OF CONCERNS

At Harbinger Primary School, we use a TED acronym to support our staff when handling an allegation made by a child.

T = tell me

E= explain to me

D= describe

In using this, staff are able to allow the child to lead the discussion. The school's record of concern form also has some useful pointers to note down when reporting and sharing a concern such as the 4Ws (What, Who, When and Where).

When a child shares that they have been or are being abused, including exploitation and neglect, they may feel ashamed, especially if the abuse is sexual, and may feel frightened lest their abuser finds out they have sought help and support from a professional. The child may have been threatened and may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe that they are to blame for the abuse. Sometimes the child may not understand that what is happening is abusive.

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

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. During their conversations with the pupils, staff will:

- allow the child to speak freely
- remain calm
- allow silences
- refrain from asking leading questions
- tell the pupil what will happen next
- inform the DSL as soon as possible
- seek support from their line manager if they feel distressed.

If the allegation poses the child under immediate danger, the school will seek advice from Children's Social Care . Advice may be that parents will not be notified immediately.

If the allegation is of a low-level concern and the child's safety will not be compromised, then parents will be notified by the end of the school day of the allegation.

## 48. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Staff should never assume a colleague or another professional will take safeguarding action through the sharing of information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Staff should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. Serious Case Reviews have highlighted failures in safeguarding systems in which people did not share information at the earliest opportunity or did not share at all. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to their DSL or a DDSL.

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

All staff should understand that safeguarding requires a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, Deputy DSL or the Headteacher.

Any member of staff can contact Children's Social Care if they are concerned about a child but should inform the DSL as soon as possible that they have done so.

Staff will have due regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to ensure that personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and they will adhere to the seven golden rules for sharing information. Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner.

The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, as safeguarding and protecting children provide a legal basis for sharing information.

Harbinger Primary School's approach to working with parents/carers is one of transparency and honesty and the school's responsibility is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the pupils in its care. The school aims to do this in partnership with its parents/carers. In most cases parents / carers will be informed when concerns are raised about the safety and welfare of their

child. Parents / carers should be given the opportunity to address any concerns raised.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision to share has been taken. Child protection information will be stored securely separate from the pupil's school file. Child protection information is stored and handled in line with the school's Retention and Destruction Policy. Where safeguarding information is stored electronically and online, the school has cybersecurity measures in place, which meets the Department for Education's Cybersecurity Standards, to ensure the data is safe and not vulnerable to evolving cyber-crime.

## 49. REFERRING TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care applying the THSCP Levels of Need Guidance if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, or the child is considered to be in need, that is a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services.

### **LBTH Multi-Agency Support Team:**

020 7364 5006 (Option 3) 020 7364 5601/5606/5358/7796

### **Child Protection Advice Line:**

020 7364 3444

The DSL will contact CPAL/MAST in the first instance to seek advice and guidance. When the DSL completes a MAST Request for Support form and sends it securely to the Multi-Agency Support Team, the referral form will be accurate and sufficiently detailed to enable the MAST to make a decision on the level of response required in accordance with the THSCP Levels of Need Guidance.

If the child is already known to Children's Social Care, then the DSL will communicate safeguarding concerns to the allocated Social Worker.

**[Insert flowchart here on how safeguarding reports are handled within the school] => Need to add**

## 50. ESCALATION PROCEDURES

If, after a referral to Children's Social Care, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

In accordance with the [THSCP Multi-Agency Escalation and Resolution Policy](#) the DSL will first make contact in writing with the team manager followed by the service manager followed by the divisional director. At every level of escalation there should be discussion and concerted effort to resolve any professional difference. It is important that the DSL at each point of escalation puts the concerns in writing.

Appendix 1: MAST Poster

Appendix 2: School Record of Concern Form (if not online)

Appendix 3: [MAST Request for Support Form](#)