



# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy/Procedure creator: Kate Williams

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## Key staff involved in the process

Head of centre	Mandy Ellen
Senior leader(s)	Mandy Ellen and Emma Finch
Exams officer	Kate Williams
Other staff (if applicable)	Not Applicable

This process is reviewed and updated annually to ensure compliance with current requirements and regulations.





## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Safeguarding Statement**

All staff at MEPA Academy have a responsibility for safeguarding children. For this reason, staff in all sections of the school must adopt it in its entirety.

Increasingly, schools are expected to work with, support, and sometimes lead different agencies to enable the most appropriate form of intervention to take place. This policy aims to outline the role that the school will have, the procedures that staff should follow, and guidance on issues related to child protection generally. However, it is not exhaustive. All staff should keep the needs and safety of the child at the centre of any decision they make.

Our policy applies to all staff, pupils and anybody involved with MEPA Academy.

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. *Keeping children safe in education* (KCSIE September 2021)

### **Foreword**

This policy was revised in 2022 in line with:

- *Keeping children safe in education*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*
- *The Children Act 1989 and 2004*

*Safeguarding vulnerable groups act*

- *Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales* (March 2015)
- *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges advise*
  - *Multi agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation*



- *Children and adoption act*
- *Counter-terrorism domestic abuse act*

## **Objectives**

Everyone at MEPA Academy shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in educational settings;
- Identifying children and young people who may be in need of early help or who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm; and
- Taking appropriate action and working with other services as needed, with the aim of making sure that they are kept safe both at home and in the educational setting.

The objectives referred to above are achieved through developing systems within the school aimed at:

- Raising awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse;
- Providing a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting concerns and cases;
- Providing guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse;
- Promoting safe practice and challenging poor and unsafe practice;
- Providing a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison;
- Identifying the strategies and interventions available to support children at risk
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop, teaching pupils, how to keep themselves safe (PSHE, online safety); and
- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment when checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.

## **Procedure**

The role of independent schools in relation to child protection is the same as that of any other school. At

MEPA Academy, we adopt the principles and pursue the objectives contained within the statutory guidance.

MEPA Academy follows the guidance of communicating with the Local Education

Authority (KCC) Safeguarding Children Partnership if a child requires support so that they receive prompt attention

and any allegations of abuse can be properly investigated. All staff, are to receive

external training in child protection every year, and in addition they should receive safeguarding and

child protection updates (for example, via email and staff meetings), as required. In

addition all staff will receive safeguarding training by the DSL, regarding MEPA Academy's safeguarding procedures



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### 1. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

This person should have the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including organising resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Emma Finch and the Deputy DSL Claire Ross. In the DSLs absence, concerns should be taken to the Deputy DSL or Principal. Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to the appropriately trained Deputy DSLs, the ultimate lead responsibility for safe-guarding and child protection lies with the DSL. During the term time, the DSL and deputies are always available during working hours. After hours, all staff have the mobile numbers of the DSL and DDSLs should a safeguarding concern arise. All staff are advised that if they can't speak to the DSL or deputy then they should make a referral to social services if they feel the child is at risk and they should not leave the concerns until they speak to the DSL.



**Job description for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

	<p><b>Preventing radicalisation</b></p> <p>In accordance with the <i>Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales and Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism (2015) (Prevent Duty)</i> the DSL has the following responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acting as the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and support staff and external agencies in all matters relating to the Prevent Duty;</li> <li>• co-ordinating Prevent Duty procedures in the School;</li> <li>• undergoing appropriate training on the Prevent Duty such as the Home Office “Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent” (<b>WRAP</b>) training.</li> <li>• undergoing appropriate training on the Channel programme;</li> <li>• assessing the training needs of all School staff in relation to the Prevent Duty and implementing and maintaining an ongoing training programme for staff including induction training for all newly appointed staff and volunteers, and keeping records of such training;</li> <li>• monitoring the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to the Prevent Duty and;</li> <li>• liaising with local Prevent co-ordinators, the police and local authorities and through existing multi-agency forums, including referrals to the Channel Police Practitioner and/or the police where indicated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Child protection file</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where children leave the school or college the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible and separately from the main pupil file. ensuring transit and confirmation of receipt.</li> <li>• In addition to providing the child protection file, to consider whether it is appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving.</li> </ul> <p><b>Availability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To always be available in term time during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>• In conjunction with the Head and to make adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for out of hours/out of term activities</li> </ul>
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<b>Summary of the role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To take lead responsibility for all child protection matter arising at the Academy and to support all other staff in dealing with any child protection concerns that arise.</li> <li>• To have the status and authority within the Academy to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources, and where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.</li> <li>• Promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for who you are responsible and with whom you come into contact</li> </ul>
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## Main duties and responsibilities

### Managing referrals

To take lead responsibility for:

- referring all cases of suspected abuse of any pupil at the Academy to children's social care;
- supporting staff who make referrals to the local authority children's social care;
- referring cases to the Channel (prevent) programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- supporting staff who make referrals to the Channel (prevent) programme;
- making referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where a member of staff is dismissed or resigns in circumstances where there has been actual harm, or risk of harm, to a child;
- making referrals to the police where a crime may have been committed which involves a child

### Working with others

- To act as a point of contact with the three safeguarding partners.
- To liaise with the Principal in respect of police investigations or investigations under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 which involve the Academy
- To liaise with the Principal or case manager and the LADO on child protection matters which concern a staff member.
- To liaise with staff on matter of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with the relevant agencies; and
- To act as a source of support, advice and expertise to all staff.

### Raising Awareness

- Ensure the School's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately.
- Ensure the School's child protection policy is reviewed at least annually, and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and to do so in connection with the governing body.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly.
- Ensure that the parents are aware that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made to children's social care and the Academy's role in this.



<p><b>Line management duties and responsibilities</b></p> <p><b>Training</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have line management responsibility for the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</li>   <li>• The Designated Safeguarding Lead should receive appropriate child protection training every two years.</li> <li>• The Designated Safeguarding Lead should undertake Prevent awareness training.</li> <li>• The knowledge and skills of the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be refreshed at regular intervals to allow them to understand and keep up to date with developments to their role so that they can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the assessment process for providing Early Help and interrogation, including local criteria for action and local authority children’s social care referral arrangements;</li> <li>• have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;</li> <li>• ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the Academy’s child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff, volunteers and contractors;</li> <li>• be alert to the specific needs of children in need those with special educational needs and young carers;</li> <li>• understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.</li> <li>• understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the three safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.</li> <li>• be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;</li> <li>• understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the rest of radicalisation;</li> <li>• are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at Academy;</li> <li>• can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online;</li> <li>• obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and</li> <li>• encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the Academy may put in place to protect them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Training**

The DSL will:

- Organise regular formal external training on safeguarding within school;
- Undertake level 3 refresher training every two years;



- Ensure all staff have read and understood Part One of KCSIE;
- Ensure staff are trained in online safety;
- Provide a safeguarding induction for all new staff that includes:

§ Part 1 of KCSIE

§ KCSIE Annex A (leaders and those who work directly with children)

§ School Safeguarding Policy

§ Staff Code of Conduct

§ Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy

§ Procedure for dealing with children missing in education (Appendix 6)

§ Prevent;

- Provide safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually;
- Keep a training log of all the safeguarding training attended by staff each year;
- Provide safeguarding training for trustees;
- Liaise with the CPD coordinator to arrange specialist safeguarding training e.g. Prevent duty/suicide prevention.

### 3. The role of all members of staff

Any member of staff who is told of an incident or who has a strong suspicion of abuse occurring within the school, or to a pupil at home or outside of school, must report it to the DSL **immediately**. The DSL will usually decide whether to make a referral to children's social care, but it is important to note that any staff member can refer their concerns to children's social care directly by informing the child's Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. 03000 411111

If the allegations of abuse are about the DSL, the report should be made to the Principal. If the allegations of abuse are about the Principal then a referral should be made to the LADO without informing the Principal. 020 8255 2889

**If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral and there is no need for parental consent. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point. If urgent action is required then the staff member should ring 999.**

At all times, school staff should:

- Be alert to the signs of abuse as detailed in this policy;
- Recognise that young people with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse;
- Report any concerns immediately to the DSL;





- Consult with the DSL if in any doubt as to how to proceed;
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here';
- Follow the advice given in this policy in relation to how to handle disclosures; and
- Contribute through the curriculum by developing children's understanding, awareness and resilience.

For children at risk, school may be the one stable place from which they can expect security and reassurance. It is not only about being alert to potential abuse, but providing the support to help children through difficult times, providing them with the coping skills that can help avoid situations arising, and dealing with the emotional difficulties that arise afterwards if they do.

## Early help

Early identification of children who may not be at risk of significant harm but are in need of additional support from one or more agencies is also essential. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem arises. These cases should lead to inter-agency assessments using the Local Authority (L.A) processes. If a staff member feels that a child is in need of additional support, as mentioned above, they should record and report their concerns to the DSL. The DSL will decide whether to refer immediately to Early Help, school pastoral support or the LSCP as appropriate. If a decision is made to access Early Help then the safeguarding team will monitor the case and refer should the situation not seem to improve.

## Whistleblowing (see Whistleblowing policy for detailed approach)

MEPA Academy values its staff and has a robust system for reporting and handling concerns, including poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding procedures. All staff are required to report to the DSL any concerns or allegations about the behaviour of colleagues or practices that are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. Any report made to the DSL will be handled with complete sensitivity. The member of staff reporting the alleged incident should be assured that they would not face any retribution as a result of their actions. If a staff member feels unable to raise the concerns internally there is a NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline which the school urges them to contact (08000280285).

## 4. Definition of Child Abuse (Refer to Appendix 2)

All staff should be aware of the types and signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify pupils who may be in need of help or protection. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL.

Child abuse is 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. Children may be abused in a family or in an 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. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Staff should be aware of the four main categories of child abuse which are commonly identified:

- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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 cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- **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 or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Abuse by one or more pupils against another.** Should a staff member suspect that a pupil is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm from another pupil/s, the same referral procedures outlined in this policy will apply. In the event that disclosures are made about Peer on Peer abuse, all the children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being 'at risk'. Staff must be aware that peer on peer abuse can take many different forms e.g. sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexting, hazing/initiation rituals, up-skirting, bullying. It is vital that staff are clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up". The school will treat any allegations of peer on peer abuse extremely seriously and refer any safeguarding concerns to the local Children's Services. **(Refer to Appendix 5 and Anti-bullying Policy)**

## 5. Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (refer to Appendix 1)

MEPA's policy is that brief notes should be made at the time of the incident, or immediately after. Records may be used in legal proceedings and must be kept accurate and secure. All records should be copied to the DSL and should include factual information rather than assumption or interpretation. All information is stored in the DSL's office under lock and key and in the encrypted Students Welfare database that only key staff member have access to. The child's own language should be quoted rather than paraphrased and staff should not ask leading questions. Staff should never reassure a pupil that what they are saying will be kept in confidence. Records may be used at a later date to support a referral to an external agency.

## 6. Confidentiality

Where a child has a safeguarding file and leaves one school for another, the DSL must inform the receiving school and ensure the safe transfer of child protection files to pupil's new school. If the child leaves the school without having a receiving school, details should be passed to the local authority .

Educational staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies. Members of staff should not promise confidentiality but can let the child know that only those who need to know will be informed, and always for the child's own sake. Time should be taken to reassure the child and confirm that any information given will be treated sensitively. Reassurance should be given and the adult involved should listen sympathetically and non-judgmentally.



Staff should be careful in subsequent discussions and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of any information they may hold. Members of staff, other than the designated member and those closely involved, should only have enough details in order to help them act sensitively and appropriately with a pupil. Sensitive information regarding pastoral issues and for children on the child protection register is kept separately in a folder in the closed section of the office or on the password protected Pupil Welfare drive. Discretion should be used when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children (for example, if a child goes into care).

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

## **7. Allegations of abuse against a member of staff**

### **Introduction**

Allegations of abuse are difficult and distressing for all concerned. It is essential that policies and procedures are in place to manage these cases. Underpinning these procedures are the following principles: there should be adequate protection for the child and the procedures should ensure that allegations against a member of staff are dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently. The same procedure will be followed with allegations made against supply staff.

**Allegation procedures should be used in all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or member of staff (including volunteers) that provides education for children under 18 years of age has:**

- **Behaved in a way which has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;**
- **Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or**
- **Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they would pose a risk of harm to children.**

### **Step 1: Initial Considerations**

Discussing the allegation: Allegations regarding staff should be made to the Headteacher or, in their absence, the DSL. If the allegations are about the Headteacher or DSL, they should be reported to the Principal (without informing the headteacher). KCSIE 2020 advises that a case manager is appointed; this would be either the Principal/DST. The role of the case manager is to liaise with the DSL and lead on any decisions made. The local authority SAAM (Safeguarding Advice and Allegations Management) Duty Team Designated Officer (DO) should be informed of all allegations that come to a school's attention and appear to meet the criteria set out above (within one day). If this is the case, the school will not undertake its own investigation of the allegations without prior consultation with the DO. The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Many cases may well either not meet the criteria set out above, or may do so without warranting consideration of either a police investigation or enquiries by the local authority children's social care services. In these cases, local school procedures should be followed to resolve cases without delay. Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, it will be for the school to deal with it. Borderline case discussions with the DO can be held informally and without naming the school or individual. The initial sharing of information with the DO and evaluation may lead to a decision that no further action is to be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation or concern, in which case this decision and a justification for it should be recorded by both the case manager and the DO, and agreement reached on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom. The following terms should be used when determining the outcome of allegations investigations: substantiated, malicious, false, or unsubstantiated.

### **Step 2: Informing Parents**

Parents should be informed of the allegation as soon as possible. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or children's social care services need to be involved, the case worker should not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed on what information can be disclosed to the parents or carers.



§ If there is an indication that the child may have been assaulted, the parent has the right to contact the police and be informed of their rights.

§ Parents may decide that they do not want to report to the police. However, the Designated Local Safeguarding Authority Officer will, in most cases, need to consult the police and the police may contact the parents to check their decision.

### **Step 3: Informing the Member of Staff**

The person who is the subject of the allegation needs to be informed as soon as possible after consultation between the case worker and LADO. Where it is likely that police and/or children's social services will be involved, an agreement needs to be made with those agencies as to what information can be disclosed to the member of staff. If the staff member is a member of a trade union or professional association, they should be advised to seek support from them. It is advisable that they should also seek independent legal advice.

If the police decide to investigate, the school would not start their own investigation before the police have decided whether or not they intend to take the case through the criminal courts.

The school would seek to support the member of staff as much as possible as they are likely to feel threatened and isolated from others.

### **Ethos**

For the sake of the child, parents and member of staff involved, it is important that the investigation is rigorous, timely, and executed in a professional manner with due consideration for confidentiality and collaboration with other relevant agencies.

The findings of the investigation and the rationale for any action taken must be recorded.

### **Suspending the member of staff**

Suspension as a course of action would be considered where there is cause to suspect a pupil is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. Staff should not be automatically suspended, and alternatives should also be considered. Suspension in a case of this kind is a procedural step only and must be viewed as a neutral action that does not presuppose guilt or innocence. Suspension itself does not constitute disciplinary action, and the member of staff will continue to receive full pay. Any disciplinary action would follow the procedures laid out in the Staff Handbook.

Investigations into an allegation of abuse should start with the presumption that the member of staff is innocent of any wrongdoing unless proven otherwise.



## Confidentiality

As of October 2012, restrictions have been put into place on the reporting or publication of allegations against teachers. The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity.

## Criminal investigations

The police will aim to complete their enquiries as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. The police are expected to set a review of progress date at the outset of their investigation, which should be no later than four weeks after the initial evaluation.

## Disciplinary action

Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or children's social care services is unnecessary or if the Crown Prosecution Service decides against criminal proceedings, disciplinary proceedings must always be considered. Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, it will be for the school to deal with. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Headteacher/caseworker should institute appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required, the investigating officer should aim to provide the Headteacher with a report within 10 working days.

## Resignation and settlement agreements

If a person tenders their resignation during an investigation, or before an investigation has started, the investigation should still be continued and recorded. Settlement agreements must not be used in such cases. Such an agreement may include restrictions on the employer in respect of sharing details of the case.

The school will refer individuals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where the school ceases to use that person's services (or they left) due to risk/harm to a child.

Failure to make a report to the DBS constitutes an offence.

**Schools and colleges have a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left.**

## Action in respect of false or unfounded allegations

If the allegation is found to be false, and the person has been suspended, then the school will support him or her as best it can, if necessary with the provision of a mentor to return to work, and will attempt to minimise contact with the pupil(s) involved in making the allegation if they remain at school. The school will consider serious disciplinary action against a child who has been found to make deliberately false allegations. The school may consider asking the police to ascertain whether or not they can take any action against the person responsible.

## Records

A record should be kept of all allegations and the individual's confidential personnel file, with a copy being sent to the person concerned. The record should be kept until the member of staff's retirement age or for 10 years, depending on which is longer. Allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from the staff member's personal records.

## 8. How to be a Safe Teacher (Refer to Appendix 3)

Staff are advised to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or at risk of allegations of harm to a pupil. Staff are advised never to disclose their own personal telephone or email addresses to pupils. Pupils can be contacted directly from the School Office using the phone there. Staff should use their MEPA email addresses. Staff have also been advised of the need for diligence in their postings on social networking sites, and the advisability of accepting pupils and ex-pupils as friends on these sites.



In addition to the advice above, staff should refer to the school document entitled 'Professional Code of Conduct for Staff 'in **Appendix 3**.

## **9. General advice to staff on physical contact with pupils**

Some form of physical contact with pupils by teachers is inevitable. All teachers should be aware of issues related to touching and the way in which this might be misconstrued. This relates particularly to any sensitive areas of the body. Particular care needs to be taken when making corrections in technique in vocational lessons. This matter is addressed directly in the Performing Arts Department. At the beginning of each year, all Performing Arts staff discuss the issue of touching and physical contact and ask for any pupils who do not wish to be touched to let them know. Where any uncertainty exists, a senior member of staff should be consulted. One-to-one discussions with pupils might most appropriately take place in rooms that are openly visible to other members of staff. In peripatetic music lessons which occur in close one-to one teaching environments the same procedure is followed as mentioned above.

In the event of physical restraint being required, it is important that only the minimum amount is used in order to prevent the pupil from causing injury to themselves, others or property. Following such an intervention, a critical incident form should be completed. Refer to the school's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy for more information on the use of reasonable force.

## **10. Safer recruitment procedures**

The nature of MEPA, with its large number of visiting vocational specialist teachers, poses significantly more challenges regarding safer recruitment. Please refer to the MEPA **Safer Recruitment Policy** for more detailed employment procedures.

It is our aim that all staff working within the School should have undergone the following recruitment checks before they start to work with pupils:

- There has been an identity check and a Barred List/DBS check;
- Proof of identification has been received;
- A medical declaration has been made; =
- Two written references have been received with one being from the individual's most recent employer; if this is a school, the reference must be from the Head;
- Proof of qualifications has been received;
- The school has been provided with a full employment history and a statement has been given to the applicant explaining that any of their previous employers may be approached;
- The employee has been interviewed (if necessary) to explain any gaps in their employment history and the interviewer will provide a written record that the explanation is satisfactory. At least one member of the panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment training;
- Overseas checks are carried out, or evidence that they had been carried out is collected;
- The applicant is informed that their appointment is subject to a satisfactory DBS check and confirmation of all pre-employment verification checks
- The applicant is informed that their appointment is subject to a satisfactory probationary period.

Due to the nature of the school, it is sometimes necessary to accept a DBS check from another institution (for example, for a visiting teacher for a half-term period teaching on a specialist unit). A DBS disclosure such as this cannot be accepted if there is



a gap of employment of more than three months. A barred list check will be obtained for the staff member. During the time of the employment, the member of staff would be under supervisory arrangements from a line manager or member of the SLT. A single central register is kept of all staff's vetting information, DBS checks, qualifications etc.

All staff are required to undergo induction training including Safeguarding, Prevent, Whistleblowing, and GDPR.

All staff taking part in Interview Panels are required to undertake Safer Recruitment in Education Training.

## **11. Prevent Duty (Refer to Appendix 4)**

From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015, all schools, colleges and universities are expected to have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. We are required to think about what we can do to protect pupils from the risk of radicalisation. This is known as Prevent duty. Any staff member who is concerned that a pupil may be at risk of being drawn into extremism of any kind, which could lead to criminal activity, is required to take these concerns to the Head teacher, who will ask for advice and support from the local Prevent Coordinator. Cases may also be referred to the Channel programme for assessment.

The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements of schools, HE institutions and FE colleges into five general themes:

### **• Working in partnership**

The process for the referral of any concerns is set out in **Appendix 3**. If staff are concerned that a pupil may be at risk of being exploited or radicalised, they should inform the Head teacher, who will make a referral to the Channel programme.

Online safety is taught as part of the PSHE and Citizenship curriculums and expert guest speakers are brought into school to speak to staff, parents and pupils about how to be safe on line.

### **• Policy on external speakers**

We value the contribution that external speakers can bring to our pupils' education. We bring in parents and speakers to talk to pupils about their experience of working in the theatre, film, music and television industries. The only other visiting speakers who are invited to MEPA Academy are those who offer specialist knowledge in relation to pupil support; for example, giving talks on nutrition, sexual health, staying safe online, stress management or drug awareness.

The credentials of speakers are researched beforehand, where possible, and speakers are accompanied at all times by a member of staff and never left alone with the pupils. This allows for the content of the speaker's speech to be monitored. In addition all guest speakers are 'Google' researched in order to check if they have any extremist views or other safeguarding concerns prior to their visit. A record of the searches is kept by the DSL. All external speakers are asked to provide photo I.D upon arrival at reception. We do not have a separate policy for visiting speakers.



### • Pastoral care

MEPA Academy takes its responsibilities for promoting pupil welfare very seriously, and has well-established systems for providing pupil support. We operate an open-door policy, and pupils are encouraged to discuss any problems or anxieties they may be experiencing with any trusted member of staff.

• **Chaplaincy support** There is no demand for chaplaincy provision and none is provided. Pupils who request a prayer room will be accommodated using the normal room booking procedure, and on request pupils will be granted a leave of absence for significant religious festivals that fall during term time.

## 12. Reviewing Policies and Procedures

The DSL will be kept informed of any statutory changes or information from the Government, and will ensure that the school's Safeguarding Policy and school practice reflect any changes.

The DSL will conduct an annual review of the school's Safeguarding Policy.

In the case of an allegation being made against a staff member, the DSL and Principal will review the school's policy after the allegation and any amendments will be made to the policy.

The DSL will conduct a review of the school's Safeguarding Policy after each incident to ensure that the policy is robust enough.

This policy is circulated to the Principal and all staff at the start of each academic year and is included within the Safeguarding Training Module completed annually or upon commencement of employment.

This policy will be made available to parents and pupils on the website and on request.

## APPENDIX 1

### Responding when children disclose acts of abuse

It is necessary to create the right atmosphere when meeting and communicating with children, to help them feel at ease and reduce any pressure from parents, carers or others. Children will need reassurance that they will not be victimized for sharing information or asking for help or protection. It is essential that any accounts of adverse experiences coming from children are as accurate and complete as possible. Accuracy is key, for without it effective decisions cannot be made and, equally, inaccurate accounts can lead to children remaining unsafe, or to the possibility of wrongful actions being taken that affect children and adults.

### Communicating with vulnerable children: a guide for practitioners

If a staff member is the recipient of a child's confidence, it is their responsibility to observe, record and report. It is not the responsibility of staff in schools to investigate possible abuse or neglect. They have a key role to play by referring concerns to the DSL, providing information for police investigations and contributing towards assessments. The DSL will, in turn, refer concerns onto the Local authority.

Staff should:

- Listen with care, allowing silence;
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame and was right to tell you;
- Not show disbelief;
- Not appear shocked or angry;
- Not give a guarantee of confidentiality;





- Take all allegations seriously;
- Avoid being judgemental about the information given by the child;
- Not pursue matters with direct questioning; a child may become distressed when faced with persistent questioning. 'Open ended 'questions should be used rather than 'leading ' questions. The child should never be interrogated;
- Ask the informing adult or child what steps they would like to be taken to protect them now that they have made the allegation, and assure them that the school will try to follow their wishes;
- Not interview alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation of abuse. The interviewing of children and adults is now carried out by specially trained staff only, following procedures agreed by the local education authority and the police;
- Provide a written report within 24hours and make a copy available to the DSL; and
- Refer to the DSL in accordance with the school's guidelines.

## **REMEMBER**

Keep detailed notes and make a record of them on the same day.

Be vigilant for signs of abuse and never assume that abuse is impossible within the school.

The identity of the alleged perpetrator, be they staff, an adult or another pupil, will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the statutory reporting procedures.



## APPENDIX 2

### Indicators of abuse

It is important to note that lists such as the one below are neither completely definitive nor exhaustive. A child may be subject to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

### 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.**

Signs of possible physical abuse:

- Injuries that form a shape or pattern that may look like the object used to make the injury (e.g. buckle, hand, iron, teeth, cigarette burns);
- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns;
- Fabricated or induced illness;
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries;
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather;
- Refusal to change for vocational lessons;
- Bald patches;
- Running away;
- Fear of medical help or examination;
- Self-destructive tendencies;
- Aggression towards others;
- Fear of physical contact – shrinking back if touched;
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study'); and
- Fear of their suspected abuser being contacted.

### Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in and/or watch sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Signs of sexual abuse:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age;
- Medical problems, such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases;
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia;
- Personality changes, such as becoming insecure or clingy;
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns, such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys;
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating;
- Being isolated or withdrawn;



- Inability to concentrate;
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder;
- Displays sexual knowledge beyond their years;
- Overly sexualised behaviour, promiscuity;
- Pregnancy, particularly when reluctant to name father;
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares;
- Becomes worried about clothing being removed;
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures;
- Drugs, alcohol or solvent abuse; and
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect, overreacting to criticism.

## **Emotional abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development/the refusal or failure to give adequate love or affection.

Signs of possible emotional abuse are:

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags;
- Low self-esteem;
- Sudden speech disorders;
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc.');
- Overreaction to mistakes;
- Extreme fear of any new situation;
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this');
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation);
- Running away; and
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.

## **Neglect**

This is where parents/carers fail to meet the basic essential needs of children, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. This includes leaving children alone and unsupervised.

Signs of possible neglect are:

- Constant hunger;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Constant tiredness;
- Poor state of clothing;
- Emaciation;
- Untreated medical problems;
- No social relationships;
- Compulsive scavenging; and
- Destructive tendencies.



## Children Missing in Education

A child going missing from an educational setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. If a child goes missing, particularly on multiple occasions or for more than 10 days consecutively, they will be reported to Children's Social Services immediately. We will act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation (**See appendix 6**)

## Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship.

## So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse 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

It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

## Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a criminal offence, and as an educational institution we have a mandatory duty to report any suspected cases to the police within one month of initial disclosure/identification.

A girl or woman who has had FGM may:

- Have difficulty walking, sitting or standing;
- Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet;
- Have unusual behaviour after an absence from college;
- Frequent infections
- Be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations; and
- Ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Call the FGM helpline if you're worried that a pupil is at risk of, or has had, FGM on 0800 028 3550 or email [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk).

## Sexting

In *KCSIE 2020* the DfE sets out information about peer-on-peer abuse. It says peer abuse can take many different forms, including 'sexting'. In dealing with allegations of 'sexting' and the potential for this to develop into peer-on-peer abuse the school will refer to the advice from UKCCIS *'Sexting in school and colleges; responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'*.

It gives guidance on:

- Handling a disclosure of 'sexting'
- Assessing the risks to the young person
- Searching devices for images
- Informing other staff members about the incident
- Informing parents/carers about the incident
- Interviewing the young persons involved in the 'sexting' incident
- Deciding on a response
- Contacting other agencies/ reporting the incident to the police
- Educating young people and parents about 'sexting'



Where an image has been shared between personal devices, staff should always confiscate and secure the device, but should never:

- View the image
- Send, share or save the image
- Allow pupils to do either of the above.

All incidents of sexting should be reported to the DSL

### **Domestic Abuse**

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life. If a staff member receives a disclosure relating to domestic violence they should refer immediately to the DSL. Domestic violence takes many forms such as physical violence which includes kicking, hitting, shoving and restraining. Verbal and physical threats of sexual abuse, intimidation and emotional abuse are also aspects of domestic abuse.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF**

This code of conduct must be adhered to alongside the standards of behaviour as outlined in the Staff Handbook

School staff are in a unique position of influence and therefore must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all pupils within the school. This Code of Conduct gives clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff must observe.

#### **All staff are expected to:**

- Demonstrate consistently high standards of professional conduct so that pupils do the same.
- Maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, both inside and outside school.
- Place the needs and safety of the child at the centre of any decision they make.
- Avoid putting themselves at risk or placing themselves in a vulnerable situation, which may lead to allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

### **Safe working practices for the protection of pupils and staff**

#### **Introduction**

The following guidelines have been created in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy 2020, KCSIE 2020 and *Teachers' Standards* (2012). A failure to follow these guidelines would make it very difficult for the school to support a staff member if an allegation were made.

#### **A failure to follow this Code of Conduct may lead to the Disciplinary Procedure being invoked.**

All staff are advised to demonstrate exemplary behaviour at all times. The following guidelines are must be observed at all times.



Staff may be required to make professional judgements/decisions not covered in this document and are expected to show professionalism and due care when doing so. In such situations, the staff member would be expected to report the incident to their line manager.

### **1. Duty of care**

- The wellbeing and safety of the child are paramount and always put above their academic or vocational achievements.
- All staff should know the name of the DSL, be familiar with the child safeguarding arrangements and understand their responsibilities regarding child protection.

### **2. Power and positions of trust**

- All adults working with pupils in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. Where an adult is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is a criminal offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.
- Where an adult in a position of trust attempts to engage in sexual activity with a person who attends the school but who is 18 the school will still see this as a breach of their position of trust, resulting in a cause for concern and disciplinary action.
- Where an adult in a position of trust attempts to engage in sexual activity with a person who attended the school recently (within three years) it will be seen as a breach of their position of trust, resulting in a cause for concern and disciplinary action.

### **3. Professionalism**

- All staff are expected to behave professionally at all times. Being professional includes:
  - Being punctual and well-prepared;
  - Carrying out tasks to the best of their ability;
  - Taking pride in all aspects of their work;



- Dressing appropriately: all staff are expected to dress appropriately and set an example in what they wear;
- Observing all Health and Safety regulations;
- All absence being genuine; and
- Meeting all deadlines.
- In all interaction with pupils, teachers must remember that they are the adult and as such they have a moral and legal duty to behave in a considered and appropriate manner.
- Staff should never criticise/undermine or question the decisions of another member of staff in conversations with pupils or in front of pupils.

#### **4. Confidentiality**

- Staff have access to confidential information about pupils in order to conduct their everyday responsibilities. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or their family for any other purposes. Information should never be used to intimidate or humiliate a pupil.
- Initiating or perpetuating anything that could be construed as 'gossip' is not acceptable under any circumstances; all staff have a responsibility to judge what is just salacious 'hearsay' and what is actually content that needs to be acted upon by referring to the DSL or the Head. All staff must exercise due confidentiality towards matters that are discussed or overheard. It is the duty of the other staff member to report any concerns to the Headteacher/DSL and not discuss the matter with members of staff or parents.

#### **5. Behaviour**

- All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. No aspect of an individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should compromise their position within the work environment, so it is important to exercise due care and attention outside of school.
- Staff should never use inappropriate language (swearing) around pupils and should challenge any pupils who use inappropriate language themselves.
- Staff must not engage in provocative (sexual or physical) conversations with pupils. While discussions



of sexuality may occur during specific PSHCE lessons, teachers should not refer to personal experience or assert judgements. Avoid discussing pupils' personal sexual relationships. Handle discussions about pupils' sexual relationships carefully, and do not allow them to be used as a platform by pupils to gossip or for pupils to boast.

- Staff should always strive to be excellent role models for pupils, and excellent ambassadors for MEPA Academy. This involves modelling professional behaviour at all times and not drinking excessively/smoking around pupils/parents at any school-related functions; for example, shows, trips, welcome evenings, Teachers and Parents (TAP) events, etc.
- Staff should not drink alcohol with current pupils in public or private places, nor purchase alcohol for pupils.
- Staff are not allowed to drink alcohol when in a position of responsibility relating to the duty of care towards pupils. This includes when supervising pupils on trips, backstage or at any school-related event.

## 6. Dress and appearance

- All staff must dress appropriately and set an example in what they wear. Put simply: 'If you can see through it, up it or down it, it is not appropriate to wear to school'.
- Staff can wear vocational clothing when teaching vocational classes (for example, Drama or Dance) but should change into smart / casual attire for parent/teacher meetings and school events.
- Jeans and denim are not acceptable.

## 7. Infatuations

- Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to become strongly attracted to a staff member. A member of staff who becomes aware of such an incident should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with their line manager and/or the DSL.
- Staff should be vigilant of the following behaviour as it may indicate the pupil has a potentially unhealthy attachment to a member of staff. As soon as the teacher feels in anyway uncomfortable, they should seek advice and it will be noted as a concern.
  1. Personal space – pupils standing very close to you.
  2. Making excessive demands of you – time, energy, emotional wellbeing.
  3. Making personal comments – about your clothes, face, manner, height, body shape, personal life.
- Staff should avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with pupils away from others. If you find a particular





pupil always wants one-to-one meetings with you, encourage another pupil to come along.

## **8. Communication with pupils**

- Communication between staff and pupils, by whatever method, should be within clear and explicit professional boundaries.  
This includes mobile phones/email/photos/social networking sites/ websites, etc.
- Staff should never give pupils their mobile numbers unless in the case of an emergency. The teacher must ensure the pupil has deleted their mobile number once it has been used for the intended purpose.
- Staff should avoid ringing pupils from their mobiles unless it is a last resort and should then check to see that the pupil has deleted their number.
- Staff should not use Internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a pupil.
- Staff should not make images of pupils available on the Internet, other than through the school network/website, without consent from parents.
- Staff should not have images of pupils stored on personal cameras or computers.
- Staff should be very conscious of the way in which they speak/communicate with pupils. No matter how positive their relationship with a pupil is, they are still in a position of authority and thus throw away remarks, sarcastic comments or put-downs can have a greater effect than they anticipate. The risk of this is heightened if comments are made outside of school hours when the boundaries between school and non-school or teacher and friend are more blurred.

## **9. Personal living arrangements.**

- A teacher should never go to a pupil's house unless for essential reasons and agreed with the DSL and the child's parents.
- A pupil should never be invited to a teacher's house.
- Staff should also be wary about what personal information they disclose to pupils about their personal lives, the reason being that some pupils could get the message that there is an invitation for greater intimacy/friendship/openness than was actually being given.

## **10. Social networking sites and online gaming**

- Staff should not be friends with current or recent pupils on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram etc. even if they are sure they have



the highest settings in place (this includes ex-pupils, as they are often friends with current pupils).

- Staff must ensure that there are not any potentially compromising personal photos or information on any of the school computers or on social networking sites, e.g. Twitter/Instagram/Facebook. Staff should be aware that they leave themselves open to charges of professional misconduct if compromising images are made available on a public profile by anyone.
- Staff should be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and should be mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations.

### **11. Advice to staff on physical contact with pupils**

- There are times when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have physical contact with a pupil, but it is crucial that they do so in an appropriate and professional way.
- Staff should ensure that any manual/physical support required should be provided openly and in line with the Safeguarding Policy and individual departmental policies. Staff must seek the consent of a pupil before a touch is made “ –is it okay if I hold your shoulder to support your weight ...?” HOD’s and the DSL should be consulted if you are uncertain on how to handle these situations.
- Staff should never touch a pupil in a way that may be considered indecent.
- There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and assurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times to ensure that the contact is not misinterpreted or intrusive.
- Staff may legitimately physically intervene to maintain pupil safety or prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or causing damage to property.

### **12. One-to-one situations**

- Staff should always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations. One- to-one meetings should not happen behind closed doors that do not have a vision panel. It is advised that, where possible, the door is left open and the meeting does not occur in a room that is away from the main academic corridors/art rooms.



- Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from school premises must not take place without the consent of the Head or the DSL.

### **13. Transporting pupils**

- Staff must not provide a lift to a pupil in a car or any other vehicle without consent from the DSL and the written consent of the parents.
- Where the staff member has authority to transport a pupil in their private vehicle they must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy/insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. The driver must also have appropriate insurance.
- A teacher must not meet pupils outside the school environment/day without previously discussing the matter with the Headteacher. In all cases, parents should be notified. If it is a weekend rehearsal, the Director of Performing Arts should be informed. A *brief* risk assessment should be completed for a weekend rehearsal, and staff must have considered arrangements for eating and supervision during this time. If it is not possible for the member of staff to supervise and pupils are to be left alone, this must be clearly communicated in the parental letter notifying of the rehearsal and the risk assessment.

### **14. Curriculum**

- Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter that is sexually explicit or of a sensitive nature. Staff must ensure that the resources used clearly relate to the learning outcomes and are age appropriate. The wellbeing of the pupil is paramount, and a pupil should not feel distressed by the content/discussions in a lesson. If a pupil does become upset during the lesson, they should be allowed to leave the classroom/studio, and the member of staff should address the



concern at the first available opportunity. The staff member is advised to remove any further reference to the sensitive subject matter from future lessons.

- Unplanned discussions of a sensitive subject matter should be handled carefully and without the staff member asserting their personal judgements.

## **15. Internet use**

- Under no circumstances should adults access inappropriate images on the Internet. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children is a criminal offence that will be reported to the police and will invariably lead to the individual being barred from working with children and young people.

## **16. Whistleblowing**

- MEPA Academy values its staff and has a robust system for reporting and handling concerns, including poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding procedures. All staff are required to report to the DSL any concerns or allegations about the behaviour of colleagues or practices that are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. Any report made to the DSL will be handled with complete sensitivity. The member of staff reporting the alleged incident should be assured that they would not face any retribution as a result of their actions.

## **17. Remote Teaching and Learning**

- The staff expectations for remote/online teaching follow the same principles as set out in the school's code of conduct above. If you have any queries or concerns about a particular aspect of on-line work, or about something that has happened whilst you have been working on-line, then please contact the Head Teacher.

- **Only:**

- o Use school-registered accounts never personal ones.
- o Use internet-enabled personal devices in line with school acceptable use policies.
- o Use equipment and internet services provided by the school unless to do otherwise
- o Communicate with those you know.



- **Never:**

- o Share your passwords.
- o Give out your personal details.
- o Use your personal devices to take images of pupils at, or on behalf of, the school.

- **Do not:**

- o Use a system that your SLT has not approved.
- o Discuss or share data relating to children and parents in staff social media groups.
- o Have inappropriate objects or information visible to your audience when on-line.
- o Seek contact or respond to contact with pupils outside of the purposes of your work.

- **Check that:**

- o You are adhering to MEPA's Online Safety Policy and/or Acceptable Use Policy.
- o Your pupils understand how to stay safe and behave on-line
- o You are only on-line with those you intend to connect.

- Know the school's Home working Arrangements Policy and associated on-line safety policies.

- Ensure your use of technologies does not bring the School into disrepute.

- Always keep a log of your work on-line including date, time, subject and the class with whom you worked.

- Remind those pupils you are working with on-line of your ground rules, safeguarding policies, and reporting process.

*This Code of Conduct forms part of the school's disciplinary rules for staff. A serious breach of the code will be regarded as gross misconduct. A less serious breach may result in a disciplinary warning or another consequence.*

## **Appendix 4**

### **Prevent duty and the Channel programme**

#### **What is Channel?**

Channel is an early intervention multi-agency process designed to safeguard vulnerable people from being drawn into violent extremist or terrorist behaviour.



Channel is designed to work with individuals of any age who are at risk of being exploited by extremist or terrorist ideologues. The process is shaped around the circumstances of each person and can provide support for any form of radicalisation or personal vulnerability.

Channel interventions are delivered through local partners and specialist agencies. The support may focus on a person's vulnerabilities around health, education, employment or housing, as well as specialist mentoring or faith guidance and broader diversionary activities such as sport. Each support package is tailored to the person and their particular circumstances.

### **How to recognise the signs of radicalisation**

Staff are directed to the online Channel General Awareness training course at <http://course.ncalt.com/>

[Channel\\_General\\_Awareness](#). The course takes about 20 minutes to complete. It gives general guidance on recognising the signs of radicalisation, and explains what Channel does to support people who may be vulnerable to exploitation, or may already be posing a risk to others.

### **What to do if you have a concern**

MEPA's Designated Lead is Emma West. If you believe that someone is vulnerable to being exploited or radicalised, inform Emma Finch and she will seek advice and support from our local Prevent Coordinator. However, **anyone can ask for advice or make a referral**.

Referrals should be made to the safeguarding team of the pupil's borough of residence, if you have any immediate concerns:

**Phone the police non-emergency line: 101**

## **APPENDIX 5-**

### **Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

#### **What is meant by sexual violence and sexual harassment?**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can be between two children, or a group of children. **Sexual violence** refers to rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault. **Sexual harassment** includes such things as sexual comments; sexual jokes; physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone, up skirting; or displaying photos of a sexual nature; and online activity including sharing of images or video (sexting) or making inappropriate sexual comments (Note - this list is not exhaustive). Abuse within intimate partner relationships also falls under child on child abuse.

'Up skirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence. KCSIE 2020

Both sexes may be affected, although girls are more likely to be victims of sexual violence, and boys are more likely to be perpetrators of sexual harassment. Children with SEND are likely to be more vulnerable as well as LGBT children are at greater risk



## Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

Reports of sexual violence are often complex and require difficult decisions to be made. Decisions ultimately are made on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL taking a leading role, supported by other agencies such as children's social care or the police.

Some situations are statutorily clear: a child under the age of 13 can never consent to sexual activity (the age of consent is 16); sexual intercourse without consent is rape (as defined in law); creating or sharing sexual images or videos of under 18s is illegal, including children making or sharing these themselves.

See *Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people*.

At all times we will carefully consider any report of sexual violence or harassment and act in the best interests of the child. It is important that all staff show that sexual violence and sexual harassment are unacceptable, and not passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

### Immediate response to a disclosure

The initial response to a disclosure is important and staff should ensure the victim is taken seriously and supported. Staff should not assume that someone else is dealing with the incident, and should discuss concerns with the DSL. Where an incident between two pupils takes place away from the school, the school's duties remain the same.

How a staff member responds to a disclosure is the same as they would regarding any other disclosure (see Appendix one) with the following additional prompts to bear in mind:

- Staff should be aware of anonymity in cases where an allegation is progressing through the criminal justice system.
- Schools should do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, including considering the impact of social media.
- Schools should make a risk assessment in cases of a report of sexual violence, considering the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children at the school.
- Risk assessments should be kept under review. In cases of sexual violence a professional risk assessment by external specialists may be required, and should be used to inform the school's own risk assessment.
- While the facts are being established, schools should consider removing the alleged perpetrator from any classes shared with the victim, and consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart, in the best interests of both children. The school will always take the victim's wishes into consideration.
- Schools should also consider carefully when to inform the alleged perpetrator, and this may be discussed with relevant agencies.
- It is important that the school ensures the victim and perpetrator remain protected, especially from bullying or harassment

There are four likely routes to consider when managing a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment:

**Managing internally:** in some cases of sexual harassment (such as one-off incidents) a school may manage the incident internally;



**Early help:** this is particularly useful in addressing non-violent, harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation;

**Referrals to children's social care:** in cases where there has been harm, or there is an immediate risk, a referral should be made to children's social care;

**Reporting to the police:** in cases where rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is reported.

Schools should not wait for the outcome of a police investigation before protecting the victim, perpetrator and other children in the school. The DSL will work closely with the police to ensure that the school's actions do not jeopardise the police investigation. If a child is convicted or cautioned, the school will update the risk assessment and consider suitable action through their behaviour policy.

## **Education**

The school has a comprehensive Sex and Relationships Education curriculum taught within PSHCE and across the broader curriculum. Sexual harassment, consent and the law, sexting and healthy relationships are focused upon within the curriculum.





## Children Missing from Education (CME)



