



**SAFEGUARDING & PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN**  
**(CHILD PROTECTION POLICY)**

**PRIMARY PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING  
OF THIS POLICY**

JAMES EYTLE, BEVERLEY MELLON (PRINCIPALS)

**CONTACT DETAILS: 020 7409 7273**

**JAMES@ALBEMARLE.ORG.UK      BEVERLEY@ALBEMARLE.ORG.UK**

**SAFEGUARDING@ALBEMARLE.ORG.UK**

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## **Safeguarding & Promoting the Welfare of Children (Child Protection Policy)**

Advice and Guidance to staff on disclosures and reporting allegations are contained in the appendices of this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following college policies:

- **Behaviour & Conduct of Students Policy**
- **Exclusions and Suspensions Policy**
- **Trip Policy**
- **Staff Disciplinary Policy**
- **Internet & e-Safety Policy**

**This policy fulfils the requirements set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*.**

### **Rationale**

Albemarle College takes very seriously its duty towards all its students who have been entrusted to its care and seeks to provide a College environment where all children are safe, secure, valued, respected, and listened to. All staff have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm. We believe that our College should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy contains the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Legal framework
3. Procedures
4. Responsibilities
5. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL & DDSL)
6. Supporting Children
7. Confidentiality
8. Supporting Staff
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15. Appendices:
  - 1) Safeguarding Guidance for Staff
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  - 3) Safeguarding and Child Protection Categories
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    - 1.2. *Radicalisation*
    - 1.3. *Child-on-Child Abuse (previously Peer-on-Peer Abuse)*
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  - 4) Children potentially at greater risk of harm\*\*
    - 1.1. *Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)*
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    - 1.3. *Elective home education (EHE)*
    - 1.4. *Children requiring mental health support*
    - 1.5. *Looked after children and previously looked after children*
    - 1.6. *Children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues*
    - 1.7. *Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning*
  - 5) Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Information Sharing\*\*
  - 6) Online Safety\*\*
  - 7) Email, Social Networking and Mobile Phones – Guidance for Staff



**8) Useful Contact Details**

**9) Role Description of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

\*\*additions in February 2025

\*additions in June 2023

## 1. Introduction

Albemarle College understands that our work in safeguarding and protecting children must always have regard for the national guidance issued by the Secretary of State and should be in line with local guidance and procedures.

### The Definition of Safeguarding:

Albemarle College fully endorses Safeguarding legislation and government guidance which says that safeguarding means:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcome; and that: "the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm – is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play." *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*.

### The Aims of Albemarle's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Are:

- to support each young person's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
- to raise the awareness of both teaching and support staff of the need to safeguard young people and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse;
- to provide a systematic means of monitoring young people known or thought to be at risk of harm; and to emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff, as between themselves and with senior management;
- to develop a structured procedure within the College which will be followed by all members of the college community in cases of suspected abuse and to foster an environment and culture where those procedures will be readily invoked;
- to develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the police and Social Services;

- to ensure that all adults within our College who have access to children have been subjected to the suitability checks required by the Disclosures Barring Service and Standard 4 of the Independent School Standards in respect of their suitability to work with children.

## 2. Legal Framework

Albemarle College is aware of its obligation to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of its students, as set out in Sections 157 and 175(2) of The Education Act 2002, the statutory guidance documents, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*, *Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff (2012)*, alongside guidance within *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* and *The Equality Act 2010*.

The college's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Beverley Mellon, leads safeguarding within the college and will liaise with the appropriate Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) as required. The DSL is supported by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), Emma Thompson, and Welfare Officer, Wanda Marshall, who report to the DSL. In line with national minimum standards, and consistent with LSCP procedures, the College has an appropriate policy on child protection and response to allegations or suspicions of abuse. The policy is known to staff and is available to parents and other stakeholders on the College website.

### Further Information on Preventing Radicalisation

From April 2015 the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent Duty"). The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 will also place a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must include the Local Authority (LA) and Chief Officer of the local police. Panels will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, following a referral from the police and where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. Schools and colleges which are required to have

regard to *KCSIE (2024)* are listed in the Act as partners of the panel.

### 3. Procedures

Our child protection procedures and procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse are in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures. These procedures are set out in the next pages. Appendix 2 offers a summary for staff on Disclosures and Reporting arrangements and Appendix 1 offers guidance to staff so they do not place themselves or students at risk of harm or risk of allegations of harm. Appendix 3 outlines the safeguarding and child protection categories, including definitions and signs of abuse.

#### 3.1. Training

All staff are given training during whole college in-service training days in September prior to the start of every academic year. It aims to develop staff's understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and to know how to respond to a student who discloses abuse. All staff are also provided with a copy of our child protection procedures and are required to read Part 1 of the *KCSIE (2024)*. They are informed of the arrangements for child protection, including the procedure for reporting allegations, and all staff complete an online Level 1 Safeguarding training programme.

The DSL, DDSL and Welfare Officer attend Level 3 training run by appropriated training providers and their training is updated every two years. All other staff refresh their Level 1 training within a two-year period.

All staff are provided with induction training which includes:

1. The College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
2. The Staff Code of Conduct;
3. The identity of the DSL, DDSL and Welfare Officer;
4. Part 1 of *KCSIE*;
5. Online Level 1 Safeguarding training.

Whole College updates on child protection amendments or training are also provided regularly.

### **3.2. Making Referrals**

Whilst the guidance places the responsibility of making decisions about referrals with the college's DSL, the importance of children receiving the right help at the right times to address risks and prevent issues escalating and the importance of acting on and referring the early signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation is such that teachers can seek advice or report allegations directly if they feel a situation is not improving or to challenged inaction.

In addition, staff should differentiate between children who are in need of additional support from one or more agencies and children who have suffered or are at risk of suffering serious harm. Children who have suffered or are at risk of suffering serious harm must be reported to children's social care immediately. Children who are in need of additional support from one or more agencies need to use Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and "Team Around Child" (TAC) approaches.

### **3.3. Informing Parents**

Parents are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures within information provided on joining the College. A copy of this policy is also made available to parents on the College website. This is explained in annual communications to parents.

### **3.4. Safer Recruitment**

The College carries out all the required checks on staff in line with guidance laid out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*.

### **3.5. Other Staff Working With Albemarle College Students**

The College requires appropriate checks to be made on staff employed by other organisations working on the school site and likely to have unsupervised access to children. The College's Trip Policy requires trip organisers to check with other organisations (e.g. residential centres, museums) to verify that their employees working with our young people have undergone satisfactory checks on their suitability to work with children.



### 3.6. Allegations Against Staff

We are aware that there may be many ways in which an allegation is made:

- a student or member of staff may make an allegation against a member of staff;
- a young person may make the allegation to another student, a parent, or a member of staff.

All staff must be aware of their duty to raise concerns, even low-level concerns, where they exist about the attitude or actions of colleagues. **If an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation MUST immediately inform the DSL or, in their absence, the DDSL.** On all such occasions, the DSL will discuss the content of the allegation with the relevant Curriculum Manager. If a young person informs his or her parent of any such allegation the College reasonably expects that the parent will report the allegation to the College and other appropriate authorities (see Appendix 8: Useful Contact Details), to enable appropriate enquiries to be undertaken.

The DSL will contact the Local Authority designated officer (LADO) immediately to discuss the allegation, consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action including any involvement of the police. Discussions will be recorded in writing, and communication with both the individual and the parents of the child/children agreed. The College will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant suspension or whether alternative arrangements should be put in place. The College will give due weight to the views of the LADO and the policy when making a decision about suspension.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns one of the Principals or a member of the Senior Management Team, the DSL will consult directly with the LADO. In the event that an allegation is made concerning the Designated Safeguarding Lead, a Principal will assume the DSL role and will adhere to relevant safeguarding procedures. In cases of serious harm, the police will be informed from the outset. The College will follow the LSCP procedures for managing allegations against staff. In accordance with the guidance issued by the DfE (*KCSIE, 2024*) all considerations and investigations carried out by the College related to an allegation will eradicate any unnecessary delays. Suspension of the individual subject to the allegation will not be automatic and will only be applied if there is no reasonable alternative. The reasons and justification for such a decision will be recorded by the College and the individual will be notified of the reasons.

Appropriate pastoral care and a named contact will be put in place for any suspended member of staff. Allegations that are found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records and any that are unfounded malicious allegations will be subject to the College's Behaviour & Conduct of Students Policy and, after investigation, sanctions may include temporary or permanent exclusion, in addition to a referral to the Police if there are grounds to believe that a criminal offence has been committed.

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012, there are restrictions on the reporting or publishing of allegations against teachers and so schools must make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity. These restrictions apply up to the point where the accused person is charged with an offence, or the DfE/NCTL publish information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case.

The College is committed to promptly report to the DBS any person (whether employed, contracted, or a student) whose services are no longer used and the DBS referral criteria are met.

Independent schools are also under a duty to consider making a referral to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and the DBS where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. The reasons such an order would be considered are: "unacceptable professional conduct", "conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute" or a "conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence". (Where a referral has been made to the DBS, it is also necessary for a referral to be made to NCTL, as the two bodies use different criteria for their respective judgements.

For further information, please refer to the NCTL document: *Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers: Advice on factors relating to decisions leading to the prohibition of teachers from the teaching profession (2022)*.

### **Low-level Concerns**

The College maintains an open and transparent culture in which **all** concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the college (including contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. It is imperative that all staff are clear about professional

boundaries, as per the Staff Code of Conduct, and act within these boundaries and in accordance with the ethos and values of the college.

The term 'low-level concern' does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' that a member of staff may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside work;
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

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

- being over friendly with students or having favourites;
- taking photographs of students on personal mobile phones, contrary to college policy;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- humiliating students.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings. Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

In the event of needing to disclose a low-level concern, this should be shared in a timely and confidential manner with the DSL (or DDSL) either verbally or by email to: **[safeguarding@albemarle.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@albemarle.org.uk)**. The DSL will then determine whether the concern raised is of low-level concern or whether it in fact meets the harm threshold and thus requires consultation with the LADO.

### **3.7. Allegations of Abuse and Instances of Abuse by One or More Students Against Another**

The College's Behaviour & Conduct Policy makes clear the expectations on students of acceptable behaviour towards other students. Where a student (or a member of staff) makes an allegation about the behaviour of a student or students against another student, and this is deemed or could be deemed as a form of abuse, the allegation must be reported to the DSL. Advice from the appropriate Local Authority Social Services team will be sought to put in place the measures necessary to safeguard the student; this may mean involving external agencies.

### **3.8. Review**

Procedures are reviewed annually by the DSL and Directors, and are updated as required. The DSL and Principals are responsible for ensuring that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay. Safeguarding and Welfare is a standing item on all major committees and staff are encouraged to bring any matters of concern to the attention of a senior member of staff without delay. The DSL, DDSL and Welfare Officer meet on a weekly basis and will have termly meetings also involving the Curriculum Managers where the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary. The basis for, and nature of, any changes will be published to all staff, and parents or students as appropriate.

If there has been a substantiated allegation against a member of staff, the College will work with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the college's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. Even in cases where the allegation concluded to be either, unfounded, false, malicious or unsubstantiated, lessons can still be learned. The DSL (and/or in liaison with the LADO) will consider the facts and identify appropriate lessons and improvements which may be made.

## **4. Responsibilities**

At board level, the Directors take responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and are responsible for college policy. The Directors undertake an annual review of the College's policies and procedures and considers how the College's

duties have been discharged.

Schools are required to report to the Secretary of State, via the DBS, within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

In this context, ceasing to use a person's services includes:

- dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed-term contract;
- no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency;
- terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee;
- resignation;
- voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training.

It is important that reports include as much evidence about the circumstances of the case as possible. **Failure to make a report constitutes an offence.** 'Compromise agreements' cannot apply in this connection, or where the individual refuses to cooperate with an investigation. The College has a legal duty to respond to requests from the DBS for information they hold already, but they do not have to find it from other sources.

## **5. Designated Safeguarding Leads ('Child Safeguarding Persons')**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who takes responsibility for dealing with child protection issues and liaising with other agencies is Beverley Mellon.

Emma Thompson is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and Wanda Marshall is the Welfare Officer. The DSL, DDSL and Welfare Officer have child protection training provided by relevant agencies.

In the absence of the DSL, the DDSL is responsible for:

- adhering to the LSCP, LA and College procedures with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse;

- keeping written records of concerns about a student even if there is no need to make an immediate referral;
- ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from general student records;
- ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on student records;
- ensuring that any student currently on the child protection register who is absent from college without explanation for two days is referred to Social Services.
  - *In such a case, where the child has not attended the first lesson, contact is made as soon as possible to find out what explanation is given for absence. Depending on the response received, a referral will be made more urgently.*

A full copy of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Job Description can be found in Appendix 9.

Staff may report allegations or get advice from the DSL or directly from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (*see Appendix 8 for contact information*).

## **6. Supporting Children**

We recognise that a young person who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. In these circumstances a child may feel any of the following: helpless, humiliated, self-blame. The College will support all students by:

- encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying;
- promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the college;
- providing LGBTQ+ students with a safe space to speak out and share their concerns with members of staff;
- liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of young people;
- ensuring that young people have access to a source of counselling, either at college or through an outside agency;

- notifying Social Services as soon as there is a significant concern, after discussion with the LSCP or the appropriate LA for the young person concerned;
- providing continued support to a student who leaves the college, about whom there have been concerns, by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the young person's new school;
- gaining assurance that the employees of any other organisation supervising students on a different site have undergone the necessary checks.

## **7. Confidentiality**

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential, in the sense that they must not be generally discussed. The DSL will only disclose any information about a young person to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies, through the defined college channels, in order to safeguard children. All staff must be aware that they cannot guarantee confidentiality to a young person when listening to any disclosure since an issue may need to be referred on.

## **8. Supporting Staff**

We recognise that staff working in the College who have become involved with a young person who has suffered harm or appears likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Welfare Officer (or appropriate colleague) and to seek further support as appropriate.

## **9. Prevention**

We recognise that the College plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our young people by providing students with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. The College community will therefore:

- regard that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the College students on another site (see the College's [Trip Policy](#));
- establish and maintain an ethos where young people feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to;

- ensure that all young people know there is an adult in the College whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- include in the curriculum opportunities for PSHE education which equips young people with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know who they should turn to for help.

## **10. Physical Intervention**

Staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent the young person injuring themselves or others. Evidence of physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a young person may be considered under safeguarding or disciplinary procedures.

## **11. Bullying and Racist Incidents**

Staff should understand that, in dealing with allegations or incidents of bullying, it may be necessary to invoke safeguarding procedures. Detailed guidance on bullying and racist incidents and the procedures to follow are provided in the College's Behaviour & Conduct of Students Policy.

## **12. Health & Safety**

Our Health & Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our young people both within the college environment and when away from the premises when undertaking College trips or visits.

## **13. Illegal Substances**

Our Behaviour & Conduct of Students Policy sets out how, in promoting the welfare of students, the College actively discourages the use of illegal drugs and harmful substances. Where concerns or suspicions surrounding a student's substance abuse nevertheless exist, the College will, in conjunction with parents, take steps and measures to safeguard the student.

## **14. Staff Code of Conduct**

The College has a Staff Code of Conduct, which is contained within the Duties and Responsibilities of Teachers Policy and is supported by the Staff Handbook.



## Appendix 1

### Safeguarding Guidance for Staff

In order that staff do not place themselves or students at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student, staff must take care to:

- avoid all situations where they are on their own with a student unless necessary and, in such situations, ensure that there is another member of staff or support staff in the vicinity;
- seek approval from a senior member of staff for arrangements whereby one-to-one tuition or coaching takes place. Last-minute or informal arrangements for one-to-one tuition or coaching should be avoided wherever possible;
- use college email addresses to give and receive appropriate messages between staff and students, with the system readily available to scrutiny if necessary. It is good practice to copy in a senior member of staff (e.g. Head of Dept.) if e-communication is used and to keep email contact formal and professional (see *Appendix 7 for further guidance on e-communication*);
- avoid using students' mobile telephone numbers without the express permission of the students' parents, and only in exceptional circumstances. The use of text messaging should be avoided. It is good practice to use the college mobile to make contact with a student (e.g. on a trip or outing) and to collect and use student numbers only in the context of a planned, risk assessed trip. Numbers should not be stored on a personal mobile and students should not have access to teachers' personal mobile numbers (see *Appendix 7 for additional guidance on e-communication between staff and students*);
- avoid giving lifts to students, particularly one-to-one, other than in an emergency when a senior member of staff should be informed;
- ensure all out-of-school contact with students is authorised by their parents or guardians and/or a senior member of staff;
- seek advice from a senior colleague if a student's need to speak to you seems out of the ordinary or makes you feel uncomfortable.

The College will, on occasion, employ ex-students and acknowledges that the established relationships between these particular individuals and current students may

have an impact on the nature of their communication and contact that is distinct from other employees. The College will inform such staff of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and appropriate good practice, but if a member of staff has any concerns about this situation then they are encouraged to contact their line manager or the DSL without delay.

### **If Teaching One-To-One Lessons**

- do not meet with students in remote areas off-site;
- if the lesson is not timetabled, inform the College Administrator and/or the Information Officer of the meeting beforehand;
- avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible; such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy;
- consider the needs and circumstances of the student(s) involved.

## Appendix 2

### Disclosures and Reporting Arrangements

In the event of a student discussing an allegation of abuse with a member of staff, it is important:

- not to promise absolute confidentiality in order to elicit disclosure or further disclosure. The student should be advised that the chosen member of staff will listen carefully; will take any complaint seriously; will have the student's welfare uppermost in mind and may need, in that context and using the proper channels;
- to discuss any disclosure or allegations made by the student with other appropriate professionals;
- not to ask leading questions if possible. Allow the student to speak freely, and clarify rather than lead. Clearly, the age of the young person and his or her ability to relay events cogently will be relevant in assessing what should be asked and how it should be asked;
- not to require the student to repeat distressing details, allowing for the fact that disclosures of abuse are of their nature distressing;
- to write down the details of the disclosure at the time (including questions and answers, if possible) or immediately afterwards, if it is not practicable to do so at the same time.

It is equally important to recognise that a young person may not feel ready or know how to disclose details of abuse. In this case, it is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged.

In the event of a member of staff needing to report a disclosure or a suspicion of abuse, the DSL should be informed immediately or, in their absence, the DDSL. It is important that any member of staff should feel able to bring any suspicions about any person (whether suspicions be about another member of staff, for example, or a parent of a student) to the DSL. Albemarle College underlines the importance of staff being able to voice concerns about any student's welfare and an "open door" policy is encouraged in this important respect by the Principals.

Similarly, whilst the guidance places the responsibility of making decisions about referrals with the college's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the importance of children receiving the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating and the importance of acting on and referring the early signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation is such that teachers can seek advice or report allegations directly to the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. Similarly, teachers have the right to contact the LSCP directly if they feel a situation is not improving or to challenge inaction.

In addition, staff should differentiate between **children who are in need** of additional support from one or more agencies and **children who have suffered or are at risk of suffering serious harm**.

Children who have suffered or are at risk of suffering serious harm must be reported to children's social care immediately. Children who are in need of additional support from one or more agencies need to use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and "Team Around Child" (TAC) approaches.

The DSL will take notes of the disclosure or suspicion and, having ascertained the facts of the allegation (if known), will consult the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately or as soon as is practicable and certainly within 24 hours. The DSL will not conduct an investigation until the LADO has advised whether a referral is necessary.

In the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, both the college and the LADO will have regard to the young person's safety and the potential for damage to the reputation and career of the member of staff where the allegation proves false. In this context, it is imperative that all teachers understand the need for discretion and tact; gossip can inflame difficult and sensitive situations. Where a teacher is suspended pending an investigation, it must be understood that such a suspension is a neutral act and does not suppose guilt on the part of the suspended teacher.

In the case of ceasing to use a person's services, including: dismissal; non-renewal of

a fixed-term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; resignation; and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, it is important that reports include as much evidence about the circumstances of the case as possible. **Failure to make a report constitutes an offence.** 'Compromise agreements' cannot apply in this connection, or where the individual refuses to cooperate with an investigation.

Proprietors of independent schools and colleges have a legal duty to respond to requests from the DBS for information they hold already, but they do not have to find it from other sources.

In addition, Albemarle College is under a duty to consider making a referral to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. The reasons for which such an order would be considered are:

- unacceptable professional conduct;
- conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute;
- conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence.

Where a referral has been made to the DBS, it is also necessary for a referral to be made to NCTL, as the two bodies use different criteria for their respective judgements.

For further information, please refer to the NCTL document: *Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers: Advice on factors relating to decisions leading to the prohibition of teachers from the teaching profession (2022)*.

Contact details for Westminster LSCP and Referral Team are provided in Appendix 8. Staff need to remember that, while Albemarle College is in Westminster, it may be necessary to report to another LA depending on the nature of the disclosure and the location of the child's home.

## Appendix 3

### Safeguarding and Child Protection Categories (KCSIE, 2024)

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, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Below are some safeguarding issues that all staff should be aware of.

#### 1.1. Types 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 is particularly relevant in relation to the impact on children involved in all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Abuse may take place in a family, institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Abuse may be by an adult, adults or another child or children.

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

**Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond

a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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

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

### **Signs of Physical Abuse**

#### ***Physical Indicators:***

- unexplained bruises and welts on the face, throat, upper arms, buttocks, thighs or lower back in unusual patterns or shapes which suggests the use of an instrument (belt buckle, electric cord) on an infant in various stages of healing that are seen after absences,

weekends, or vacations;

- unexplained burns, cigarette burns, especially burns found on palms, soles of feet, abdomen, buttocks; immersion burns producing "stocking" or "glove" marks on hands and feet; "doughnut shaped" on buttocks or genital area;
- rope burns;
- infected burns indicating delay in treatment; burns in the shape of common household utensils or appliances.

### ***Behavioural Indicators:***

- behavioural extremes (withdrawal, aggression, regression, depression);
- inappropriate or excessive fear of parent or caretaker;
- antisocial behaviour such as substance abuse, truancy, running away, fear of going home;
- unbelievable or inconsistent explanation for injuries;
- lies unusually still while surveying surroundings (for infants);
- unusual shyness, wariness of physical contact.

### **Signs of Sexual Abuse**

#### ***Physical Indicators:***

- torn, stained or bloody underclothes;
- frequent, unexplained sore throats, yeast or urinary infections;
- complaints about pain and irritation of the genitals;
- sexually transmitted diseases;
- bruises or bleeding from external genitalia, vagina or anal region;
- pregnancy.

#### ***Behavioural Indicators:***

- the victim's disclosure of sexual abuse;
- regressive behaviours (thumb-sucking, bedwetting, fear of the dark);
- promiscuity or seductive behaviours;
- disturbed sleep patterns (recurrent nightmares);
- unusual and age-inappropriate interest in sexual matters;
- avoidance of undressing or wearing extra layers of clothes;
- sudden decline in school performance, truancy;
- difficulty in walking or sitting.



## **Signs of Emotional Abuse**

### ***Physical Indicators:***

- eating disorders, including obesity or anorexia;
- speech disorders (stuttering, stammering);
- developmental delays in the acquisition of speech or motor skills;
- weight or height level substantially below norm;
- nervous disorders (rashes, hives, facial tics, stomach aches).

### ***Behavioural Indicators:***

- habit disorders (biting, rocking, head-banging);
- cruel behaviour, seeming to get pleasure from hurting children, adults or animals; seeming to get pleasure from being mistreated;
- age-inappropriate behaviours (bedwetting, wetting, soiling);
- behavioural extremes, such as overly compliant-demanding; withdrawn- aggressive; listless; excitable.

## **Signs of Neglect**

### ***Physical Indicators:***

- poor hygiene, including lice, scabies, bedsores, body odour;
- squinting;
- unsuitable clothing; missing key articles of clothing (underwear, socks, shoes); overdressed or underdressed for climate conditions;
- untreated injury or illness;
- lack of immunisations;
- indicators of prolonged exposure to elements (excessive sunburn, insect bites, colds);
- height and weight significantly below age level.

### ***Behavioural Indicators:***

- unusual school attendance;
- chronic absenteeism;
- chronic hunger, tiredness, or lethargy;
- assuming adult responsibilities;
- reporting no carer at home.

For further information or guidance, please refer to the HM Government guidance: *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners*

## 1.2. Radicalisation

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist activity. Extremism is 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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of the armed forces.

Children and young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include exposure through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm. Examples of extremist causes that have used violence to achieve their ends include animal rights, the far right, internal terrorist and international terrorist organisations.

### **Preventing Radicalism**

The College recognises that it has a key part to play in preventing its students being drawn into terrorism. As a result of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the College must refer students to the police if it suspects that they are in danger of being radicalised. The College will co-operate closely with Channel panels and any other agencies as necessary.

The DSL will ensure that staff are acquainted of the warning signs through Prevent awareness training. Staff will inform the DSL of any concerns that they may have about our students.

The Internet and e-Safety Policy reflects the fact that the College is aware that the Internet remains a significant risk to young people in terms of the propagation of extremist views. ISIS, in particular, has shown itself to be adept at using social media as

a tool to groom and manipulate young people. The College has endeavoured to set the appropriate filters on its computers, whilst acknowledging that students may have legitimate reasons for researching terrorism.

All external speakers will need to submit a detailed summary of the content of their speech.

### 1.3. Child-On-Child Abuse

Staff are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse may breach children's rights, as set out in The Human Rights Act 1998.

It is imperative to know that children can be abused by other children. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying, including:
  - cyberbullying and sexualised online bullying;
  - prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- Teenage relationship abuse (*in intimate personal relationships between children*);
- Physical abuse, such as:
  - hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (*including online elements which facilitate, threaten and/or encourage physical abuse*);
- Sexual violence, such as:
  - rape;
  - assault by penetration;
  - sexual assault (*including online elements which facilitate, threaten and/or encourage physical abuse*);
- Sexual harassment, such as:
  - sexual and/or lewd comments, sexual remarks, "jokes" or taunting (*stand-alone or as part of a broader pattern of abuse*);
  - upskirting (*involving 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*). **This is a criminal offence:**

- deliberately brushing against someone / interfering with their clothes;
- grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia;
- pulling down trousers, flicking bras or lifting up skirts;
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;
- online sexual harassment (*stand-alone or as part of a broader pattern of abuse*) which may also include:
  - sharing of unwanted explicit content;
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media;
  - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, including the coercion of others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they are uncomfortable with online;
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (*also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery*);
- 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;
- Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals, involving:
  - harassment, abuse or humiliation as a way of initiating a person into a group (*this may involve an online element*).

## **Consent**

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. For further information on consent, please refer to: [Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent](#).

## **Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent.

Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and potentially damaging. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can occur simultaneously between the two.

## **Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex, and can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. Dismissing, tolerating or failure to treat matters seriously can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and, in worst case scenarios, the normalisation of abuse, leading to children not reporting it. It is vitally important to challenge physical behaviour which is potentially criminal in nature, as sexual harassment creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

Ultimately, it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe; the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise them. As reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex to manage, it is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. Factors such as intra-familial harms must be taken into consideration and appropriate support and protection should be provided for siblings, other students and college staff as appropriate following incidents.

Multi-agency guidance and procedures should be followed in line with statutory guidance provided in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* and part five of *Keeping*

*Children Safe in Education (2024).*

For further support and information, refer to the following guidance and agencies:

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) command: a law enforcement agency that aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and via their Child Protection Advisors;
- NSPCC Helpline: **0808 800 5000** and **help@nspcc.org.uk**;
- Rape Crisis England & Wales or The Survivors Trust;
- The Anti-Bullying Alliance.

#### 1.4. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

Both CSE and 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.

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. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims

despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to recognise that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys and the indicators may not be the same. As both boys and girls are at risk of criminal exploitation, it is important to note that those being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

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

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse that involves the manipulation and/or coercion of young people under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for things such as money, gifts, accommodation, affection or status. The manipulation or 'grooming' process involves befriending children, gaining their trust, and often feeding them drugs and alcohol, sometimes over a long period of time, before the abuse begins. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power which limits the victim's options. It is a form of abuse which is often misunderstood by victims and outsiders as consensual. Although it is true that the victim can be tricked into believing they are in a loving relationship, no child under the age of 18 can ever consent to being abused or exploited (*Barnardo's, 2012*).

Child sexual exploitation can manifest itself in different ways. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional or physical control over a young person. It can involve peers manipulating or forcing victims into sexual activity, sometimes within gangs and in gang-affected neighbourhoods, but not always. Exploitation can also involve opportunistic or organised networks of perpetrators who may profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity with multiple men (*Barnardo's, 2011*).

This abuse often involves violent and degrading sexual assaults and rape. The Children's Commissioner's report on sexual exploitation by gangs and groups found that oral and anal rape were the most frequently reported types of abuse. Experts agree that these types of abuse are particularly humiliating and controlling, and, as such, may be

preferred by those who exploit vulnerable young people (*Berelowitz et al, 2012*). Exploitation can also occur without physical contact when children are persuaded or forced to post indecent images of themselves online, participate in non-contact sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone, or engage in sexual conversations on a mobile phone (*DfE, 2011*).

Technology is widely used by perpetrators as a method of grooming and coercing victims, often through social networking sites and mobile devices (*Jago et al, 2011*). This form of abuse usually occurs in private, or in semi-public places such as parks, cinemas, cafes and hotels. It is increasingly occurring at 'parties' organised by perpetrators for the purposes of giving victims drugs and alcohol before sexually abusing them (*Barnardo's, 2012*).

If you suspect or discover that someone is sexually exploiting a child, you can discuss your concerns with a NSPCC counsellor by calling **0808 800 5000** or emailing **help@nspcc.org.uk**. For more information and documentation, please refer to the [NSPCC website](#).

### **1.5. Domestic Abuse**

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, as 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.

### **1.6. So-called 'Honour'-Based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)**

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and practices such as breast



ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. It is important to be aware of the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered HBA, they should speak to the DSL (or DDSL). As appropriate, the DSL will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

The issue is complex and despite its very severe health consequences, parents and others who have the procedure carried out on their daughters may not intend it, or regard it, as an act of abuse but as a cultural practice.

The impact on children's physically and psychologically can be severe, at worst resulting in fatality and it is important that we raise awareness to try and prevent female genital mutilation and to offer support to children who have already been subjected.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced a new **legal** duty on teachers, social workers and healthcare professionals to report to the police known cases of FGM involving victims aged under 18. This duty came into force on 31 October 2015, and the Government published *procedural information and advice* about the new duty.

Whilst all staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation, if a teacher, in the course of their

work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher **must** report this to the police.

Some indicators that female genital mutilation may be about to or has already taken place:

- a conversation with a child may refer to female genital mutilation i.e. she may express anxiety about a “special procedure” or event that is to take place;
- a prolonged absence from school and a noticeable change in the child’s behaviour on their return, including a reluctance or inability to take part in physical activity;
- a prolonged family trip to the country of origin;
- a child may spend long periods of time away from class during the day-perhaps indicating bladder or menstrual problems;
- a midwife/obstetrician/gynaecologist/general practitioner may become aware that FGM has occurred when treating a female patient. This should trigger concern for other females in the household.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) makes it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal. Suspected FGM will be reported via the College Safeguarding procedures.

For more details, staff are directed to the [London Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures](#), which may be viewed (and downloaded) via the [LSCP website](#).

### **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. This is a crime in England and Wales. A lack of full and free consent encompasses when a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (e.g. if they have learning disabilities), and threats can take physical, emotional and psychological form. Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived

cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

For further guidance, please refer to: *The Right to Choose: Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage* and *Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage (2023)*. Advice or information can also be sought from the Forced Marriage Unit by calling **020 7008 0151** or by emailing **fmu@fcdo.gov.uk**.

### 1.7. Mental Health

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

Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, exploitation or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Staff must be aware of how these experiences can impact children's mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they must take immediate action, following the College's procedures and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

For further information or guidance, please refer to: *Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies* and *Mental health and behaviour in schools*.

### 1.8. Serious Violence

It is crucial to have an awareness of the indicators which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- Increased absence from school or college;

- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups;
- A significant decline in educational performance;
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing;
- 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.

For further information or guidance, please refer to the Home Office's guidance: *Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement* and its *Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines*.

## Appendix 4

### Children Potentially At Greater Risk of Harm (KCSIE, 2024)

Whilst all children should be protected, it is important to recognise that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm than others (both online and offline). The list below is not exhaustive, but highlights some of those groups.

#### 1.1. Children Who Need A Social Worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs, abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation and/or complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.

LA's should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or to a child missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare.

#### 1.2. Children Who Are Absent From Education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation (particularly county lines). The college's response to persistently absent students missing education should support identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent students, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging, but also

where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker, where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

For further guidance and support, please refer to: *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, *Children Missing Education*, *Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges* and *Missing Children and Adults Strategy*.

### **1.3. Elective Home Education (EHE)**

Many home-educated children have a positive learning experience and the parents' decision to home educate should be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not always the case, and consequently, some children do not receive suitable education and are less visible to the services there to ensure the safety and support in line with their needs.

In accordance with The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admissions register.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, LAs, schools, and other key professionals should coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible; prior to a final decision being made to ensure that the best interests of the child have been considered. This is particularly important where a child has SEND needs and/or has a social worker and/or is otherwise vulnerable.

DfE guidance for *Elective home education* sets out the role and responsibilities of local authorities and their powers to engage with parents. Although this is primarily aimed at local authorities, schools should also be familiar with this guidance.

### **1.4. Children Requiring Mental Health Support**

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. 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. Clear systems and processes should be in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

#### **1.5. Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children and previously looked after children safe.

The appropriate staff should have access to the information needed in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. The designated safeguarding lead should have details of the child's social worker and the name of the "Virtual School Head" from the local authority that looks after the child.

When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

#### **1.6. Children with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities (SEND) or Health Issues**

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration;
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than others;
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly

showing any signs;

- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges;
- cognitive understanding: being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) or the named person with oversight for SEND.

### **1.7. Children Who Are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning**

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm; however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

When supporting a gender questioning child, a cautious approach should be taken and with consideration of the broad range of individual needs. Approaches should also be taken in partnership with the child's parents (other than in exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child) and including any clinical advice and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

For further information and guidance, please refer to: *Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children (2023 draft for consultation)*.





Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

### **LGBTQ+ Inclusion**

A range of support to help counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse can be found in the statutory curriculum for 'Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education'.

## Appendix 5

### **Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and Information Sharing (KCSIE, 2024)**

#### **Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR**

It is important to be 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.

Relevant staff should have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as per the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. This includes:

- being confident of the processing conditions which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as ‘special category personal data’;
- understanding that ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’ is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes sharing information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and when the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner. Sharing information without consent would be legitimate where:
  - it is not possible to gain consent;
  - it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent;
  - if to gain consent would place a child at risk;
- for schools, not providing pupils’ personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation and the serious harm test is met, data must be withheld in compliance with schools’ obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Where in doubt, schools should seek independent legal advice.

**The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.**

If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### **Information Sharing**

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes. Schools and colleges have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

Staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.

For further information and guidance, please refer to: *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*, *Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers*, *The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)* or *Data protection: toolkit for schools*.

## Appendix 6

### Online Safety (KCSIE, 2024)

#### Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school and college approach to online safety empowers the protection and education of pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

1. **content:** exposure to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, and extremism;
2. **contact:** subjection to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer-on-peer 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;
3. **conduct:** 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);
4. **commerce:** online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. To report those at risk, visit: [Anti-Phishing Working Group](#).

#### Online Safety Policy

The College's approach to online safety includes appropriate filtering and monitoring of college devices and networks as per the [Internet and e-Safety Policy](#).

Many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks and the use of mobile and smart technology. This access enables some

children, whilst at school or college, to sexually harass, bully and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups), and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

### **Filtering and Monitoring**

The College seeks to provide a safe environment in which to learn, and has measures in place to reasonably limit students' exposure to online safety risks. Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness. The leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively, and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems is a matter for individual schools and colleges, and is informed, in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

The DfE's filtering and monitoring standards provides guidance to schools and colleges in order to manage online safety. This guidance suggests: the annual review of filtering and monitoring provisions, blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning, and effective monitoring strategies.

Guidance on "appropriate" filtering and monitoring can be found at: [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) or via [filtering and monitoring webinars](#). [South West Grid for Learning's tool](#) checks whether current filtering providers are signed up to relevant lists (*CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content*).

### **Reviewing Online Safety**

Technology, and risks and harms related to it, evolve and change rapidly.

For further information and guidance, please refer to: [360 safe website](#), [LGfL online](#)



safety audit, The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCIS): Online safety in schools and colleges: Questions from the governing board and Online Safety Audit Tool.

## Appendix 7

### Email, Social Networking and Mobile Phones – Guidance for Staff

The College recognises that there may be occasions when a teacher may have to communicate with a student via email or (perhaps to a lesser extent) a mobile phone when carrying out their normal professional duties.

These normal professional duties may include:

- email receipt of homework and teacher acknowledgement;
- email receipt of UCAS material and teacher comment/suggestions;
- text messages or student mobile phone numbers while on a College trip/visit to aid communication or safety;
- text messages or calls to students to chase up punctuality issues / clarify whereabouts.

As outlined in the College's Duties and Responsibilities of Teachers Policy, electronic communication between staff and students is limited to communication within the meaning of professional conduct. Communication which can be described as “grooming” or an abuse of trust will never be permitted. Contact between staff and current students on social networking sites is prohibited.

The College suggests the following procedures of good practice in order to protect the interests of teachers, the young person and the College. Please implement these and discuss with colleagues in order to regularly monitor and review our personal and institutional practice.

#### Email

As of Spring 2025, the College data management system, Griffin, now enables *G-Message*. Staff are expected to gradually transition to this new system in lieu of email communication.

1. Use your College email account for any communication with a student. Do not use your personal email address;
2. All communications (beyond a simple acknowledgement or factual statements)

should be copied (for information/record) to a relevant colleague. For example, if you are offering academic advice then you could copy in the relevant Curriculum Manager, or if the message is more concerned with a straightforward pastoral matter then the Personal Tutor or Welfare Officer.

### **Visual Social Media Platforms, Messaging Applications and Networking Sites**

1. Carefully consider the public nature of such sites and decide if it is appropriate to join, and what information about you will be open to parents, students or colleagues. Personal blogs should also take this into account;
2. Never allow an existing student to join your circle of “friends”. The College regards students as part of our community until they begin their career at another institution;
3. Training and advice on privacy settings on social networking sites and their safe use can be obtained from the College’s IT support team;
4. Report any unwanted contact / emails / messages from an existing student to the DSL immediately.

### **Mobile Phones and Messaging**

1. Do not store the mobile phone numbers of students on your phone. A paper list of student numbers that you may need for regular contact is acceptable;
2. Use a College-issued mobile phone where possible for trips/visits and, for speed and efficiency, student and parent emergency contact numbers may be stored on such a device for the duration of the trip/visit. These details will then be removed at the conclusion of the trip;
3. As with email, if a text message to a student is necessary then consider the style and language used. It should be professional and purposeful and not open to alternative interpretation. If in doubt, show the text message to a colleague or do not send;
4. Always consider if an alternative means of communication can be used to contact a student, for example, a message via another student or their parents.

### **Photography, Video recording and Audio recording**



1. Any recording taken of a student must be for legitimate academic/educational reasons. The validity and necessity of such recording must be transparent and obvious or approved in advance by their Curriculum Manager;
2. Student consent must always be obtained. Recordings must never be clandestine;
3. Care must be taken if recording images of students in clothing other than normal school dress, for example, sports kit or costume. It is never acceptable to record images where students may not be fully dressed, for example, in changing rooms or sports venues;
4. It is good practice to use designated College equipment to make such recordings. If staff or students have to use their own personal IT equipment to record images, then the appropriate Curriculum Manager should be informed. Recordings taken with personal equipment must be transferred to College IT facilities without undue delay and immediately deleted from the personal equipment. It is good practice to ask a member of the Admin team or a colleague to verify this transfer and deletion;
5. All recordings of students on College or personal equipment must be deleted or destroyed once their specific educational purpose has been achieved;
6. Any temporarily stored recordings must be held on a College-issued computer. They must not be held on a personal computer or equivalent device. Copies must not be made nor distributed or shared, nor be open to public viewing.

For further guidance, please refer to the College's [Internet & e-Safety Policy](#).

## Appendix 8 Useful Contact Details

### **Albemarle College Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Beverley Mellon – [safeguarding@albemarle.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@albemarle.org.uk)

### **Albemarle College Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) & Welfare Officer**

Emma Thompson - [safeguarding@albemarle.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@albemarle.org.uk)

Wanda Marshall - [welfare@albemarle.org.uk](mailto:welfare@albemarle.org.uk)

### **Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)**

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/lscp/>

### **London Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)**

<https://www.londonscb.gov.uk/>

For advice and guidance and to report an issue about an adult who is working with children and young people, please contact:

**Duty Child Protection Adviser/LADO**, Westminster City Council:

[LADO@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@westminster.gov.uk)

### **LSCP arrangements for Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) and Westminster**

The Local Safeguarding Children Partnership for RBKC and Westminster ensures the coordination of safeguarding work by all agencies and monitors the effectiveness of child protection work across the three local authority areas. Each local area retains a multi-agency group to ensure the maintenance and development of effective local partnerships.

**Emma Biskupski** – LSCP Business Manager for RBKC and Westminster

**Aileen Buckton** – LSCP Independent Chair for RBKC and Westminster



The LSCP Team can be contacted on: **07739 315 388**

If you are worried about a child or young person and want to report any abuse or discuss concerns in relation to children and young people, please contact:

**Westminster**

**020 7641 4000**

**[accesstochidrensservices@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:accesstochidrensservices@westminster.gov.uk)**

Westminster Prevent Team:

**020 7641 5071 / 07817 054 699 / 07790 980 223**

**[prevent@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:prevent@westminster.gov.uk)**

For further contact details, please follow:

**<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/lscp/information-professionals-and-volunteers/contacts-safeguarding-westminster>**

## Appendix 9

### Role Description of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) role includes the responsibilities for:

- implementing and promoting the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures;
- knowing how to recognise the signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral to the relevant investigating agencies. A key person for contact is the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- having an understanding of the LADO role in order to work effectively with them;
- liaising with other agencies, when making a referral, and acting as a point of contact and a source of support, advice and expertise within the college;
- at all stages of the referral process, the DSL must keep the Curriculum Managers/Welfare Officer informed of ongoing investigations, ongoing child protection issues and the welfare of students who are subject to a child protection plan;
- acting as the main point of contact for college staff, student, families and external agencies, and receiving and acting upon any reported concerns. This includes ensuring that the completed paperwork is accurate, correct, fully completed and reviewed as necessary and stored in a secure and safe place;
- providing support, advice and guidance to any other staff on an ongoing basis or on any specific safeguarding issue as required;
- implementing, maintaining and updating the policy and procedures on an annual basis or as required;
- ensuring that all relevant contact names and numbers are known to staff and displayed in an accessible place at all times;
- keeping abreast of developments and understanding the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children, including attending appropriate regular training and ensuring that all staff have appropriate and up-to-date training;
- providing guidance on relevant matters to all staff members as appropriate and promoting best safeguarding practice at all times;
- advocating the importance of Child Protection to parents so that they understand that the College has their child's best interests at the heart of its practice;
- monitoring child attendance, accident logs, pre-existing injury reports, concern forms and incident forms to exclude any possible child protection issues. These are reported

and acted upon accordingly;

- representing the key link to statutory agencies (Social Care or Police) during and following any formal investigations that may have to take place. This includes maintaining confidential records of reported cases, action taken, liaising with the statutory agencies and ensuring they have access to all necessary information;
- liaising with local children's services and our LSCP as necessary;
- producing a termly report to the Board of Directors on safeguarding matters;
- ensuring that when a child leaves the school, any child protection files are copied for the new school, college or FE setting as soon as possible but transferred securely and separately from the main student file;
- liaising and co-ordinating, within college, the activities of any other agencies that become involved. This may involve completing the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and taking on the role of the lead professional. The DSL should be familiar with the CAF and the local procedures in place for submitting the form. Further advice should be available from the LSCP;
- attending or arranging for an appropriate member of staff to attend child protection conferences and core groups relating to a child at the college;
- submitting a school child protection report to Child Protection Conferences;
- potentially acting as the lead professional in a case and being familiar with this role and its associated responsibilities. The role of lead professional is usually decided on a case-by-case basis.

## **Training**

The DSL should:

- complete a MeLearning Level 1 & 2 child protection training course in order to recognise how to identify signs of abuse and know when it is appropriate to make a referral;
- receive training on inter-agency working. The DSL must have a working knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), the conduct of a child protection conference, and must be able to contribute to these and other inter-agency meetings effectively when required. A key role for the DSL is to ensure that the concerns and views of the college are represented and taken into account.
- receive specific training on the role of the DSL, which should be refreshed every two years.

### **Staff Safeguarding Training:**

It is the role of the DSL, working with the Principals and Welfare Officer, to ensure that all staff:

- have induction training covering child protection, an understanding of safeguarding issues including the causes of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- are able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse;
- know how to respond effectively when they have concerns and know that they have a responsibility to report any concerns immediately;
- know how to respond to a disclosure appropriately;
- are familiar with, and adhere to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy that is in place and know the procedures to follow and who to speak to should the need arise. This is included as part of the staff induction programme and ongoing CPD;
- are made aware of relevant information around child protection through staff meetings and other means of internal communication.