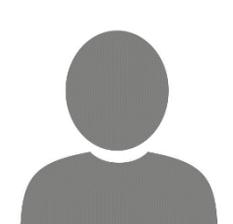
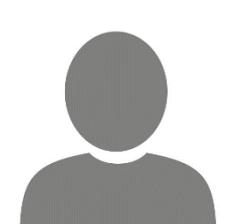


## The Bridge School Child Protection Procedures

**Date: August 2021**

**Next review due by July 2022**

Our designated safeguarding staff are:

				
Tina Sharman <b>Deputy Headteacher</b> Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Hazel Simmons <b>Headteacher</b> Deputy DSL	Elaine Griffin <b>Family Liaison and Welfare Officer</b> Deputy DSL	Nick Whitman <b>Family Liaison and Welfare Officer</b> Deputy DSL	Amanda Finn Deputy DSL
01473 556200	01473 556200	01473 556200 07496 305183	01473 556200 07496 305187	01473 556200
<a href="mailto:tina.sharman@thebridgeschool.org.uk">tina.sharman@thebridgeschool.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:hazel.simmons@thebridgeschool.org.uk">hazel.simmons@thebridgeschool.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:elaine.griffin@thebridgeschool.org.uk">elaine.griffin@thebridgeschool.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:nick.whitman@thebridgeschool.org.uk">nick.whitman@thebridgeschool.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:amanda.finn@thebridgeschool.org.uk">amanda.finn@thebridgeschool.org.uk</a>				
				 
Hazel Simmons Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children	Stuart Ellis Chair of the local governing body	Lucie Calow Director of Education	Steve Watts Trust Lead on Safeguarding	Safeguarding Governor  Adam Goddard Daryl Brook
01473 556200	StuartEllis@compassacademytrust.org	LCalow@unitysp.co.uk	SWatts@unitysp.co.uk	adam.goddard@thebridgeschool.org.uk daryl.brook@thebridgeschool.org.uk

## Aim

1. Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in keeping them safe. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals must ensure their approach is child centred. This means that they must always consider what is in the best interests of the child.
2. These procedures are for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. They form part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school. They should be read in conjunction with the trust's [policies](#) on safeguarding, safer recruitment and selection, staff code of conduct, health and safety and acceptable use of ICT, and the school's policies on behaviour (including the anti-bullying strategy and approach to physical intervention) and educational visits policy. They should also be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education, September 2021). Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:
  - a. protecting children from maltreatment
  - b. preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
  - c. ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
  - d. taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
3. Specialist provisions within the Unity Schools Partnership have a particular role to play in the safeguarding of vulnerable children. At the Bridge this means meeting the safeguarding and child protection needs of pupils with complex and severe learning disabilities. Our trust safeguarding policy provides further information on online safety, emotional and mental health, sexual and criminal exploitation, FGM, domestic abuse, homelessness and the impact of radical influences. We recognise our pupils' additional vulnerabilities in all situations.

## Expectations

4. All staff and volunteers must sign to confirm they have read and agree to these procedures before they start working with us, and whenever these procedures change. All children and their families will be provided with these procedures before enrolment. It is important for families to be aware of actions staff may take if there are any concerns for a child's safety, and for them to understand that they might not be consulted before action is taken. Knowing about child protection procedures ahead of time helps parents to engage better in the process, meaning that change is more likely to take place.
5. All adults working in our school who have contact with pupils are in positions of trust. Staff and volunteers should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including through early help. This means that staff and volunteers:

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

### Early help

6. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.
7. Early help is about stopping problems escalating. It relies on accurate early identification of difficulties and early action which is targeted and evaluated. It can involve intensive intervention or lighter touch support and is usually based on a clear support plan, with identified actions, responsibilities and outcomes, which is then reviewed.

Effective early help relies upon us all working together, providing local support as soon as a problem arises at any point in a child's life, from early years through to the teenage years and into early adulthood. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. By identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other professionals and targeting assessed need, positive outcomes for children, young people and their families are increased.

'Early Help' at The Bridge School is support offered to a child or family to meet a need not being met by usual provision, but that does meet the threshold for Child Social Services. The Early Help Offer is about schools working with partners in health and education services to help children and their families deal with any problems as soon as possible. This may involve direct work with the child or family, or signposting possible resources and services to support them.

In-school Early Help:

- supported transition for reception and in-year admissions

- robust safeguarding protocols
- Bespoke learning interventions
- SEND in-school offer Working with partners

With the support of parents, we are able to liaise and or refer children to other services which can support specific areas of need:

- Learning Disability Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (LD CAMHS)
- Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT)
- Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy
- CAF and Social Work Assessments
- SEND local offer

[Early Help » Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership \(suffolksp.org.uk\)](https://www.suffolksp.org.uk)

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

Children can be harmed in several ways; abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or it can take the form of neglect (see [Part 1 of Keeping children safe in education \(September 2021\)](#)). Children sometimes suffer more than one type of abuse at a time. Children as well as adults can be abusers; peer on peer abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up” (see [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)). Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of our wider safeguarding duties (see [The prevent duty: for schools and childcare providers](#)), and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

### Online safety

9. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We adopt whole school approaches to online safety to protect and educate pupils, students and staff in their use of technology and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate concerns as appropriate.

10. E-Safety is the responsibility of every member of staff within school. The use of technology is becoming an increasingly significant component of many safeguarding issues and an effective approach to online safety empowers a school community to establish effective mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate.

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

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes’.
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images

(e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

- **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>)

Many of the children and young people at The Bridge School are unlikely to access social media and other sites where they could access inappropriate content yet they remain at risk due to adult use.

Children and young people at The Bridge School are:

- Helped to use the internet in a safe and responsible manner;
- Encouraged to gain awareness of Online Safety;
- Only have access to the internet under the supervision of a member of staff; and
- Be logged on to the school system using their class login usernames and passwords.

Staff at the Bridge School have strict guidelines to the use of technology in school and beyond. Inadvertent access is treated as a safeguarding incident and reported to DSL/ADSL.

Inappropriate internet access will be subject to action under the Staff Disciplinary Process.

### How to respond

11. If you have a concern about a child's wellbeing, based on:
  - a. something the child or their parent has told you
  - b. something another child has told you
  - c. something you have noticed about the child's behaviour, health, or appearance
  - d. something another professional said or did

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

12. Even if you think your concern is minor, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) may have more information that, together with what you know, represents a more serious worry about a child. It is never your decision alone how to respond to concerns – but it is always your responsibility to share concerns, no matter how small.
  - a. **Do not investigate** but decide whether you need to clarify your concerns by asking the child or parent open questions (beginning with words like who, how, why, what, where and when) and being careful not to lead them. **Do not discuss your concerns with the parent(s) if this may increase the risk to the child.**
  - b. If you have heard a disclosure of abuse or are talking with a child or parent about your concerns, let them know what you will do next. For

example, 'I am worried about your bruise and I need to tell Mrs Smith (the DSL) so that she can help us think about how to keep you safe.'

- c. **Inform the DSL immediately.** If the DSL is not available, inform a Deputy DSL. If none of the designated safeguarding staff or headteacher are available, you must make the referral yourself. Details of how to do this are at the end of these procedures.
  - d. As soon as possible after the event, make a written record following the school's procedures: Every staff member has a log in for CPOMS and this is the preferred method of reporting. If you are unable to access CPOMS make notes and if immediate action is required contact DSL/ADSL by telephone. If there was a disclosure, record the words of the child or parent rather than your interpretation. Include analysis of what you saw or heard and why it is a cause for concern.
13. Any member of staff is entitled to report a safeguarding concern directly to the local authority if they do not feel able to refer the matter to the DSL. Details of how to do this are at the end of these procedures.

#### Who to pass concerns on to:

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

#### Concerns about another adult in the school

15. Safeguarding concerns about another adult in the school that may meet the harms threshold set out below, must be referred to the Headteacher (or whoever is fulfilling the role in their absence) without delay. If the concerns are about the Headteacher (or a relative of the Headteacher working at the school) they must be referred to the relevant trust Director of Education. They will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day in respect of all cases that may meet the harms threshold, i.e. in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
  - a. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - b. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
  - c. Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
  - d. Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

If you feel your concern has not been responded to appropriately, please contact the Trust Lead on Safeguarding ([swatts@unitysp.co.uk](mailto:swatts@unitysp.co.uk))

16. Low level concerns that do not meet the harms threshold set out above, should also be reported to the Headteacher. If they are about the Headteacher (or a relative of the Headteacher working at the school), they should be reported to the Director of Education. If they are about a member of the trust central team, they should be reported to the Chief Executive

Officer. All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing by the person to whom they are reported. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, action taken and the rationale for decisions.

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

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

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

### Whistleblowing

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

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

### Reviewing these procedures

20. These procedures are reviewed at least annually and approved by the local governing body. Copies of these procedures and supporting materials, such as Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education, September 2021), are available in the staffroom and on the school's website. Hard copies may be requested from the school office.

### Contact details for the local authority

21. To seek advice before making a referral to the local authority contact:

MASH Consultation Line on **0345 606 1499**.

22. To make a referral to the local authority contact:

Customer First on **0808 800 4005**.

In an emergency, call the Police on **999**.

[Child Safeguarding Concern \(MARF\) \(suffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/child-safeguarding-concern)