

Ridgewood Community High School



Safeguarding Policy

Status:	STATUTORY
Responsible Committee:	Full Governing Body
Ratified by Headteacher:	Autumn 2025
Governors' approval date:	Autumn 2025
Review date:	Summer 2026

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure every child or young adult who is a registered pupil at Ridgewood Community High School is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:

- Provide help and support to meet the needs of the pupils as soon as problems emerge
- Protect children and young people at Ridgewood Community High School from maltreatment; whether this is within or outside the home, including online
- Prevent impairment of our children's and young people's health or development;
- Ensure that children and young people at Ridgewood Community High School grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Undertake that role to enable pupils at Ridgewood Community High School to have the best outcomes.

This policy will give clear direction to staff, volunteers, visitors, parents and carers about expectations and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at Ridgewood Community High School.

Ridgewood Community High School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and young adults from harm and to support and promote the welfare of all those who are registered pupils at Ridgewood Community High School.

STATUTORY GUIDANCE

- Education Act 2002: Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 sets out organisational responsibilities for schools and colleges and this applies to maintained, independent, academies, free schools and alternative non provision academies
- Keeping children safe in education 2025: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges 2016 was issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011. This contains information on what schools and colleges should do and sets out the legal duties with which schools must comply
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2019
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004

- Addendum to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy updated June 2020

ETHOS

Ridgewood Community High School recognises that high self-esteem, confidence, peer support and clear lines of communication with trusted adults helps all pupils, especially those at risk of, or suffering abuse. We therefore ensure that:

- ALL staff, volunteers and governors contribute to an ethos where pupils feel secure and safe
- ALL pupils have opportunities to communicate and know that they are listened to
- ALL pupils wishes, feelings and views will be taken into account when decisions are being made about how to keep them safe
- ALL pupils know that they can communicate with any adult in school if they are worried or in difficulty
- ALL staff and volunteers will contribute to providing a curriculum which will equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe and be able to communicate when they do not feel safe
- ALL staff and volunteers will contribute to providing a curriculum which will help pupils develop an attitude which will enable them to enter adulthood successfully and reach their full potential
- ALL staff, volunteers and governors will establish effective, supportive and positive relationships with parents, carers, pupils and professionals
- ALL staff should be aware that children and young adults may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to providing the relevant personnel with clear and explicit roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability when safeguarding children. We therefore ensure that:

All adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of the school will:

- Demonstrate an understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Maintain and demonstrate a mind set of "it could happen here"
- Do all they can within the capacity of their role, to keep ensure that children are protected from harm
- Do all they can within the capacity of their role, to ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care

- Do all they can within the capacity of their role, to ensure that children have the best outcomes
- Report cases of suspected abuse to the DSL. This will be done as soon as possible using CPOMS
- Report lower level concerns to the DSL using the school's agreed format
- Monitor all pupils, particularly those that are deemed vulnerable
- Report any concerns regarding adults conduct to the DSL or Headteacher

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the policies, procedures and training in Ridgewood are effective and comply with the law at all times
- Ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are followed by all staff
- Put in place safeguarding responses in cases where children go missing from education
- Appoint a DSL and back-ups and ensure that they are provided with appropriate support, funding, resources and time to carry out their role
- Ensure the school or college contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working together to safeguard children 2023
- Ensure that safeguarding procedures take into account local guidance including Working well with children and families in Lancashire.
- Ensure that staff members undergo safeguarding training at induction
- Ensure that DSLs and all staff, volunteers and Governors are trained and updated regarding safeguarding regularly in compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Ensure that pupils are safe online by ensuring that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place
- Ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding
- Prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children
- Ensure there are procedures in place to handle allegations against teachers, headteachers, principals, volunteers and other staff
- Ensure staff in school are aware of, and policies reflect, an understanding of specific issues such as child on child abuse and safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Ensure that all practice and procedures operate with the best interests of the child at their heart
- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the education of CLA
- Ensure that all staff are aware of safeguarding issues and vulnerabilities associated with CLA

The DSLs will:

- take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection
- manage referrals to Children's Social Care, Police and other agencies
- work with others in order to improve outcomes for children
- attend DSL training every 2 years
- undertake Prevent awareness training
- update their skills and knowledge on a regular basis, but at least annually
- raise awareness of safeguarding throughout school
- ensure that this policy is reviewed annually and is available publicly
- ensure that parents are aware of schools' responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection
- maintain accurate safeguarding records that are stored securely
- be available during school hours
- arrange cover of DSL role for any out of hours/out of term activities
- represent school in multi-agency meetings
- be provided with appropriate support and supervision in order to carry out the role safely and effectively
- Ensure all Operation Encompass information relating to a pupil is stored with that child's CPOMS record.

INDUCTION, TRAINING & UPDATES

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to providing staff and volunteers with the skills and knowledge needed to safeguard pupils. We therefore ensure that:

- ALL staff will receive Level 1 & 2 online Safeguarding Training on induction using LCC Safeguarding Induction Pack which includes Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part One), Guidance for Safer Working Practice, Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy.
- ALL staff, volunteers and Governors will receive Level 1 & 2 Safeguarding Training
- the DSL/s will provide ALL staff, volunteers and governors with regular safeguarding updates
- ALL staff, volunteers and governors will read and show an understanding of any updates that are provided
- DSLs will attend DSL training every 2 years
- DSLs will update their knowledge, skills and understanding of relevant safeguarding issues on a regular basis
- the Lead DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training
- at least three members of staff and one governor will attend Safer Recruitment Training. This will be renewed at least every 5 years.
- ALL staff, volunteers and governors will undertake any additional training on matters such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Prevent, child on child abuse, Online Safety etc as is deemed necessary by the SLT
- any staff member will discuss any specific training requirements or gaps in knowledge

or understanding with the DSLs

- DSLs will identify their own or others training needs as an outcome of supervision when appropriate.

CHILD PROTECTION

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to PREVENTING abuse, PROTECTING those from abuse and SUPPORTING those involved in cases of abuse. We therefore ensure that:

- ALL staff and volunteers understand the importance of teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe from all types of abuse
- ALL staff and volunteers seek out opportunities that are relevant to their role, to teach pupils the skills to keep themselves safe
- ALL staff and volunteers make and maintain positive and supportive relationships with pupils which enable children and young people to feel safe and valued
- safeguarding has a high status throughout school by being on the agenda at staff meetings/briefings, information being readily available on notice boards, regular updates
- ALL staff feel confident in approaching DSLs to raise concerns
- ALL staff and volunteers have an understanding of the four categories of abuse; NEGLECT, EMOTIONAL ABUSE, SEXUAL ABUSE, PHYSICAL ABUSE.
- ALL staff and volunteers understand that there are other ways in which children can be abused such as; Online, Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Abuse, Radicalisation, Trafficking, Slavery, child on child Abuse, Forced Marriage and others
- ALL staff and volunteers have the knowledge, skills and expertise to recognise the signs and symptoms of all types of abuse
- DSLs keep up to date with emerging and specific safeguarding issues and update training
- DSLs update staff and volunteers' knowledge and understanding of such issues in order for them to be able to identify those who are at risk of such specific safeguarding issues
- ALL staff and volunteers will maintain and demonstrate an attitude of "it can happen here"
- ALL staff and volunteers are child-centred in their practice and act in the best interests of the child at all times
- ALL staff recognise and understand that behaviour can be a pupils way of communicating distress and changes to behaviour may be an indicator of abuse in line with the schools behaviour policy
- ALL staff and volunteers have the skills to respond appropriately and sensitively to disclosures or allegations of abuse
- ALL staff and volunteers report cases of suspected abuse to the DSL. This will be done as soon as possible using CPOMS
- where a child is at risk of immediate harm, ALL staff understand that they must refer to the Police or Children's Social Care
- ALL staff and visitors know how to refer to Children's Social Care
- DSLs will make a Section 47 referral to Children's Social Care where a child is in need of protection, has been significantly harmed or is at risk of significant harm, using

Working well with Children and Families in Lancashire Guidance to determine whether this threshold has been met

- This referral will be done via the Children's Social Care online reporting platform or via telephone as soon as possible.
- Consent from parents/carers and child (if age appropriate) will be sought prior to this referral, except where this will cause delay or place anyone at risk
- where consent is not given, parents and carers are informed that a referral will still be made, except where this will cause delay or place anyone at risk
- DSLs adhere to policy, procedures and guidance from the CSAP with regard to sharing information
- DSLs contribute to Strategy Discussions, Strategy Meetings, Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences, Core Group Meetings and other CP meetings
- DSLs will attend CP meetings, produce and present reports, liaise with staff, work with parents, work with other agencies and ensure the voice of the child is evidenced throughout these processes
- DSLs meet regularly to ensure that decisions made about children who are subjects of CP Plans are agreed and a clear rationale for the decision is documented
- a copy of the child's CP Plan is included on CPOMS
- ALL staff and volunteers will support victims of abuse in a capacity that is relevant to their role. This will be determined by the DSL
- DSLs will determine what information staff members need to know in order to safeguard and support children. This may be different information for different staff.
- staff are offered appropriate support and/or supervision that is relevant to their role or involvement in particular cases
- communication and work with parents and carers will always be undertaken in a supportive manner and in the best interests of the child
- ALL staff understand that children who perpetrate abuse or display harmful behaviour should be treated as victims first and foremost and supported in the same way a victim of abuse would be supported
- ALL staff understand that pupils may not feel ready or know how to tell someone if they are being abused, exploited or neglected and they may not recognise their experiences as harmful
- ALL staff must endeavour to reduce any additional barriers faced and provide children with a safe space to speak out or share any concerns.
- specific programmes of work and support are offered to children and families who are vulnerable
- Risk Assessments will be undertaken where a pupils behaviour poses a risk to others, themselves or the environment

CHILD IN NEED

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to ensuring the appropriate level of support is offered to a "Child in Need" and their family. We therefore ensure that:

- DSLs will make a Section 17 referral to Children's Social Care where Early Help has not been successful in reducing risk and meeting unmet needs using Working well with children and families in Lancashire and the online reporting platform
- DSLs will make a Section 17 referral to Children's Social Care where there is evidence that the Level 4 threshold has been met on the Continuum of Need
- this will be determined and assessed by the DSL using the Working well with Children and families in Lancashire DSLs will obtain parental consent for the referral and for information to be shared, prior to contacting Children's Social Care
- when consent is not given, DSLs will continue to offer Early Help, gather evidence of engagement or lack thereof, disguised compliance, impact on the child, increase in risk or level of unmet need, improvements or deteriorations
- DSLs will review such cases regularly and assess whether there is evidence that this may require escalating to child protection levels. In such cases Child Protection Procedures will be followed
- DSLs contribute to Child in Need Meetings and Reviews
- DSLs will attend CiN meetings, produce and present reports, liaise with staff, work with parents, work with other agencies and ensure the voice of the child is evidenced throughout these processes
- DSLs will meet regularly to ensure that decisions made about children who are subjects of CiN Plans are agreed and a clear rationale for the decision is documented
- a copy of the child's CiN Plan is stored on CPOMS

EARLY HELP

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to providing our families with the right help at the right time. Everyone who comes into contact has a role to play in identifying concerns and taking action. We therefore ensure that:

- ALL staff and volunteers can identify the risk factors that indicate a family or pupil may benefit from Early Help
- ALL staff and volunteers will use the school's agreed format for letting the Pastoral Team know about Early Help requirements
- The Pastoral Team will undertake a EH assessment, when appropriate, to identify what Early Help is required
- The Pastoral Team will signpost and refer to appropriate support agencies
- A member of the Pastoral Team will lead on TAF meetings where it is appropriate for them to do so

- A member of the Pastoral Team will refer to CSC where Early Help has not been successful in reducing risk and meeting unmet needs using Working well with Children and families in Lancashire and the online reporting platform.
- The Pastoral Team will utilise child and family wellbeing service and the schools allocated support worker
- The Pastoral Team and other identified staff will identify and work with any organisations that are relevant in meeting the needs of pupils and their families
- The Pastoral Team and other identified staff will initiate and maintain positive and supportive relationships with parents and carers of children who may benefit from Early Help

SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to keeping our pupils safe from specific forms of abuse. We therefore ensure that:

ALL staff and volunteers understand that there are specific and emerging ways in which people can be abused, such as:

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism, there is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology.

- ALL staff and volunteers will have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism', known as the 'Prevent Duty'
- ALL staff and volunteers will have a general understanding of how to identify a child who may be at risk of radicalisation
- ALL staff and volunteers will use professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately
- The school Online Safety Policy will ensure the safety of children by ensuring they cannot access terrorist and extremist material when using the internet and that suitable filtering software is in place
- DSLs understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to Prevent
- ALL Staff will be aware of the schools Anti-Radicalisation policy

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people may receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts or simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. The perpetrator will not only groom the victim (possibly over a long period of time) but will always hold some kind of power which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves a degree of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressures from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including online bullying (cyberbullying) and grooming. It is important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse and may be aware that they are being exploited.

- The school curriculum (whereby sexual relationships/PSHE is delivered) will include relevant information around the risks associated with CSE
- The school Online Safety Policy will ensure the safety of children by ensuring they cannot access inappropriate material when using the internet and that suitable filtering software is in place

Honour Based Abuse (HBA) 'A crime or incident, which has or may have been committed, to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. (ACPO Working Definition 2008) ALL staff and volunteers will have a general understanding of how to identify a child who may be at risk of Honour Based Abuse.

Forced Marriage is one whereby one or both parties do not consent to marriage but are forced to do so through violence, threats or any form of coercion. Schools play an important role in safeguarding children from being forced to marry. It is an offence of a child under the age of 18 to enter marriage in any circumstances including those that are not legally binding; for example in community or traditional settings (Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum age) Act 2022)..

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is encompassed within the term Honour Based Violence

- ALL staff and volunteers are aware of the "one chance rule" and will report all cases of suspected Honour Based Violence to the DSL immediately
- FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences
- ALL staff need to be alert to the possibility of when a female pupil may be at risk of FGM or when it may have been conducted on them
- Teachers have a statutory duty and must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have taken place

Modern-day Slavery The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a statutory duty on public authorities, including schools, to report to the police on observing signs or receiving

intelligence relating to modern day slavery where it is suspected that severe exploitation of others is being undertaken in order to personal or commercial gain by others. The public authority (including schools) bears this obligation where it has 'reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking'.

- Staff must be aware of the above and contact the DSL should they suspect or receive information that either parents or their children may be victims of modern slavery. The DSL should then contact the police who will in turn contact the Single Competency Authority (SCA)
- ALL staff should be aware of the types of exploitation including labour, criminal, sexual, domestic servitude and organ harvesting.

Child on Child Abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in child on child abuse is under the age of 18. This can include bullying, intimate personal relationship abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, causing a child to engage or observe a sexual activity, sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, upskirting or hazing.

- ALL staff and volunteers understand that children can abuse other children
- ALL staff and volunteers will inform the DSL of suspected child on child abuse
- Child on child abuse will be taken as seriously as any other form of abuse
- Physical abuse between peers will be managed under the school's Positive Relationships Policy
- Emotional abuse between peers will be managed under the school's Positive Relationships Policy
- Harmful sexual behaviour will be identified and managed using the Brook Traffic Light Tool
- Sexting will be managed on a case by case basis using national and local guidance and advice from LCC Schools Safeguarding Officer
- In cases of suspected or actual child on child abuse a risk assessment will be undertaken and appropriate and proportionate control measures put in place to manage and reduce risk. Seek advice from LCC Schools Safeguarding Officer
- Referrals to Children's Social Care, Police and/or other appropriate agencies will be made where thresholds are met

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).

Children Who are Absent from Education. A child missing from education is defined as a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll and not receiving education

by other means, however pupils may not attend school for some time whilst being on roll and this can be a potential sign of abuse or neglect including sexual exploitation, undergoing female genital mutilation, forced marriage or travelling to conflict zones.

- ALL staff and volunteers follow school procedures when a child misses education particularly on repeat occasions to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect
- The school Attendance Policy is up to date, reviewed annually and includes reference to CME
- There is an admissions policy and an attendance register
- Schools must notify the local authority of children whose whereabouts are unknown or who have moved out of the area and no new school has been arranged.
- Schools should undertake their own enquiries to try to ascertain the whereabouts of pupils prior to making a CME referral.
- Schools should be aware that in addition to a CME referral they should also make referrals in line with appropriate safeguarding procedures where there are other safeguarding concerns including radicalisation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation.

ONLINE SAFETY

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to keeping pupils safe online. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material

online. The four areas of risk are identified as

- the content viewed which may be illegal, harmful or inappropriate
- The contact being made may be a harmful interaction with another
- The conduct where the online behaviour may increase the likelihood of, or causes harm
- Or the commercial risk posed by things such as online gambling, advertising, phishing or scams

We therefore ensure that:

- ALL staff and volunteers understand that children and young adults can be harmed online via hurtful and abusive messages, enticing others to engage in age inappropriate conversations, sharing and production of indecent images or encouraging risk taking behaviour
- The school's Online Safety Policy details how we keep pupils safe when using the internet and mobile technology
- Online bullying by pupils, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our Anti-bullying / Positive Relationships Policy
- There is a clear and explicit procedure for dealing with mobile phones that are brought

into school by children

- DfE advice; Searching, Screening and Confiscation is followed where there is a need to search a pupil for a mobile device (an article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used to commit an offence)
- When school become aware of an online safety issue that has occurred outside of school, it is managed in accordance with the school Anti-bullying Policy

RECORD KEEPING

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to recording all matters relating to the welfare of children in a relevant format. We therefore ensure that:

- DSLs will refer to LCC Record Keeping Guidance to assist them in creating and maintaining accurate safeguarding records
- there is an agreed format for reporting all matters relating to child wellbeing, from an early help requirement or "niggle", to a disclosure of abuse
- ALL staff use the agreed format for passing on concerns
- concerns should be factual, and evidence based
- concerns should be logged onto CPOMS and a DSL made aware
- concerns should be passed directly to the DSL
- DSLs will record all discussions, decisions and rationale behind decisions and sharing of information in the child's records on CPOMS
- DSLs will record evidence of child's wishes, professional challenge, offers of early help and multi-agency working
- when individual pupils are discussed during staff meetings, such as supervision, staff updates or risk assessments etc. pupil information should be anonymised or stored in a secure manner
- all safeguarding records will be stored securely on CPOMS. Any paper copies are kept locked in a cabinet in the Pupil Support Managers room or archived electronically and securely disposed of.
- only DSLs and other named staff will have access to safeguarding records
- a pupil's safeguarding file will be transferred, in its entirety, to the educational establishment where the child moves to, unless there is ongoing legal action
- the safeguarding file will be hand delivered to the DSL at the receiving school. If this is not possible, the safeguarding file will be sent by recorded delivery
- a receipt will be obtained at time of transfer and the responsibility for the safeguarding records will pass to the receiving school
- the educational establishment where the pupil attends at statutory school leaving age (18) will securely retain the safeguarding records for 75 years. Safeguarding records will then be destroyed securely
- advice will be sought from legal services and/or Schools Safeguarding Officer if any staff are unclear about any aspects of safeguarding record keeping

SAFER RECRUITMENT

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to keeping pupils safe by ensuring that adults who work or volunteer in school are safe to do so. We therefore ensure that:

- LCC Human Resources guidance is adhered to, to ensure that there is a strong reference and commitment to safeguarding during advertisement, selection and recruitment of new staff
- at least one governor and three staff members have attended Safer Recruitment Training in the last 5 years
- there are at least 2 people on each selection panel and at least one person on every selection panel has attended Safer Recruitment Training
- ALL staff will monitor the conduct of all adults who come into contact with children at school and report any concerns to the DSL, headteacher or Chair of Governors as appropriate
- relevant, proportionate and lawful checks are undertaken on all adults who regularly work at, or visit the school
- a Single Central Record is kept of checks that are undertaken on all adults who regularly work at, or visit the school
- the SCR is stored securely and only accessed by designated staff and governors
- DSLs/HT/Safeguarding Governor/Chair of Governors should evidence regular oversight/scrutiny of the SCR using the SCR Audit Sheet
- evidence of staff members identity, required qualifications and the right to work in the UK will be kept in individual personnel files
- covering (umbrella) letters will be obtained from agencies and other employers that provide staff to work in school
- individual identity checks will be undertaken on those staff detailed above to ensure they are employees of the named agency/employer
- a transfer of control agreement will be used where other agencies/organisations use school premises and are not operating under school's safeguarding policies and procedures
- advice will be sought from Human Resources, LADO and/or Schools Safeguarding Officer if any staff are unclear about any aspects of Safer Recruitment

SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINED STAFF

Staff Member
Training Date

Ian Carden (Headteacher)

24.04.2025

David Preston (Chair of Governors)

10/10/2025

Julie Naylor (Assistant Head Teacher)

01/03/2025

Jayne Rostron (Governor)

29/03/2022

Cara Woolley (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

05/10/2023

Matthew Siney (School Business Manager)

05/10/2023

Gemma Robinson (Deputy Head Teacher)

30/05/2024

Hannah Gibbons

27/05/2024

Lois Talbot

15.09.2025

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Ridgewood Community High School understands that when an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. We therefore ensure that:

- all staff are aware of the requirement to, and process of referring allegations against staff to the headteacher
- all staff are aware of the requirement to, and process of referring allegations against the headteacher to the nominated Governor
- The headteacher and/or Chair of Governors will discuss the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- All staff remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and that they have a duty to inform the DSL if any adult's conduct gives cause for concern
- All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the headteacher.
- Complaints about the headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors
- All staff are aware of the school's Whistleblowing Policy which enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place

VISITORS

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to keeping pupils safe by ensuring that visitors to school do not pose a risk to children at Ridgewood Community High School. We therefore ensure that:

- visitors to school sign in and wear identification lanyard to indicate they have done so. Visitors from professional agencies who have DBS for school will be given a Blue Lanyard. Others will be given a Red Lanyard.
- ALL staff and pupils, where appropriate, will challenge visitors to school who are not wearing correct identification
- visitors sign out and remove/hand in their identification when they leave the school
- visitors are aware of who to speak to if they are worried about a pupil during their visit, photographs of DSLs will be attached to all visitors lanyards along with names and leaflets are available at the sign in point if they wish to take one with them
- visitors are accompanied during their visit, when children are present, unless they have undergone relevant checks and these are accepted and verified by DSL or headteacher (Blue lanyard holders)
- visitors will behave in a way that is compliant with the school's Code of Conduct
- visitors will not use mobile phones or other similar electronic devices during their visit unless agreed by the headteacher/DSL
- visitors will not initiate contact or conversations with pupils unless this is relevant and appropriate to the reason for their visit
- when there are several visitors to the school at the same time (such as for an assembly etc) there will be adequate staff supervision of children and visitors. A risk assessment will be undertaken if deemed necessary or appropriate
- visitors who come at the start and end of the day to collect pupils will be required to remain in the foyer, staff will bring individuals to them as this is a particularly busy time of day.
- when visitors are undertaking activities with children, content of the activity will be agreed with the headteacher/DSL, prior to the visit

CAMERAS, MOBILE PHONES AND DEVICES

(The Early Years Foundation Stage, EYFS 2014) The decision has been taken to retain this within our policy as we are a special school with vulnerable Children & Young People.

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to keeping pupils safe by ensuring that electronic devices such as cameras, phones and tablets are used in an appropriate manner.

School will therefore ensure that:

- parental consent is obtained to take and use photographs and/or videos of children
- Only authorised school cameras or mobile phones will be used to take photographs
- parental consent is obtained for photographs to be taken by the media for use in relation to promoting or publishing the school
- separate parental consent is obtained if any other agency requests to take photographs of any pupil
- parental consent will be valid for 5 years but may be sought more regularly at the discretion of the headteacher. Here at Ridgewood this is reviewed annually
- images will be uploaded to, and stored in a secure place for a relevant amount of time, this may be for longer than the child is at school if appropriate
- photographs and videos of pupils are only taken to provide evidence of their achievements for developmental records or for other school related purposes
- staff, visitors, volunteers and students do not use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of pupils
- the school's digital camera/s or memory cards or mobile phones must not leave the school setting unless this is agreed by the headteacher for official school business
- photos are printed/uploaded in the setting by staff and once done images are immediately removed from the cameras memory
- parents are reminded frequently of the risks associated with posting images of children to social media
- parents are reminded frequently that they are not permitted to distribute or post images that contain children other than their own
- staff, volunteers and visitors will not use mobile phones in toilet or changing areas
- The Code of Conduct and/or Acceptable Use/Behaviour Policy will outline when and where staff, volunteers and visitors can use their mobile phones
- All staff will sign to say that they have read and understood this policy
- ALL staff, volunteers and visitors will adhere to the above policies and failure to do so will be addressed appropriately by the headteacher and/or the Governing Body
- Pupils' use of mobile phones and other devices will be managed under the school's Home/School Agreement/Acceptable Use/Behaviour Policy
- DFE Advice; Searching, Screening and Confiscation is followed where there is a need to search a pupil for a mobile device

KEY PERSONNEL AND TRAINING DETAILS

Designated Safeguarding Leads
(DSL) Cara Woolley 24/01/2024
Back-up/Deputy DSL(s)

Ian Carden 17/07/2024
Gemma Robinson 18/09/2024

Lois Talbot 18/09/2025
Sarah Booth 26/03/2024

Prevent Lead
Cara Woolley

Pastoral Team
Jasmin Mansfield – Pupil Support Worker
Kylee Honeyman – Family Support Worker

Chair Of Governors

David Preston
15.10.2025 advances safeguarding
Safeguarding
Governor

Local Authority Designated Officer Useful Contacts (LADO)
Tim Booth 01772 536694
LADO@lancashire.gov.uk

Lancashire Children's Social Care
0300 123 6720

Whistleblowing
01772 532500
WhistleblowingComplaints@lancashire.gov.uk

CHILD PROTECTION ADDENDUM (PROCEDURES)

1.

WHAT SHOULD STAFF/VOLUNTEERS DO IF THEY HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IN RIDGEWOOD SCHOOL?

Practitioners in schools who are concerned about a child's welfare or who believe that a child is or may be at risk of harm from abuse or neglect should pass any information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in school; this should always occur as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours. A DSL should always be available, but informing a DSL should not cause delay to contacting Childrens Social Care.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: C Woolley

The Back Up Designated Safeguarding Leads are: I Carden, G Robinson, S Booth,

The named Governor for Safeguarding Lead is: D. Preston

It is these senior colleagues who are responsible for taking action where the welfare or safety of children or young people is concerned. If staff are uncertain about whether their concerns are indeed 'child protection' then a discussion with their DSL/line manager will assist in determining the most appropriate next course of action. The MASH schools safeguarding officer can also be consulted about this.

Staff should never:

- Do nothing/assume that another agency or practitioner will act or is acting.
- Attempt to resolve the matter themselves alone.

What should the DSL consider right at the outset?

- Am I dealing with 'risk' or 'need'? (By definition, a child at risk is also a child in need. However, what is the priority / level and immediacy of risk / need?)
- Can the level of need identified be met:
 - In or by the school or by accessing universal services
 - By undertaking an Early Help Assessment (EHA), without referral to Emergency Duty Team
 - By working with the child, parents and colleagues?
- What resources are available to the practitioner and the academy/school and what are their limitations?
- Is the level of need such that a referral needs to be made to Emergency Duty Team which requests that an assessment of need be undertaken? (Section 17 Child in Need referral)
- Is the level and/or likelihood of risk such that a child protection referral needs to be made (i.e. a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm? (Section 47 Child Protection referral)

- What information is available re: Child, Parents, Family & Environment?
- What information is inaccessible and, potentially, how significant might this be? For example has the parent/carer denied that there is a problem and failed to co-operate with the school in resolving the issue?
- Who do I/don't I need to speak to now and what do they need to know?
- Where can I access appropriate advice and/or support?
- If I am not going to refer, then what action am I going to take? (e.g. time-limited monitoring plan, discussion with parents or other practitioners, recording etc)

2. FEEDBACK TO STAFF WHO REPORT CONCERNS TO THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL)

Rules of confidentiality mean that it may not always be possible or appropriate for the DSL to feedback to staff who report concerns to them. Such information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only and the DSL will decide which information needs to be shared, when and with whom. The primary purpose of confidentiality in this context is to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

3. THRESHOLDS FOR REFERRAL TO EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM

In making a decision about whether a referral to Emergency Duty Team may be required, there are two thresholds for (and their criteria) and types of referral that need to be carefully considered:

Is this a Child In Need?

Under section 17 (s.17(10)) of the Children Act 1989, a child is in need if:

- a) He is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain, a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority;
- b) His health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services;
- c) He is disabled.

Is this a Child Protection Matter?

Under section 47(1) of the Children Act 1989, a local authority has a duty to make enquiries

where they are informed that a child who lives or is found in their area:

- a) Is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order;
- b) Is in Police Protection; or where they have
- c) Reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Therefore, it is the 'significant harm' threshold' that justifies statutory intervention into family life. A practitioner making a child protection referral under s.47 must therefore provide information which clearly outlines that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make judgements around 'significant harm', levels of 'need' and when to refer.

4. MAKING REFERRALS TO CSC (GUIDANCE FOR THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD)

(i) Child In Need/Section 17 Referrals

- Where a parent/carer/young person refuses to consent, you should make clear your ongoing plans and responsibilities in respect of support, monitoring etc, and the possibility of a child protection referral at some point in future if things deteriorate or do not improve. (This is not about threats or saying that this is inevitable but about openness and transparency in dealings with parents).

(ii) Child Protection/Section 47 Referral

- Make a telephone call to Emergency Duty Team and forward for consideration.
- You do not require the consent of a parent or child/young person to make a child protection referral
- A parent should, under most circumstances, be informed by the referrer that a child protection referral is to be made. The criteria for not informing parents are:
 - a) Because this would increase the risk of significant harm to a child(ren); or
 - b) Because, in the referrer's professional opinion, to do so might impede an investigation that may need to be undertaken;
 - c) Because there would be an undue delay caused by seeking consent which would not serve the child's best interests.

Fear of jeopardising a working relationship with parents because of a need to refer is not sufficient justification for not making a referral nor for not telling them that you need to refer. Lack of openness will do little to foster ongoing trust, particularly as the source of referrals will be disclosed to parents except in a limited number of circumstances. If you feel that your own or another adult's immediate safety would be placed at risk by informing parents then you should

seek advice and/or make this clear during the initial telephone conversation. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to strand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

5. EMERGENCY DUTYS TEAM RESPONSES TO REFERRALS AND TIMESCALES

In response to a referral, the Emergency Duty Team may decide to:

- Provide advice to the referrer and/or child/family;
- Refer on to another agency who can provide services;
- Convene a Strategy Meeting (within five working days);
- Provide support services under Section 17;
- Undertake an Initial Assessment (completed within ten working days);
- Convene an Initial Child Protection Conference (within 15 working days of a Strategy Meeting)
- Undertake a Child and Family Assessment (completed within 35 working days);
- Accommodate the child under Section 20 (with parental consent);
- Make an application to court for an Order;
- Take no further action.

6. FEEDBACK FROM THE EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM

Emergency Duty Team have 24 hours within which to make a decision about a course of action in response to a referral. A DSL should expect to receive written confirmation about action following any referral within 7 days. If you do not receive any (same day) verbal feedback following an urgent child protection referral, and where this places a child or children in a vulnerable position, you should ask to speak to a Duty Social Worker, or the relevant Team Manager.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT 'CHECKLIST'

- Does/could the suspected harm meet the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership definitions of abuse?
- Are there cultural, linguistic or disability issues?
- Am I wrongly attributing something to impairment?
- Does the chronology indicate any possible patterns which could/do impact upon the level of risk?
- Are any injuries or incidents acute, cumulative, episodic?

- Did any injuries result from spontaneous action, neglect, or intent?
- Explanations consistent with injuries/behaviour?
- Severity and duration of any harm?
- Effects upon the child's health/development?
- Immediate/longer term effects?
- Likelihood of recurrence?
- Child's reaction?
- Child's perception of the harm?
- Child's needs, wishes and feelings?
- Parent's/carer's attitudes/response to concerns?
- How willing are they to cooperate?
- What does the child mean to the family?
- What role does the child play?
- Possible effects of intervention?
- Protective factors and strengths of/for child (i.e. resilience/vulnerability)
- Familiar strengths and weaknesses?
- When and how is the child at risk?
- How imminent is any likely risk?
- How grave are the possible consequences?
- How safe is this child?
- What are the risk assessment options?
- What are the risk management options?
- What is the interim plan?

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITION OF WHAT IS CLASSED AS ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

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

Definitions of child abuse

There are four types of child abuse. They are defined in the UK Government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) as follows:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Physical abuse.

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

Emotional abuse.

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve

seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse.

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

Neglect.

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

Child-on-child abuse

Children can abuse other children and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. Even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children

accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to bullying, abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, upskirting or initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Bullying (refer to Ridgewood School Bullying and Anti-bullying Policies)

Bullying is not defined as a form of abuse in Working Together but the NSPCC for example, holds that it is abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse. Therefore it is included in this section.

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- physical (for example, hitting, kicking, theft)
- verbal (for example, racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling)
- emotional (for example, isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group)

The damage inflicted by bullying (including bullying via the internet) can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies.

Signs of abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy. Sometimes the signs are not obvious and sometimes signs that appear to be indicative of abuse can be due to other causes. Therefore it is very important that you use these signs to help you think about the concerns you have and how you will describe these when making a referral to Childrens Social Care.

These definitions and indicators only serve as a guide to assist you. Remember that children may exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more is not necessarily proof that abuse is occurring. There may be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as bereavement, significant changes in family relationships, including the birth of a new baby in the family or problems between parents/carers.

It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a

child is at significant risk of harm from someone. You do, however, have a responsibility and duty to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child. The social worker or police officer will always want to understand your concerns about the child in the context of the child's development and relationships.

The following information should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse and to provide the necessary information when reporting your concerns.

Physical Abuse

Most children in daily life will collect cuts and bruises. But each child is different and any perceived injuries should be interpreted in light of:

- the child's medical and social history
- the child's developmental stage
- the explanation given for the injury

Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and often on the front of the body.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body that are unexplained or not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body especially in clusters and in places which are not normally exposed to falls or rough games
- Injuries which have not received medical attention or there has been a delay in getting medical attention (although note that burn injuries are often delayed in presentation due to blistering taking place some time later)
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds
- Multiple burns

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation

- Fear of further enquiries being made
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather, or to participate in games or swimming
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home or school /academy

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify, as there may be no outward physical signs.

There may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow – but this will usually only be evident if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, for example when hospitalised or away from their parents' care.

Children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers.

Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour or presentation which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden underachievement or lack of concentration
- Seeking adult attention and not mixing well with other children
- Sleep or speech disorders
- Negative statements about self
- Extreme shyness or passivity
- Running away, stealing and lying
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress
- Reporting parental violence or discord (i.e. exposure to domestic violence)

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is known to take place against children and young people of all ages, including infants and toddlers.

Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour that may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present.

Children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

It is not just adult men who sexually abuse children – there are increasing numbers of allegations of sexual abuse of children against women and sexual abuse can also be perpetrated by other children or young people.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Repeated urinary infections
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour or presentation which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Any allegation by the child of sexual abuse
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares and severe or persistent sleep disturbance
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge beyond their age or developmental level; preoccupation with sexual matters
- Sexual activity through drawings, language or play
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money

- Not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise but it has some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant or frequent hunger, sometimes stealing food
- Constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- Loss of weight, or constantly underweight
- Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.
- Frequent diarrhoea
- Untreated illnesses, injuries or physical complaints

Changes in behaviour or presentation which can also indicate neglect may include:

- Frequent tiredness
- Overeating
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Bullying (refer to Ridgewood School Bullying and Anti-bullying Policies)

Bullying is not always easy to recognise as it can take a number of forms

Persistent bullying can result in:

- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Shyness
- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation
- Threatened or attempted suicide

Signs that a child may be being bullied can be:

- Coming home with cuts and bruises
- Torn clothes
- Asking for stolen possessions to be replaced
- Losing dinner money, travel passes etc

- Falling out with previously good friends
- Being moody and bad tempered
- Wanting to avoid leaving their home
- Aggression with younger brothers and sisters
- Doing less well at Ridgewood School
- Sleep problems
- Anxiety
- Becoming quiet and withdrawn

APPENDIX 2

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

It is essential for all Staff/Carers to sign for and read the guidance for 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation' (2017). CSE is a form of abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the UK. It's also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this.

The maximum sentence for carrying out FGM or helping it to take place is 14 years in prison.

FGM is any procedure that's designed to alter or injure a girl's (or woman's) genital organs for non- medical reasons. It's sometimes known as 'female circumcision' or 'female genital cutting'. It's mostly carried out on young girls.

FGM procedures can cause:

- severe bleeding
- infections
- problems with giving birth later in life - including the death of the baby

If you know someone at risk

Contact the the NSPCC anonymously if you're worried that a girl or young woman is at risk of FGM or is a victim of FGM.

FGM Helpline

Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 028 3550

Find out about call charges

If you know someone in immediate danger Contact the police if you think that a girl or

young woman is in immediate danger of FGM. You should also contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if she's already been taken abroad.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Telephone: 020 7008 1500

From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 1500

Find out about call charges

Other help

You can search for help and advice in your area if you're worried that someone is in danger of FGM or if you're a victim of FGM.

You can also contact:

- the Safeguarding Children Board at your local council
- Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development (FORWARD)
- NHS specialist clinics for FGM
- Daughters of Eve
- FORWARD

Forced Marriage

Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison

Disobeying a Forced Marriage Protection Order can result in a sentence of up to 5 years in prison

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor. Information for people directly affected by forced marriage is also available.

Legislation on Forced Marriage

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether

they're pressured to or not)

- Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order is also a criminal offence
- The civil remedy of obtaining a Forced Marriage Protection Order through the family courts will continue to exist alongside the new criminal offence, so victims can choose how they wish to be assisted
- Details of the new law can be found on the Legislation website

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022, has now come into force. It means that 16 and 17 year olds will no longer be allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent.

Extremism and Radicalisation

This policies can also be found on Ridgewood Schools web-site under 'School Policies'

Building resilience of young people and the promotion of fundamental British values is at the heart of preventing radicalisation. Ridgewood provides safe places in which children can discuss controversial issues, and be given the knowledge and confidence to challenge extremist beliefs and ideologies.

School has a duty of care:

- Clarifying what the prevent duty means
- Outlining what they can do to help protect children from the risk of radicalisation
- Making clear what they do to demonstrate compliance with the duty
- Inform pupils about other sources of information, advice and support

The government has also published advice below for schools on how social media is being used by extremist groups to encourage young people to travel to Syria and Iraq. It makes clear that every teacher should be aware of the risks posed by the online activity of extremist and terrorist groups and be vigilant of the signs of radicalisation.

The Department for Education has set up a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) and an email address (counter.extremism@education.gov.uk) to enable people to raise concerns directly with the department about how an education setting is tackling radicalisation.

Prevent

Our definition of radical or extreme ideology is 'a set of ideas which could justify vilification or violence against individuals, groups or self.'

Ridgewood Community High School recognises its duty to protect our children from any form of indoctrination linked to radical or extreme ideology which may lead to the harm of

self or others. Steps taken by the school to promote this duty include:

- Promoting tolerance, diversity and a respect for other cultures in line with our school aims and motto.
- Promoting British Values and an understanding of democracy and the rule of law to prepare pupils to make a positive contribution to British society in the future.
- Promoting a respect for the views and ideas of others and an understanding of the right to have an opinion that does not impact negatively on the rights of others.
- Working closely with the assembly leaders to plan themes linked to developing responsible citizens.
- Training staff to be vigilant for identifying signs of extremist view and behaviours and to report anything which may suggest a child or parent is expressing opinions which may cause concern.
- Ensuring pupils are aware of how to use the Internet and social media appropriately and responsibly as part of our work on E-Safety. This includes addressing the dangers of downloading and sharing inappropriate material.
- Vetting all visitors carefully and taking appropriate action if any individual or group is perceived to be attempting to influence members of our school community.

Hazing

Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone on joining a group, or maintaining status in a group, that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Hazing is known to exist in schools, universities and in sports environments. Typical hazing activities include sleep deprivation, personal servitude, binge drinking and drinking games, being forced to wear embarrassing attire, carry out dangerous stunts and sexual assault. Hazing will not be tolerated and should be reported.

Children Absent from Education:

All children are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude & special educational needs. Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and criminal exploitation as well as abuse.

Definition of Children Missing Education (CME)

“Any child of statutory school age (5-16) who is not registered at any formally approved education activity (e.g. school, alternative curriculum, home education), and has been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time (agreed as 4 weeks)”

Ridgewood Community High School follow procedures in accordance with the latest

LCC guidance on Children Missing in Education Policy and Procedures along with the Education Support Centre (01257 517333). Further information can be found in the schools Attendance Policy.

Child trafficking:

Child trafficking is child abuse. Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. They are often subject to multiple forms of exploitation.

Children are trafficked for:

- child sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage
- domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking
- forced labour in factories or agriculture
- criminal activity such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDs, bag theft.

Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

Where Ridgewood Community High School is made aware of a child suspected of or actually being trafficked/exploited we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

Private Fostering

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

A privately fostered child means a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- A parent.
- A person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility.
- A close relative.
- A Local Authority

for more than 28 days and where the care is intended to continue. It is a statutory duty for us at Ridgewood Community High School to inform the Local Authority where we are made aware of a child or young person who may be subject to private fostering arrangements.

APPENDIX 3

USEFUL SAFEGUARDING CONTACT NUMBERS: LANCASHIRE

Emergency Duty Team

0300 123 6720

Local Authority Designated Officer (LCC LADO)

01772 536694

Lancashire Police

101

Lancashire Police

999

List of Services in Lancashire

See page 85 (Part 3 of Working Well with
Children and Families in Lancashire)

APPENDIX 4

Safeguarding off site – appendix

This Sixth Form offsite provision is still bound by the same policies as the primary building for Ridgewood Community High School. Therefore this appendix should be read in conjunction with all other school policies including, but not limited to;

- Positive Relationships (Behaviour)
- Attendance
- Safeguarding
- Personal care
- Normal and emergency operating plans

The purpose of this appendix is to acknowledge the three main differences that are unique to the offsite provision.

- Classroom absconding
- Transition from classroom to coffee shop
- Additional risks within coffee shop

Staff

- Mrs Booth – Head of Sixth Form / Sixth Form Lead. Trained DSL.
- Ms Woolley – Ridgewood Community High Schools Lead DSL

Other trained DSL staff

- Mrs Robinson – Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)
- Mr Carden – Headteacher

DSL on site

Ridgewood Community High School is committed to safeguarding all pupils. A decision was therefore made that the Head of Sixth Form would be trained as a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). They will undertake refresher training in line with the schools safeguarding policy. A trained DSL will be contactable at all times when pupils are on the premises. If the named DSL is not available, the primary premises will ensure another DSL trained member of staff will be contactable at the main site.

The Sixth Form lead will liaise with the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead in relation to all safeguarding concerns. If The lead DSL is not available, the school office will make contact with another trained DSL on behalf of the offsite provision and will request they attend site or liaise accordingly. All low level concerns are to be reported onto CPOMS in line with school policy.

Absconding

The offsite classroom is fitted with door safety features to enable the pupils to be safe within the classroom and reduce the risk of any absconding. If a pupil was to abscond

from the classroom, staff on the premises should follow the same procedure as would occur in the primary building. The offsite DSL should be made aware of this and should attempt to follow the pupil. They must make a dynamic risk assessment relating to the risks this may pose to themselves, others or the pupil in question. If the pupils absconding is more than merely transient; the lead DSL should be contacted along with the police and the pupils parents. Once able to, a reflective conversation should occur. A risk assessment will be completed based around any new information and any continued perceived risk of absconding from site.

Transition

If pupils are transported to the offsite provision by Lancashire County Council Transport Services, or by a pupils parent / carer, they will remain the responsibility of those people until such time as school registration opens for the day. If pupils are transported from the primary site to the offsite provision, they will become the care of school staff when arriving at the primary site. If school mini-buses are used to transport pupils from the primary site to the off site provision, school 'trips out' policy will apply in relation to how this information is logged. When off site, pupils will be supervised to transition between the offsite classroom and the coffee shop. The supervising member of staff will be suitably trained with regards to safeguarding and medical care. No additional risk assessment will be required.

Additional information regarding the coffee shop

The coffee shop will be open to members of the public. There is an implied right of access to the premises for the purposes of being a patron of the shop. However, should the patron pose a risk to any pupil, the implied permission will be withdrawn and the patron will be asked to leave by a member of staff. In such circumstances, the member of staff must determine what course of action is then required. If in doubt, the offsite DSL or any DSL at the primary site should be consulted. Although pupils are present at the coffee shop to experience work related learning, they are to be safeguarded at all times by staff. Pupils will serve and engage with patrons independently of staff, however this is to be supervised from a distance to ensure the safety of pupils at all times. If any member of staff deems a patrons behaviour to be inappropriate in any way, the DSL should be contacted and the patron requested to leave. Inappropriate internet use, language or behaviour will not be tolerated and the safety and wellbeing of pupils is paramount. If their behaviour is of a criminal nature, the police and lead DSL will be contacted.

Policy Updates Based on KCSiE 2025:

- 1. Update terminology: Replace 'autism spectrum disorder' with 'autism' to align with SEND code of practice.
- 2. Online Safety: Expand the section to include misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, and generative AI risks. Reference DfE guidance on planning technology and cyber security standards.
- 3. Alternative Provision: Emphasize written confirmation of safer recruitment, regular reviews of placements (at least half-termly), and ensure settings are safe and meet student needs.
- 4. Attendance: Update language to reflect that schools 'must' work with children's services where absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- 5. Gender Questioning Children: Add a note that government guidance is expected before September 2025.
- 6. Safer Recruitment: Update references to include latest guidance and tools from DfE and Information Commissioner's Office.
- 7. New Resources: Add 'Shore' as a resource for teenagers concerned about sexual behaviour, and include the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse education page.
- 8. Annex B: Update title from 'Children missing education' to 'Children who are absent from education'.
- 9. Ensure all references to KCSiE are updated to 2025 where applicable.

Gender Questioning Children – Policy Update (2025)

In line with the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance issued in 2025, Ridgewood Community High School adopts the following principles and practices to support gender questioning children:

- **Parent-First Approach:** Parents must be involved in all decisions regarding social transition, including changes to names, pronouns, and uniforms.
- **Cautious Social Transition:** Social transition should be extremely rare and only considered after a watchful waiting period and thorough safeguarding assessment. Schools are not required to accept all requests.
- **Biological Sex-Based Access:** Access to single-sex spaces (toilets, changing rooms, dormitories) and participation in competitive sports will be based on biological sex to ensure safety and fairness.

- **Safeguarding Considerations:** All decisions will be made in the best interests of the child, with safeguarding as the primary concern. Staff will not be compelled to use preferred pronouns unless necessary for safeguarding.
- **Record Keeping:** Schools must accurately record the biological sex and legal name of all pupils in the admissions register.
- **Uniform Policy:** Gender questioning pupils will be held to the same uniform standards as others of their biological sex, with reasonable adjustments considered.
- **Staff Training:** Staff will be trained to manage requests sensitively and lawfully, and to understand the implications of social transition.
- **Future Updates:** This policy will be reviewed and updated in line with any further statutory guidance issued by the DfE.