



# LAMBROOK

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NURTURING  
POTENTIAL  
SINCE 1860

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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This document applies to all parts of Lambrook School including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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## **Lambrook School – Our Purpose**

Since 1860, Lambrook has been laying the foundations for its pupils' futures. Children have one opportunity for an education which will form the basis of their lives and, at the same time, one childhood; Lambrook aims to keep a happy balance between the two.

During their time with us, we give our pupils the 'Feathers to Fly' so that when they leave us, they will spread their wings and will take flight; leaving Lambrook as confident, happy, engaging, independent and kind young people who are outward looking in all that they do.

### **Inspiring**

Inspiring pupils from Nursery through to Year 8, offering the most outstanding breadth of educational experiences, encouraging academic intrigue and a desire to learn.

### **Nurturing**

Nurturing and supporting all pupils through an outstanding level of pastoral care, empowering pupils to flourish and have healthy relationships with others within our vibrant and caring School community.

### **Providing**

Providing pupils with an abundance of opportunities to discover, pursue and develop their skills, talents and interests.

### **Preparing**

Preparing our children for the next stage of their educational journey, developing the many 'feathers' necessary for their time at Lambrook, at their future senior schools and beyond.

### **Equipping**

Equipping our children with the skills and the confidence to understand the challenges of the world in which they live; recognising their responsibility towards others, the environment and themselves and enabling them to make a difference, both now and in the future.

## **Policy statement and principles**

Lambrook's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with Child Protection and Safeguarding issues, in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children, (2023), and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated Safeguarding portfolio. This policy is available on the school website and is included on the staff portal.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- At Lambrook, we are committed to safeguarding children and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment.
- Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them
- Key staff and governors will be involved in policy development and review
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review
- The best interests of the child are at the heart of what we do

## **Child Protection statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and Governors and are consistent with those of the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board. The Board is made up of a partnership of East Berkshire Integrated Care Board (ICBs), Bracknell Forest Council and Thames Valley Police. We are under a statutory duty to co-operate with Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board.

## **Policy principles**

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

## **Policy aims**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners

## Terminology

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of:

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

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

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

**DSL** refers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

## Safeguarding legislation and guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Children Acts (1989 & 2004)
- Section 157 of the Education Act (2002)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)
- The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations (2003)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- The Teacher Standards (2012)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter Terrorism Act (2015)
- What To Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused (2015)
- The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (2024)
- Working together to improve school attendance (2024)
- Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers (2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2025)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2025)

# Roles and responsibilities

## Key personnel

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection is Ed Marland**

Contact details: email: [edward.marland@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:edward.marland@lambrookschool.co.uk)

tel: (internal: 242) external: 01344 882717

**The Deputy Designated Leads are: Tessa Bayldon-Pritchard, Nickie Edrich, Louise Farrar, Lee Grant, Will Kay-Shuttleworth, Laura Maheady, William McKegney and Rob Whitmell**

Contact email:

[Tessa.bp@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:Tessa.bp@lambrookschool.co.uk)  
[William.mckegney@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:William.mckegney@lambrookschool.co.uk)  
[Lee.grant@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:Lee.grant@lambrookschool.co.uk)  
[Will.ks@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:Will.ks@lambrookschool.co.uk)  
[Robert.whitmell@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:Robert.whitmell@lambrookschool.co.uk)  
[Laura.maheady@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:Laura.maheady@lambrookschool.co.uk)

Nickie Edrich for **EYFS** [nickie.edrich@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:nickie.edrich@lambrookschool.co.uk)

**The nominated child protection governor is Hannah Lyman**

Contact details:

email: [Hannah.lyman@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:Hannah.lyman@lambrookschool.co.uk) tel: 07713 323116

**The Headmaster is** Jonathan Perry (DSL trained)

Contact email: [jonathan.perry@lambrookschool.co.uk](mailto:jonathan.perry@lambrookschool.co.uk) tel: 209

## Important Contact Details

<b>Bracknell Forest</b> Children's Social Care (Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm)	01344 352020
<b>MASH Team</b>	01344 352005
<b>Emergency Duty Team (Out of hours)</b>	01344 786543
<b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</b>	01344 351572
<b>Bracknell Forest Council Education Safeguarding Manager</b>	01344 354014
<b>Children's Social Care Duty Team Consultation Line</b>	01344 351211
<b>Thames Valley Police</b>	0845 8 505 505
<b>NSPCC Child Protection Helpline</b>	0808 800 5000
<b>NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline</b> ( <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a> )	0800 028 0285
<b>Child Line</b>	0800 1111
<b>Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board (BFSB)</b> <a href="https://bracknellforestssafeguarding.org.uk/">https://bracknellforestssafeguarding.org.uk/</a>	

## **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

- Has the status and authority within the school (SLT) to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- Is appropriately trained every two years, with regular updates
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Has a working knowledge of Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB) procedures
- Makes staff aware of BFSB training courses and the raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst staff and parents
- Keeps detailed written records of all concerns, actions discussions and decision and the rationale for those decisions. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such as children's social care or the Prevent programme. They will ensure that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to children's services or the Police as appropriate
- Ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained
- Considers the sharing of safeguarding information with a child's new setting ahead of the transfer if it enables a smoother transition to the new school
- Has overall responsibility for Online Safety in the school and filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
- Attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- Coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the BFSB and will share information with this as early as possible in response to concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils
- Ensures that the Child Protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated annually
- Liaises with the nominated governor and Headmaster (where the role is not carried out by the Headmaster) as appropriate
- Makes the Child Protection policy available publicly, on the school's website or by other means.
- Understands the processes, procedures and responsibilities of multi-agency working, particularly children's social care
- Will develop and operate safeguarding procedures in line with locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board
- Manage referrals from schools staff or any others from outside the school
- Promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school leadership staff.
- Be aware of pupils who have a social worker

## **The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Is trained to the same level as the DSL (updating training 2 yearly) and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

## **Staff Responsibilities**

Should staff have any concerns about a child, they should raise their concerns with the DSL or DDSL.

## Induction

As part of their safeguarding induction, all members of staff are required to read and understand:

- Part 1 and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- The Lambrook Safeguarding Policy
- Lambrook Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

New staff also meet with the DSL who covers:

- Online Safety
- The role and identity of DSL and DDSL's

## Good Practice Guidelines and staff Code of Conduct

Good practice includes:

- Treating all pupils with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, staff Code of Conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- Referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary directly to police or children's social care
- Further information can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct.

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach. **The School's Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members at induction.**

## Concerns Regarding an Adult's Behaviour

Lambrook has an open and transparent culture where concerns about adults working with children are dealt with promptly and appropriately. A 'low level concern' is one that does not meet the harm threshold set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). The aim is for Lambrook to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working at, or on behalf of Lambrook are to be clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the school.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites

- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating children

If you have any concern regarding an adult's behaviour towards a child, children or young people (not an employee or volunteer working for the school), a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' about an adult working at Lambrook, or see behaviour that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work:

- Do not ignore it - any concerns will be taken very seriously
- You must discuss your concerns about any colleagues with the Headmaster, who will support you in liaising with the statutory agencies should any child protection issues arise
- If the concern relates to the Headmaster, you must discuss your concern with the Chair of Governors
- If the concern is about a member of supply staff or a contractor, their employers should be notified so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
- Do not confront the adult

**The Headmaster will maintain written records of low level concerns, with details of the concern, the context in which it arose and the action taken. The name of the person reporting should be noted, respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonable possible. These records are then reviewed. When a pattern of behaviour meets the thresholds set out, they will refer to the LADO.**

Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

If there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Headmaster, staff can contact the LADO directly.

The school will consider if there are any wider cultural issues at Lambrook which enable this behaviour to occur and if any appropriate policies should be reviewed or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

See Annex A for further information on concerns about a member of staff.

## **Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse and may benefit from **early help**. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs (SEND) or certain health conditions
- Has a mental health need (whether or not they have a statutory EHCP)
- Young carers
- In a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home
- Affected by parental offending or has a parent or carer in custody
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying (including prejudice-based bullying)

- Living in temporary accommodation
- Live transient lifestyles
- Frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- At risk of being excluded from school or who have received multiple suspensions
- Struggling with their own mental health
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- At risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Do not have English as a first language
- At risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (**FGM**) or forced marriage
- At risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Have communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

## **Children absent from education**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence, persistent or unexplainable absence and take appropriate action. The school will work with the local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Lambrook works with the local authority and informs them when a child is removed from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points. The school will also hold at least one emergency contact number for each child on register. For further information, please refer to the School's Missing Child Policy.

## **Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's Whistleblowing Policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Headmaster. Complaints about the Headmaster should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is: 0808 800 5000

## **Allegations against staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, our set procedures must be followed. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and in the school's Advice on Specific Procedures for Safeguarding Scenarios. Where an allegation relates to a member of supply staff provided by an agency, the agency will be fully informed.

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

## **Specific Scenarios for allegations against Staff**

Specific scenarios and the procedures to be followed regarding allegations against staff can be found in Annex A.

## **Staff training**

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and Governors will receive this during their induction, which includes reading policies including the Lambrook Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, KCSIE (2025) and staff Code of Conduct. New staff also meet with the DSL to explain reporting and recording arrangements and they read and read the '*Safeguarding Induction Handbook for Education Based Staff at Lambrook*' and complete questions.

All staff, the Headmaster and relevant governors will receive annual training, including Prevent and Online Safety. There is termly safeguarding training for all staff during INSET. The DSL and Deputy DSL(s) receive 2-yearly training. A full training log is kept to monitor this.

All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, the staff portal and staff meetings throughout the year. There are also regular updates termly during INSET where further training is given, including online safety.

## **EYFS Staff training**

All Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) staff at Lambrook are trained in accordance with the requirements set out in Annex C of the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2025).

Training for all EYFS staff is renewed annually.

All EYFS staff receive regular safeguarding training and are supported to embed their learning through continuous supervision, mentoring, and reflective practice. This ensures that safeguarding knowledge is effectively translated into everyday practice and that staff remain confident in their ability to recognise and respond to concerns.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) undertakes training which fully meets the requirements outlined in Annex C of the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2025).

The DSL provides ongoing support, advice, and guidance to all EYFS practitioners in relation to safeguarding matters, both on a routine basis and in response to any specific safeguarding concern or incident as required.

## **Safer recruitment**

Our school complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and BFSB by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history.

The school's Recruitment policy and procedures set out the process in full, including the process for shortlisting candidates, applicants signing a declaration and Lambrook doing due diligence on shortlisted candidates, such as carrying out online searches.

Safer Recruitment training is required for relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process. At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All relevant staff (involved in Early Years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are required to disclose if they have personally been disqualified from working in childcare.

The School obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers, including governors, will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

## **Contractors**

The school requests all contractors to sign in on arrival and will be met and escorted onsite by their relevant staff contact. DBS with barred list checks may be requested where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

## **Site security**

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a visitor label, which confirms they have permission to be on site. They are also required to read and sign a summary statement which has all the contact details of the DSL, Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board, police, etc as well as a brief summary of what to do if a child makes a disclosure to them. Visitors will also be shown a poster with the pictures of the DSL and Deputy DSL(s). Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's Safeguarding and Health and Safety regulations.

The Headmaster will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## **Extended school and off-site arrangements**

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site on behalf of our school, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place. Details of the School's Educational Visits Policy can be found in the policy documentation file.

## **Staff/pupil online relationships**

Staff are not permitted to have online contact with pupils on social media sites. The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation. More information can be found in our Staff Code of Conduct. Staff are also trained via outside organisations on online safety for themselves as well as for pupils.

## **Child protection procedures**

### **Recognising abuse**

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, all staff should be aware of the indicators of

abuse, neglect and exploitation and we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people (commonly referred to as child-on-child abuse).

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Annex One along with indicators of abuse.

## **Bullying**

While bullying between children (child-on-child) is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it 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 our Anti-Bullying policy.

## **Taking 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”. When deciding what course of action needs to be taken, as well as whether to involve outside agencies, the school will look at the threshold guidance produced by BFSB to decide on the best course of action:

[Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board - guidance for professionals](#)

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- Stop and listen to what the child is telling you straight away
- Make notes there and then or immediately after the disclosure if more appropriate
- Do not guarantee confidentiality – tell the child you may need to tell someone to get them the right help
- Do not ask leading questions
- In an emergency, take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999
- Report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- 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
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

## **If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should remember that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or they may not recognise these experiences as harmful. Staff should share any concerns with the DSL.

## Record Keeping

Staff should record any concerns they have about pupils in CPOMS and/or speak to the Head of Pastoral Care and DSL, Ed Marland, Head of Pre Prep and Deputy DSL, Louise Farrar, Assistant Head of Upper School, William McKegey, Acting Head of Middle School and Deputy DSL, Rob Whitmell, Tessa Bayldon-Pritchard, Laura Maheady or Deputy Head of Pre Prep Lee Grant about these concerns.

Information added to CPOMS is kept confidentially on a secure site. All records on CPOMS should include:

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

If the pupil reveals that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

## If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes children may not be aware that what is happening is abusive. All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

As the person being disclosed to, the member of staff may want to refer to the Lambrook *'Safeguarding and Child Protection'* leaflet for the key points to keep in mind.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the pupil, staff will:

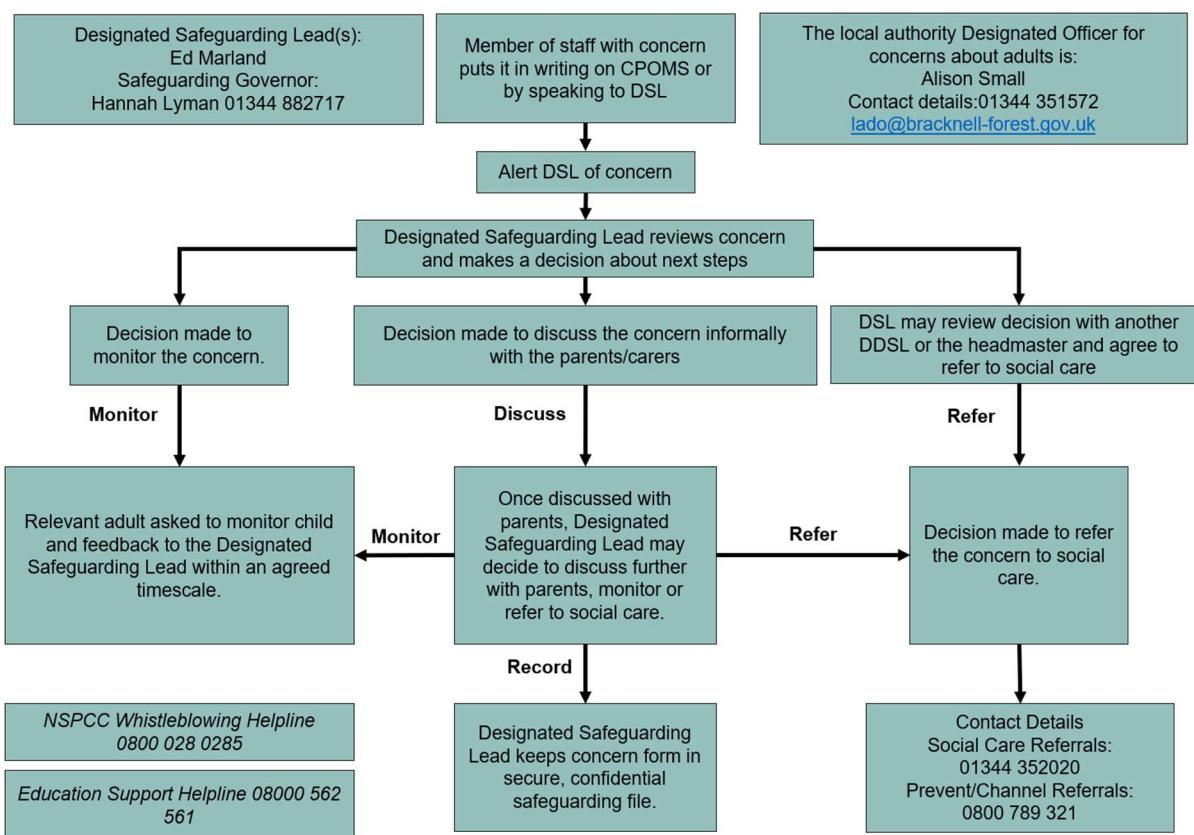
- Stop and listen
- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and do not overreact
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- Do not be afraid of silences
- **Under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the pupil’s mother think about it
- At an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- Tell the pupil what will happen next
- Seek support if they feel distressed
- Act immediately and report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves

- Follow this up by completing an incident on CPOMS alerting the DSL as soon as possible

## If Pastoral support or help is required

If it is decided that a referral is not necessary, (DSL or Deputy will make this decision) then pastoral support will be put in place by the Head of Pastoral Care (and Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School as relevant)

## Flow chart for raising safeguarding concerns about a child



## Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

## Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only

out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Headmaster or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or if the concern is about a member of the staff body. If the concern is about the DSL or Deputy DSL, the Headmaster should be informed. If the concern is about the Headmaster, the Chair of Governors should be informed. The person contacted will then decide who else needs to have the information and this will be disseminated on a ‘need-to-know’ basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children’s social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). It is important to note that the safety of children is paramount and takes precedence over data protection policies it does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent (KCSIE, 2025 Para 109). The information sharing decisions also take into account the December 2023 update to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE).

Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- Necessary and proportionate
- Relevant
- Adequate
- Accurate
- Timely
- Secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. Lambrook do not need consent to share personal information provided there is a lawful basis to process any personal information required (*Working Together to Safeguard children*, p19).

‘Record of concern forms’ and other written information will be stored in a locked facility by the DSL or Headmaster and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil’s school file.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is a safeguarding concern and wherever it is practicable and safe to do so, the DSL will engage with the child and/or their carer, explaining who the information will be shared with, what will be shared and why. Decisions will be recorded, irrespective of whether or not the information is shared (*Information Sharing, 2024*). If a child is at risk or a perceived risk of harm, consent is not needed to share personal information. The DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act (2018), which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Headmaster or DSL.

The Data Protection Act (2018) does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school’s Data Protection Policy is available to parents and pupils on request. To obtain a copy, please contact the Bursary.

## **Referral to children's social care**

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

## **Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputy, the Headmaster and the Chair of Governors are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

## **Safeguarding Issues**

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Other safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include:

## **SEND**

All staff also need to be alert to the specific needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including young carers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. Those with SEND may not outwardly show signs of abuse and/or may have difficulties in communication about abuse or neglect. Those children with SEND might be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying than other children. There is the potential for children with SEND or other medical conditions to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and have communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these changes. Staff will support such pupils in expressing any concerns they may have and will be particularly vigilant to any signs or indicators of abuse, discussing this with the DSL as appropriate.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation**

Both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas in the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line.' They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

CCE does not always involve physical contact, it does occur through the use of technology.

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.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

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

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include noncontact activities, 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 happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;

- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Potential vulnerabilities include:

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

Further information is available here:

[Child sexual exploitation - Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child](#)

## **Domestic Abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;

(d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and

(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

The definition can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted>

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the DSL as a matter of urgency.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the *Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003*. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by a female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period. More information can be found [here](#).

If you suspect a girl is at risk or has been a victim of FGM, you **HAVE A LEGAL DUTY TO** report it to the police. This is a legal responsibility of all teachers. The safeguarding lead should also be notified.

It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number. Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should call 999. In most cases the reports should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, best practice is for reports to be made by the close of the next working day.

The procedures to make a report can be found [here](#).

Risk factors for FGM include:

- Low level of integration into UK society
- Mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE

- Visiting female elder from the country of origin
- Being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- Talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

### **Symptoms of FGM**

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

### **Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:**

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- Spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- Frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- Prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- Confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

## **Serious Violence**

Children can be at risk from or be involved with serious violent crime. There are a number of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence or at risk. These may include being male, increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, having experienced child maltreatment, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

## **Radicalisation and Extremism**

The government defines **extremism** as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

**Radicalisation** is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence (Prevent Duty, 2023).

**Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people' causes serious damage 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 (Terrorism Act, 2000)

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380595/SMSC\\_Guidance\\_Maintained\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf) you in

School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

- A risk assessment will be completed which assesses the risk of children at Lambrook being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology and what those risks might be in the local area. Should a child be assessed to be at risk of radicalisation, a referral should be made to the appropriate agency (Channel or Children's Social Care).
- The school will also undertake to assess the suitability of visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by the children. These speakers must be appropriately supervised at all times for the duration of their visit. Should the assessment of visiting speakers give rise to suspicion of extremist or radical ideologies, further more thorough checks must be conducted and the safeguarding officer or her deputy notified, before the visit is planned.

Staff will assess the level of risk to identify the most appropriate referral, which could include reference to Channel or Children's Social Care. Contact details for support and advice on the Prevent Duty can be found below.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has undertaken Prevent awareness training and can provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.

The Home Office statutory Prevent duty guidance (2023) can be accessed on: [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance-england-and-wales-2023)

The Channel General Awareness course can be accessed on the link below:

[https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channel\\_awareness/01-welcome.html](https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channel_awareness/01-welcome.html)

## Child-on-child Abuse

Lambrook recognises that all children are capable of abusing their peers and all staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This can happen inside and outside of school as well as online. Lambrook will protect their pupils who has been harmed or is at risk of harm wherever any abuse may have taken place. If staff have **any** concerns about a child's welfare or regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to the DSL/DDSL and act on it immediately.

**Lambrook has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse which means that action will be taken and the behaviour will not be ignored.**

Staff should be clear that abusive comments and interactions should not be treated as 'banter' and could represent safeguarding concerns. Staff should challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as 'just banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour such as inappropriate touching, use of sexualised language, sexualised behaviour which is deemed age inappropriate (see flow diagram on page [ ] below)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- 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 (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

All staff should be clear as to the school’s policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse.

Lambrook recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys the perpetrators but that all child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously.

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm and will warrant a response under these procedures rather than the School’s Behaviour Policy.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the school during the investigation. The school will take advice from Bracknell Forest Children Safeguarding Board (BFCSB) on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the alleged victim and perpetrator. If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the school will ensure that, subject to the advice of the BFCSB, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupils involved are supported during the interview by an appropriate adult (DSL, DDSL or other senior member of staff) and until the investigation is completed.

Confidentiality will be an important consideration and advice will be sought as necessary from the BFCSB or police as appropriate.

Victims and perpetrators of child-on-child abuse will be offered support by the School, as appropriate e.g. through counselling and other professional services.

## **Lambrook’s response to allegations of child-on-child abuse including harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment**

The DSL must be informed where is any allegation of child-on-child abuse and will take the lead. The following provides a strong framework around which the DSL and the DDSL team will operate in taking further action where a Disclosure/report is made by a member of staff:

- All victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and will be kept safe.

- No pupil should ever be made to feel ashamed for making a disclosure/report.
- Staff should not promise confidentiality to the pupil at the disclosure stage.
- The staff member will write up a thorough summary of the report/disclosure – only recording the facts as presented. This will include the time and location of the alleged incident.
- The staff member should inform the DSL or DDSL as soon as practically possible.
- The DSL will follow the flow chart in Annex C on page 39.

#### **Risk Assessment:**

- The DSL will carry out an immediate risk assessment (RA), considering the immediate safety and support for the victim, the alleged perpetrator and all other children at the school. Subsequent Risk Assessments will be prepared in consultation with the parents of the children involved.
- The RA should be considered a live document and reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
- The DSL will engage with statutory agencies (e.g. Children's social services, the police) as required.

#### **Action following the report/disclosure, the DSL will consider:**

- Whether an investigation can be carried out by the school or whether the school needs permission to carry out an investigation from the statutory agencies if involved
- The victim's views on how the investigation should be progressed or the parents' views where the victim is not able to give consent
- The nature of the alleged incident
- The ages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children
- If the incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern
- If there are ongoing risks to the victim or other children
- If there are other related issues and wider context (contextual safeguarding)
- The proximity between perpetrator and victim, during the investigation stage
- Any actions required to make the location safer

#### **Further considerations:**

- The DSL may manage the incident internally through utilising behaviour and bullying policies
- The DSL may decide that the child or children may benefit from early help, particularly in the case of non-violent harmful sexual behaviour. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexualised behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. Full details of early help can be found in Chapter 3 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Where the school suspects that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm or in imminent danger, the school will make a referral to children's social care and follow subsequent advice/guidelines. This may involve reporting to the police. Any delays in the criminal process, any bail conditions and the conclusion of the criminal process will need consideration and attention and management
- It is important to understand intra-familial harms and identify and necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment

### **Ongoing response:**

- Long term support should be in place for the victim. There are many providers of support, including CAHMS, Rape Crisis and Survivors Trust. The victim may choose to have a designated trusted adult at school (DSL, tutor)
- Protect the victim from any subsequent bullying or harassment
- The transfer of information should the victim move to a new school
- Long term support for the perpetrator (including the transfer of information to a new school)

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school's behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns as referred to above. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting)

### **If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil**

- Staff must tell the DSL and record the allegation, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all the children involved – both the victim(s) and the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made – with a named person they can talk to if needed.
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate
- If deemed appropriate, the allegation will be investigated by the DSL or another member of the SLT or an independent investigator appointed by the School

### **We will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:**

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour, including Harmful Sexual Behaviour, misogyny and consent. Where appropriate, pupils will be signposted to appropriate support, such as the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's Shore Space- [www.shorespace.org.uk](http://www.shorespace.org.uk)
- Ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially through the teaching of safeguarding and the PSHE curriculum and the use of Whisper – an online platform where pupils can communicate with the DSL confidentially via their laptop on the Lambrook portal.
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.

### **Notifying parents**

- Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure
- Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL
- If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so
- In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved

### **Dealing with unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports**

If following an investigation, an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO (if appropriate) and the Children's Social Services should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help.

In such circumstances, a referral to BFCB may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, Lambrook will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it.

## **Nudes and Semi-nudes**

The sharing of nudes and semi-nude imagery/videos (sexting) can be viewed as a form of sexual harassment and is defined as the production and/or sharing of sexual photos and videos of and by young people who are under the age of 18. It includes nude or nearly nude images and/or sexual acts. It is also referred to as 'youth produced sexual imagery'.

'Sexting' does not include the sharing of sexual photos and videos of under-18 year olds with or by adults. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police.

Further information can be found in the UKCIS document:

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(updated March 2024\) - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people)

## **What to do if an incident involving 'nudes and semi-nudes' comes to your attention**

- Report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately
- Where possible take the device on which the image has been shared with you and hand to the DSL
- Never view, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it
- Do not ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved
- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL

## **Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or gender questioning (LGBT)**

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. At Lambrook, we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced, by providing opportunities for any pupil to speak to teachers, tutors, anyone from the safeguarding team or the School Counsellor.

When a child is gender questioning, the Cass review identified that caution is needed as there are impacts on social transition. The child may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs. The school will encourage families to seek clinical help and advice when making decisions about support for a gender questioning child. Lambrook will consider the broad range of the individual's needs, this will be done in partnership with the child's parents (unless by involving parents would bring a significant risk of harm to the child).

## **Preventative Education**

Lambrook plays a crucial role in preventative education and has a whole-school approach which prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Lambrook has a culture of zero tolerance of:

- Sexism
- Misogyny
- Homophobia
- Biphobia
- Sexual violence/harassment

Lambrook has a clear set of values and standards that are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This is underpinned by the behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as a planned programme of evidence based RSE. This is delivered in regular timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. The programme is fully inclusive and is developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities).

The RSE program tackles, at an age-appropriate stage, issues such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries and consent
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- the concepts of, and laws relating to: sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and;
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

## **Online Safety at Lambrook**

Children in Years 5-8 have access to a one-to-one device and the school put in robust measures to ensure that children remain safe whilst online. Children can be vulnerable to exploitation or abuse

when online. At Lambrook, we manage these risks by ensuring that when children are using their laptop, they are protected from inappropriate content with filtering and monitoring systems in place. This includes when pupils are using Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Generative AI.

The filtering and monitoring that is in place is regularly reviewed for their effectiveness. Should a child type anything into their laptop that is of concern, it is flagged by the monitoring software and the DSL receives a notification with any searches or key words of concern.

It is important that **ALL** staff and volunteers are alert to the potential risks children may be exposed to, and steps can be taken to mitigate the risk of this occurring, with specific reference to:

- **Content**:- e.g. being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news), conspiracy theories, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **Contact**:- e.g. being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: child to child pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.
- **Conduct**:- e.g. personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying

**Commerce**:- e.g. - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Staff with concerns over children's use of ICT equipment must report their concerns, if, for example, a child is spending too much time online, on a PC, on their own or experiencing difficulties, overly defensive, anxious or secretive about their PC usage.

The **ICT Acceptable Use Policy** must be adhered to within School.

The school supports and trains children in online safety through a variety of different methods:

- Across the curriculum in all subjects
- Annual e-safety day/week
- Workshops on online safety training for children and parents
- IT curriculum covering safe internet usage
- Pupil's home screen with Childline details on it
- Through PSHE lessons
- Through the Tutor System
- All staff share responsibility for e-Safety in the school and must be aware of these responsibilities.
- Posters with the Childline number are posted on the back of bathroom cubicle doors.

At Lambrook, pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Examples include being taught to contact NSPCC or CEOP should pupils see content online they are uncomfortable with. Being taught to block anyone or anything who contacts them that might be harmful.

## **Use of Mobile Phones and imaging equipment**

The school are aware that there are times that Lambrook staff need to use their mobile phones at school, such as emergency phone calls and for 2-factor authentication of school owned devices, but in general, Lambrook members of staff should not their mobile phones when in front of pupils.

The ICT Acceptable Use Policy and e-safety Policy sets out guidelines for use of mobile devices by pupils and teachers in the school.

School devices may be used by teachers where there are children present, but any images captured must be erased from the device if a teacher leaves the school site with this device, unless this is for the purposes of an educational school trip.

Staff may use their phones during break and lunchtimes in the staffroom only. Designated school iPads may be used to take photos and record information for Tapestry and the children's Learning Journals.

**In the EYFS the use of personal mobile devices, including those with imagine or sharing capabilities, including wrist-worn smart watches, is prohibited on the school premises.**

## **Use of AI-Enabled and Smart Wearable Devices (Including AI Sunglasses and glasses)**

AI-enabled or smart wearable devices are defined as any item of clothing or accessory that can:

- Capture or transmit audio, video, or images (e.g., glasses or sunglasses with cameras or microphones)
- Process or analyse data using artificial intelligence or facial recognition technology
- Connect to the internet, Bluetooth, or cloud-based services for data storage or sharing
- Include AI assistant functions (e.g., OpenAI, Meta, or similar embedded AI systems)

Examples include AI or smart sunglasses/glasses, AR/VR headsets, smartwatches with cameras, or any future wearable technology with similar capabilities.

There are potential risks associated with the use of AI-enabled and smart wearable devices (such as AI sunglasses and glasses) for Lambrook pupils, staff, and visitors. Risks include breaches of privacy, inappropriate recording, or misuse of personal data.

AI-enabled sunglasses, smart glasses, or similar wearable devices are **not permitted** to be used or worn on school premises by pupils, staff, contractors, or visitors, unless authorised by the Headmaster (for a clearly defined purpose).

The school recognises that while some AI-enabled devices have educational or accessibility benefits, they also pose significant safeguarding risks, including:

- Unauthorised recording or streaming of pupils, staff or parents
- Violation of privacy and data protection rights under UK GDPR
- Risk of cyberbullying, online grooming, or image misuse
- The potential for AI-generated or altered content (e.g., deepfakes) involving children or adults
- Undermining trust and confidentiality within the school environment

### **Authorised use**

These devices may be authorised, only in specific circumstances.

#### **All authorised use must:**

- Be risk assessed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Have written parental consent where pupils are involved
- Comply fully with the school's Data Protection, Online Safety, and Acceptable Use policies
- Be supervised at all times by a member of Lambrook staff

### **Unauthorised use**

Unauthorised use of such devices by pupils or staff may result in confiscation. Any concerns about recording, streaming, or data misuses will be treated as a potential safeguarding incident and the DSL may conduct a safeguarding review. The DSL may contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), police, or other relevant agencies.

### **Staff and Visitor Responsibilities**

Staff and visitors must not bring or use AI-enabled sunglasses or recording devices on site unless authorised. Staff must report any concerns about such devices immediately to the DSL or other DDSL.

### **Pupil Awareness**

Pupils will be educated about the risks and responsibilities linked to AI technology through Online Safety and Wellbeing (PSHE) education. Misuse of AI devices will be addressed in line with the school behaviour Policy.

## **Physical Intervention and Restraint**

This can be found as a standalone policy on the staff area under School Policies. There are occasions when physical contact with pupils is proper and necessary, for instance during demonstrations, coaching or giving First Aid. Young children and those with special educational needs may need physical prompts and children in distress may need comfort. Teachers must be aware of children who are sensitive to contact for cultural or other reasons and use their professional judgement according to individual circumstances.

## **Other Potential Safeguarding Issues**

School is aware that other issues may have an effect on the wellbeing of the pupils, and as such should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Experienced Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD);
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement;
- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Is within the court system;
- Has family members in prison;
- Is at risk of modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism, trafficking or exploitation;
- Is involved in Cybercrime

This is not an exhaustive list but the school will provide support to children, families and staff, when the need arises.

Lambrook assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the wellbeing and safety of its pupils, particularly extra-familial harms. These can take a variety of different forms and pupils can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should be aware of the need to highlight children whom they believe are at risk. Staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues but may notice behaviours that may be of concern. If staff have a mental health

concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by adding an incident on CPOMS or speaking to the DSL or any of the DSL's.

Lambrook's Senior Mental Health Lead is **Sarah Seldon**.

## **Looked after children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children and previously looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

## **Children with a social worker**

At Lambrook, we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most pupils.

This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.

We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

## **Children staying with host families**

The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms and we will follow recommended guidelines to ensure such arrangements are safe and suitable. In such circumstances the school follows the guidance in Annex E of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

## **Boarding Schools**

Research has shown that children can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings. All boarding schools and residential special schools comply with the National Minimum Standards for their particular setting and are appropriately inspected. All boarding staff should be aware of the following points:

- Staff should maintain professional standards of behaviour and appropriate boundaries at all times in relationships between themselves and the pupils, themselves and the parents
- Relationships between residential boarding staff and pupils are key to a happy and successful boarding experience for pupils, but teachers must be aware of the guidelines set out in the Code of Conduct at all times, within the boarding environment
- Boarding staff should be aware of the potential for abuse of children due to their boarding environment
- The procedure for reporting concerns is the same as for non-boarding pupils

## **Private fostering arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible. More information can be found [here](#).

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DSL and the school should notify the local authority of the circumstances.

On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

## The Role of Governors

In accordance with Part 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), the governing board:

- Will ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training will be regularly updated.
- Have a nominated Safeguarding Governor to oversee the safeguarding policy and procedures at Lambrook
- Meet with the key members of the Child Protection Team termly (at the very least the DSL) to discuss safeguarding matters (procedural and policy related)
- Are presented with an annual audit of safeguarding at Lambrook school, delivered by the DSL at a full governing body meeting (which is included in the minutes) and the safeguarding governor signs this off
- Review any policy changes and sign off the safeguarding policy annually
- Are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

The safeguarding governor chairs a termly Health and Safety meeting at which safeguarding procedures are discussed and reviewed.

## Link between Legal Duties and Safeguarding

Lambrook are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act (1998), the Equality Act (2010) and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Lambrook will always follow the Human Rights Act (1998) to respect and protect an individual's human rights.

Under the Human Rights Act, it is unlawful for schools and colleges to act in a way that is incompatible with the Convention. The specific convention rights applying to schools and colleges are:

- 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, and
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to education.

Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances.

Lambrook has an obligation under the Equality Act (2010) to not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).



## Annex A – Action Required For Specific Scenarios

### Suspicions or Allegations of Child Abuse involving an employee or volunteer

#### Concerns about a Colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's **whistleblowing code** enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

If there is an allegation or suspicion of misconduct about a member of staff, or volunteer, the **Headmaster** must be informed immediately. Failure to do so would result in disciplinary action. (See Staff Handbook)

Please see the **Whistle Blowing Policy** for more detail.

Should the member of staff be accommodated on-site, arrangements will be made for alternative accommodation for that individual that will be off-site and a suitable distance away from school.

The school will consult with the Designated Officer and adhere to the relevant procedures set out in Part four of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

#### Allegations involving the Head or Safeguarding Lead

In the case of an allegation or suspicion about the Head or The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Head, the **Chairman of Governors** should be informed immediately, without informing the Head, who will then contact the Designated Officer within one working day on (01344 351572).

The Chair of Governors should not seek to interview the child/ren or members of staff involved until advice has been sought. Doing so may compromise police interviews that may be necessary.

The Headmaster will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process and asked to vacate his school residence, and alternative accommodation would be found for the duration of the investigation. The Deputy Head will be made acting Head until the conclusion of the investigation and resolution of the issue.

The Headmaster should similarly be told at once of any allegation involving the DSL. The Chairman of Governors should normally be informed on the same day, and legal advice obtained. The DSL will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made acting DSL until the conclusion of the investigation and resolution of the issue.

The school will follow the procedures set out in Part four of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

#### Allegations against a volunteer or employee

If you believe there to be a Child Protection issue directly relating to an employee or volunteer working for Lambrook School, the **Headmaster** must be informed. All such allegations or concerns should be referred to and discussed with the person with specialist responsibility for child protection and safeguarding. They will refer to the Children's Social Care Duty Team. In most cases, a child strategy meeting will be called to discuss how to proceed with regard to Police investigation, child protection enquiries and/or disciplinary investigation.

All allegations, even those that appear less serious, need to be followed up by the Headmaster and examined objectively by someone independent of the school. All allegations will be brought, by the Headmaster, to the Designated Officer, who acts for the LCSB agencies to monitor allegations and ensure that the actions in response to the allegation are in accordance with the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures.

Advice on the storage of all documentation must be sought from the DSL or Deputy DSL who must ensure that access is strictly limited to relevant staff and external professionals on a 'need to know' basis.

Staff must be aware that they may be vulnerable to accusations of abuse and must, therefore, be sensitive to a child's reaction to physical contact and react appropriately.

During their daily contact with the children, all staff must adhere to the **Staff Code of Conduct**.

The school is required to inform the Disclosure & Barring Service within one month of leaving the school any person, whether employed, contracted a volunteer or a student, whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

The address for referrals is:

Helpline: 01325 953 795 Website: [www.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.gov.uk/dbs)

Email: [dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk)

Post: Disclosure and Barring Service

Post Office Box 181

Darlington

DL1 9FA

Failure by the school to make such a report would constitute an offence, leading to the school being removed from the DfE Registration of Independent Schools (legislation from The Education (Provision of Information by Independent Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. Compromise Agreements cannot apply in this connection.

Lambrook will give consideration to making a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate because of "unacceptable professional conduct", "conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute", or a "conviction at any time for a relevant offence."

All staff must be aware of the School's policies concerning Child Protection.

### **Disclosure from an adult that they are involved in abuse**

If someone not employed by the school discloses that they are involved in the abuse of a child or young person, **YOU MUST TAKE ACTION**:

- Believe what they are saying and take the allegation seriously
- Record the details of what you have been told as soon as possible on the appropriate form
- Report it to the DSL who will ensure that the appropriate actions are taken, also explaining the limits of confidentiality
- If you cannot immediately contact the DSL you must directly contact Children's Social Care or the Police. Your actions must be communicated to the DSL as soon as possible

### **Anonymous Allegations**

If we are faced with an anonymous allegation of child abuse which names both a member of staff, or volunteer, and a child, we will handle it in exactly the same way as if we knew the identity of the person making the allegation. Where the allegation names the member of staff, or volunteer, but not the pupil, we will normally interview the member of staff, or volunteer, and ask for his or her version of events. It could be appropriate to establish a mentoring or review programme for that individual, or to provide him or her with further training. A record would be kept on the individual's personal file.

### **Allegation of Abuse of a Child who is not a Pupil at the School**

If we were given information that suggested that a member of staff, or volunteer, was abusing a child who was not a pupil at Lambrook School, we would immediately pass such information to

Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB) to handle. We would then interview the member of staff, or volunteer, and formally advise him/her of the allegations, making it clear that the school would not play any part in the investigatory process. He or she would be advised of the possibility of facing suspension, re-assignment to other duties, etc in exactly the same way as if the allegation had involved a school pupil. If the allegation subsequently proved to be unfounded, he or she would be given full support by the school in resuming his/her career.

## Procedures To Deal With Allegations Of Abuse Against Members Of Staff

### The First Response

We will respond promptly and sensitively to the legitimate concerns of the victim and his or her family. We undertake to:

1. Take any allegation of abuse, involving a member of staff, or volunteer, very seriously
2. Establish the facts before jumping to any conclusion
3. Inform the member of staff, or volunteer concerned honestly of the allegation that has been made, and advise him or her to contact their Trade Union or Professional Association for advice and support
4. Inform the child's parents in confidence, inviting them to maintain confidentiality whilst the investigation takes place, unless the allegation involves the parents, in which case we will contact the Social Services before making contact

### The Next Step

Although a formal investigation is a matter for specialists, where the facts suggest that there may be reasonable grounds for suspecting actual abuse, or grooming of a child, or other criminal behaviour, we will always:

- Invite the police to conduct the investigation
- Involve Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB)
- Consider suspending the member of staff or volunteer concerned

### Suspension

Suspension of a member of staff, or volunteer, is a neutral act and does not imply that any judgement has been reached about his or her conduct. Even so, it is a serious step, and we will take legal advice beforehand, and will normally only suspend a member of staff, or volunteer, where:

1. There is a serious risk of harm (or further harm) to the child
2. The allegations are so serious as to constitute grounds for dismissal, if proven
3. The police are investigating allegations of criminal misconduct

We recognise fully that we have a duty of care towards all of our staff, and we will always:

1. Keep an open mind until a conclusion has been reached
2. Interview a member of staff, or volunteer, before suspending him or her
3. Keep him or her informed of progress of the investigation

Any member of staff, or volunteer, who is invited to a meeting where the outcome is likely to result in his or her suspension, is entitled to be accompanied by a friend or Trade Union representative.

Boarding, or other accommodated staff who are suspended, will be required to remain off-site for the duration of their suspension, but alternative accommodation would be provided.

### Alternatives to Suspension

We will always consider whether an alternative to suspension might be appropriate. Possibilities include:

1. Sending the member of staff, or volunteer, on leave
2. Giving him or her non-contact duties,
3. Ensuring that a second adult is always present in the classroom when he or she teaches

### **If the Member of Staff or Volunteer Resigns**

The resignation of a member of staff, or volunteer mid-way through an investigation would not lead to the investigation being abandoned. Our policy is always to complete every investigation into allegations of child abuse.

### **Settlement/Compromise Agreements**

The policy at Lambrook School is to follow the guidance set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) on the use of compromise agreements in cases of child abuse which is:

*'Settlement agreements' (sometimes referred to as compromise agreements), by which a person agrees to resign if the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, should **not** be used, where there are allegations that indicate the person is a risk or poses a risk of harm to children or deemed not suitable to work with children. Such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police and/or school or college investigation where that is appropriate.'*

### **Length of Investigatory Process**

We recognise that everyone's interests are served by completing any investigatory process as swiftly as possible. Lambrook School is a small community and we will aim to spend as little time as is compatible with fair and impartial processes on the investigatory process. We would expect almost every case to be completed within one month.

### **Referral To Disclosure and Barring Service**

Like all schools, we have a statutory legal duty to refer an individual, where there is the risk that he or she may harm, or has caused harm to children, to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) within one month of the individual's dismissal or resignation because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. Reports concerning members of staff or volunteers are normally made by the DSL. If the DSL is involved, the report is made by the Headmaster. If the Headmaster is involved, the report is made by the Chairman of Governors.

The referral form can be downloaded from the DBS website on [www.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.gov.uk/dbs). The school plays no part in the subsequent process of barring individuals from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. We also have a legal duty to respond to any requests for information that we receive from the DBS at any time.

### **Recording Allegations of Abuse**

We will record all allegations of abuse, and our subsequent actions, including any disciplinary actions, on an individual's file. A copy will be given to the individual and he or she will be told that the record will be retained until he or she reaches statutory retirement age, or for ten years, if that is longer.

### **Handling Unfounded or Unsubstantiated Allegations**

#### **The Child**

A child who has been the centre of unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse needs professional help in dealing with the aftermath. We will liaise closely with the LSCB to set up a professional programme that best meets his or her needs, which may involve the Adolescent Mental Health Services and an Educational Psychologist, as well as support from the School Counsellor. We shall be mindful of the possibility that the allegation of abuse was an act of displacement, masking abuse that is actually occurring within the child's own family and/or community.

However, much support the child may need in such circumstances; we need to be sensitive to the possibility that the aftermath of an unfounded allegation of abuse may result in the irretrievable breakdown of the relationship with the teacher. In such circumstances, we may conclude that it is in

the child's best interests to move to another school. We would do our best to help him/her to achieve as smooth a transition as possible, working closely with the parents or guardians.

### **The Member of staff or volunteer**

A member of staff, or volunteer, could be left at the end of an unfounded or unsubstantiated allegation of child abuse with severely diminished self-esteem, feeling isolated and vulnerable, all too conscious that colleagues might shun him/her on the grounds of "no smoke without fire". If issues of professional competency are involved, and though acquitted of child abuse, disciplinary issues are raised; we recognise that he or she is likely to need both professional and emotional help. We will undertake to arrange a mentoring programme in such circumstances, together with professional counselling outside the school community. A short sabbatical or period of re-training maybe appropriate.

### **Lessons Learned**

Throughout the process in handling allegations and at conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated, the LADO should review the circumstances of the case with the case manager to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's or college's procedures to help prevent similar events in the future.

For all other cases, where the allegation concluded to be either, unfounded, false, malicious or unsubstantiated the case manager (and the LADO if they have been involved) should consider the facts to determine whether any lessons can be learned and if any improvements can be made.

## Annex B – Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

For further information click [here](#).

### Definitions of abuse and neglect

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial context by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. A body map to record bruises/marks on a child's body can be used when recording an incident on CPOMS. These should be used if you are concerned about bruising or injuries on a child.

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

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

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; provide suitable accommodation. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide

injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

**It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

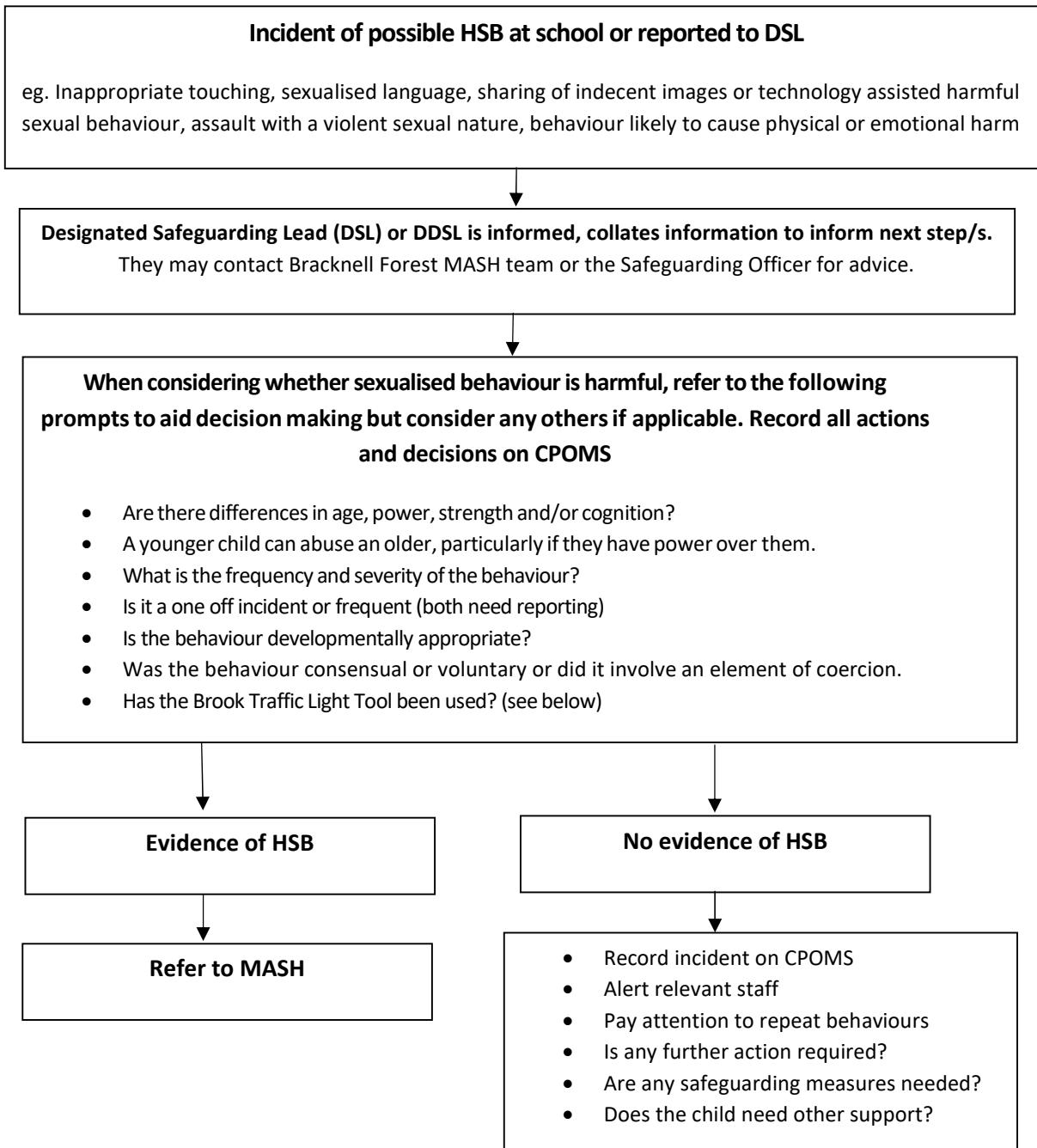
- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- Look unkempt and uncared for
- Change their eating habits
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- Appear fearful
- Be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- Self-harm
- Frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- Show signs of not wanting to go home
- Display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- Challenge authority
- Become disinterested in their school work
- Be constantly tired or preoccupied
- Be wary of physical contact
- Be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- Acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.

## Annex C - Flowchart for Managing an incident of Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour or problematic behaviour displayed between children and young people which is harmful or abusive. All staff need to act appropriately to support and protect any children who have displayed HSB and those who have been impacted.



Brook Traffic Light Tool: [CPD: Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool \(RSE\) Course](#)

## **Annex D – Related Policies**

Staff Code of Conduct

Physical Restraint

Behaviour Policy

Complaints procedure

Anti-Bullying

Health & Safety

Whistleblowing

SEND

Missing Child Policy

Admissions

Attendance

Recruitment Policy

Grievance Policy

ICT acceptable use

Data Protection Policy