

Birkwood Primary



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Designated Teachers are:

Mrs Ben Froggatt (Deputy Head/Inclusion Leader)

Mr Daniel Wood (Head Teacher)

Mrs Linda Taylor (Parent Support Advisor)

Mrs Jill Birch (Senior HLTA)

Designated Governor is:

Mr Paul Sabin (Chair of Governors)

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2021



BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

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AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To ensure that children are effectively safeguarded from the potential risk of harm at Birkwood Primary School and that the safety and wellbeing of the children is of the highest priority in all aspects of the school's work.
- To help the school maintain its ethos whereby staff, pupils, parents and governors feel able to articulate any concerns comfortably, safe in the knowledge that effective action will be taken as appropriate.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

- To ensure that all members of the school community:
- are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection.
 - know the procedures that should be followed if they have a cause for concern.
 - know where to go to find additional information regarding safeguarding.
 - are aware of the key indicators relating to child abuse.
 - fully support the school's commitment to safeguarding and child protection.

The school Child Protection Policy should also be read in conjunction with Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018 (inc. February 2021 updates) and Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021.

1 PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Section 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002 gives maintained schools and academies a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children, and have due regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State¹ at all times.
- 1.2 This school recognises its legal and moral duty to promote the well-being of children, and protect them from harm, and respond to child abuse concerns when they arise.
- 1.3 We believe that every child and young person has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically harmed.
- 1.4 We agree that we have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our teaching and learning, extracurricular activities, pastoral care and extended school activities. In order to achieve this, all members of staff (including volunteers and governors) in this school, in whatever capacity, will at all times act proactively in child welfare matters especially where there is a possibility that a child may be at risk of significant harm.
- 1.5 The school seeks to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of their responsibility for pastoral care. The school hopes that parents and children will feel free to talk about any concerns and will see school as a safe place if there are any difficulties at home.
- 1.6 Children's worries and fears will be taken seriously if they seek help from a member of staff. However, staff must not promise secrecy if concerns are such that referral must be made to the appropriate agencies in order to safeguard the child's welfare.
- 1.7 In our school, if there are suspicions that a child's physical, sexual or emotional well-being is being, or is likely to be, harmed, or that they are being neglected, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the Child Protection procedures issued by Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership(<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/safeguarding-families-in-barnsley/safeguarding-children-in-barnsley/>).

1.8 As a consequence, we

- assert that teachers and other members of staff (including volunteers) in the school are an integral part of the child safeguarding process;
- accept totally that safeguarding children is required and is an appropriate function for all members of staff in the school, and wholly compatible with their primary pedagogic responsibilities.
- recognise that safeguarding children in this school is a responsibility for all staff, including volunteers, and the Governing body;
- will ensure through training and supervision that all staff and volunteers in the school are alert to the possibility that a child is at risk of suffering harm, and know how to report concerns or suspicions;
- will designate a senior member of staff with knowledge and skills in recognising and acting on child protection concerns. He or she will act as a source of expertise and advice, and is responsible for coordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies; (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- ensure (through the Designated Safeguarding Lead) that all staff with designated responsibility for child protection will receive appropriate training to the minimum standard set out by the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)
- will share our concerns with others who need to know, and assist in any referral process;
- will ensure that all members of staff and volunteers who have a suspicion or concern that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, refer such concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will refer on to Children's Social Care Assessment and Joint Investigation Service in accordance with the procedures issued by Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board.
- safeguard the welfare of children whilst in the school, through positive measures to address bullying, especially where this is aggravated by sexual or racial factors, disability or special educational needs, cyber bullying or Internet technologies
- will ensure that all staff are aware of the Child Protection Procedures established by Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership and, where appropriate, the Local Authority, and act on any guidance or advice given by them;
- will ensure through the recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees that all people who work in our school are suitable to work with children,
- will act swiftly and make appropriate referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer where an allegation is made that a member of staff has committed an offence against a child, harmed a child, or acted in a way that calls into question their suitability for working with children.

2 DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD IN SCHOOL

- 2.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding and child protection in this school is: **Ben Froggatt**

2.2 In their absence, these matters will be dealt with by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: **Daniel Wood, Linda Taylor or Jill Birch**

2.3 The designated person is key to ensuring that proper procedures and policies are in place and are followed with regard to child safeguarding issues. They will also act as a dedicated resource available for other staff, volunteers and governors when they may have child protection concerns to discuss.

2.4 The school recognises that:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead need not be a teacher but must have the status and authority within the school management structure to carry out the duties of the post – they must therefore be a senior member of staff in the school.
- All members of staff (including volunteers) must be made aware of who this person is and what their role is.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will act as a source of advice and coordinate action within the school over child protection cases
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to liaise with other agencies and build good working relationships with colleagues from these agencies.
- They should possess skills in recognising and dealing with child welfare concerns.
- Appropriate training and support should be given.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the first person to whom members of staff report concerns.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for referring cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies according to the procedures established by the BSCP.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is not responsible for dealing with allegations made against members of staff, these are dealt with by the Headteacher.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also ensure that the school is represented at Child Protection Conferences and that the required reports are written and available within the appropriate timescales as prescribed by Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership and discussed with families in advance of Conference.

2.5 To be effective they will:

- Act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the school and be responsible for coordinating action regarding a request for service by liaising with Children's Social Care and other relevant agencies over suspicions that a child may be suffering harm.
- Cascade safeguarding advice and guidance issued by Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Where they have concerns that a request for service has not been dealt with in accordance with the child protection procedures, they can discuss this with the Head of Safeguarding and Welfare/members of the Safeguarding Unit and consider what needs to happen next.
- Ensure each member of staff and volunteers at the school, and regular visitors (such as Education Welfare Officers, Connexions personal advisors, trainee teachers and supply teachers) are aware of and can access readily the Child Protection and

Safeguarding Policy.

- Liaise with the Headteacher (if the Headteacher is not the Designated Safeguarding Lead) to inform him/her of any safeguarding issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for the role.
 - Ensure that this policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the designated governor for child protection to ensure this takes place.
 - Be able to keep detailed accurate secure written records of referrals/concerns, and ensure that these are held in a secure place.
 - Ensure parents are aware of the Child Protection Policy in order to alert them to the fact that the school may need to make referrals of concerns to Children's Social Care. Raising parents' awareness may avoid later conflict if the school does have to take appropriate action to safeguard a child.
 - Where children leave the school roll, ensure any child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible but certainly within the 15 day national requirement, separately from the main file, and addressed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection. Wherever possible, this should include a face to face discussion and handover of the records. Both schools should sign a form to confirm the handover of the records, both schools should retain a copy of the transfer form.
 - Where a child leaves and the new school is not known, ensure that the local authority is alerted so that the child's name can be included on the database for children missing education. The Local Authority should also be informed if a parent is considering elective home education so the relevant checks can be completed. Referrals regarding Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education should be made to the Education Welfare Service.
- 2.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead also has an important role in ensuring all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training. They should:
- Attend training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case. (Training is every two years.)
 - Have a working knowledge of how Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership operates and the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these when required, to enhance the implementation of the Child Protection Plan.
 - Attend any relevant training courses or workshops and then ensure that any new or key messages are passed to other staff, volunteers and governors.
 - Make themselves (and any deputies) known to all staff, volunteers and governors (including new starters and supply teachers) and ensure those members of staff have had training in child protection. This should be relevant to their needs to enable them to identify and report any concerns to the designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

3 DESIGNATED GOVERNOR

The Designated Governor for Safeguarding at this school is: Mr Paul Sabin

- 3.1 Where appropriate, the Governors will ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under inter-agency procedures.

- 3.2 The Governors will ensure that the designated member of staff for safeguarding is given sufficient time to carry out his or her duties, including accessing training.
- 3.3 The Governors will review safeguarding practices in the school on a regular basis, and no less than annually, to ensure that:
- The school is carrying out its duties to safeguard the welfare of children at the school;
 - Hold a termly monitoring meeting with the designated safeguarding lead with an agreed focus.
 - Members of staff and volunteers are aware of current child protection practices and that staff receive training where appropriate;
 - Child protection is integrated into the school induction procedures for all new members of staff and volunteers and supply staff.
 - The school follows the procedures agreed by Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership, and any supplementary guidance issued by the Local Authority
 - All staff, volunteers etc will be vetted to ensure that only persons suitable to work with children shall work in the school.
 - Where safeguarding concerns about a member of staff are raised, appropriate action will be taken in line with BSCP Allegations against Staff Procedures and BMBC Disciplinary Procedures and DfE guidance Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against teachers and other staff. Guidance for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Proprietors of Independent Schools (October 2012).

4 RECRUITMENT

- 4.1 In order to ensure that children are protected whilst at this school, we will ensure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.
- 4.2 We accept that it is our responsibility to follow the guidance set out in “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education”, in particular we will ensure that the following checks are satisfactorily completed before a person takes up a position in the school:
- Identity checks to establish that applicants are who they claim to be e.g. having sight of an applicant's birth certificate, passport and/or driving licence
 - Academic qualifications, to ensure that qualifications are genuine
 - Professional and character references prior to offering employment
 - Satisfy conditions as to health and physical capacity
 - Previous employment history will be examined and any gaps accounted for.
 - DBS Checks will also be completed.
 - The process should also confirm that the Preventing Illegal Working Declaration of Entitlement to Work in the UK is completed.

5 VOLUNTEERS

- 5.1 We understand that some people otherwise unsuitable for working with children may use volunteering to gain access to children; for this reason, any volunteers in the school, in whatever capacity, will be recruited in line with BMBC Recruitment Policy.

- 5.2 'Working with Volunteers' policy is in place and WWV1 forms are used for all volunteers working within school.

6 INDUCTION & TRAINING

- 6.1 All new members of staff will receive induction training, which will give them an overview of the organisation and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure, as well as how to identify and report abuse, child protection concerns within the appropriate levels of confidentiality.
- 6.2 All new staff at the school (including volunteers) will receive child protection information and a copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on starting their work at the school.
- 6.3 All staff will be expected to attend training on safeguarding children and this will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of child protection effectively. The school will provide access to this training and new staff will also as part of their induction, complete the on line safeguarding training which can be accessed via the BSCP online portal.
- 6.4 All Staff will receive safeguarding updates at least annually, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead formal training every two years.
- 6.5 Staff visiting the school for short periods of time e.g. 1 day supply cover, will receive information in relation to safeguarding children and the procedures they must follow. (See Induction Policy)
- 6.6 All adults are required to attend safeguarding training. Attendance at school training will also be open to parent helpers, volunteers, extended schools providers, governors and any other parties that come in to contact with children on a regular basis. These staff will also be signposted to the online training available via the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board website.
- 6.7 For staff who are unable to access face to face Safeguarding awareness training the school expects them to complete online training as above. All NQTs and students are expected to have completed the Safeguarding awareness training prior to commencing their employment.

7 DEALING WITH CONCERNS

- 7.1 It is not the responsibility of any member of staff or volunteer to investigate any suspicions or concerns that a child/young person is at risk of or is suffering significant harm.
- 7.2 All concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately using the CPOMS system. For staff that don't have a CPOMS log in, for example lunchtime staff, concerns should also be recorded using the school's Cause for Concern documentation or through another member of staff on CPOMS.
- 7.3 A Cause for Concern is an action, observation or discussion that makes you feel anxious about the safety or wellbeing of a child. Concerns may relate to any categories of abuse and may involve an adult or another child as the perpetrator of the alleged abuse.
- 7.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide on the appropriate actions,

completing the section 'For designated teacher use' on the Cause for Concern form (for staff who don't have a CPOMS log in) or detail the action in the relevant section on the CPOMS system.

- 7.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider if the issue needs to be passed to Children's Social Care Assessment and Joint Investigation Team for further action via a telephone conversation and the Request for a Service procedure.
- 7.6 Where an EHA or referral to Social Care is required, the information will be recorded on CPOMS or a Cause for Concern Form and all relevant staff will be alerted.
- 7.7 All discussions, telephone calls and meetings in relation to the child/young person must be recorded on the CPOMS system.
- 7.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and other appropriate professionals will hold a monthly meeting to discuss and review all live and dormant records. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then be able to:
- monitor that the agreed actions have taken place
 - assess the impact of the actions and the progress being made
 - agree the next steps
 - quality assure the written records
 - collate a report for the Governing body outlining the level of child protection concerns and work being undertaken
 - ensure that clear actions are followed up where there is a Child Protection Plan in place and the outcomes are monitored.
 - Ensure school is represented at Core Groups and Conferences
- 7.11 The documentation for each child/young person must be stored in a secure place.
- 7.12 School leaders and Governors understand the importance of Multi-agency working, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children. This may include:
- Providing a co-ordinated offer of early help where needs are identified
 - Contributing to inter-agency plans to support children who are subject to child protection plans
 - Allowing access for children's social care to conduct section 17 or 47 assessments

This may require working with the 3 safeguarding partners:

- Local authority (LA)
- Clinical commissioning group
- Police

If the safeguarding partners have named school as a 'relevant agency' school leaders will co-operate with their published arrangements.

8 SAFEGUARDING IN SCHOOL

- 8.1 As well as ensuring that child protection concerns are addressed, we will also ensure that children who attend the school are kept safe from harm whilst they are in our charge.
- 8.2 The PREVENT strategy – **Ben Froggatt** is the specified person of contact (SPOC) in relation to Prevent.

At Birkwood follow the procedures set out by BMBC:

a) If a member of staff has concerns that an adult or young person may be vulnerable to the messages of violent extremism, that person should in the first instance discuss those concerns with their DSL and Head of School.

b) The DSL and Head Teacher will report any concerns to the SPOC

c) The SPOC will inform the Safeguarding Children Head of Safeguarding and Welfare and liaise with:

- Link in with the Joint Partnership Silver Prevent Group
- Link in with Prevent lead officers from other agencies
- Provide advice and support for team managers and agency staff

8.3 To this end, this policy must be seen in conjunction with the school's policies on:

- Personal, Social and Health Education and Sex and Relationships Education; child protection issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate.
- Anti-Bullying Policy; the school will also ensure that bullying and racial harassment is identified and dealt with so that any harm caused by other pupils can be minimised. We will pay particular attention to sexualised behaviour, or bullying that is homophobic in nature, cyber bullying or where there appear to be links to domestic abuse in the family home. Incidents of bullying will be investigated, recorded through the Cause for Concern Process and reported to the Local Authority on the electronic recording system.
- Safe recruitment
- Code of conduct for staff
- Confidentiality
- Behaviour and discipline
- Health & Safety
- Physical Intervention - managing challenging behaviour
- Allegations against members of staff
- E-safety
- Whistle Blowing
- Visitors policy
- Induction policy
- Information sharing policy
- Supervision Policy
- Children Missing Education
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy

9 PHOTOGRAPHING CHILDREN

- 9.1 We understand that parents/carers like to take photos of or video record their children in the school play, or at sports day, or school presentations. This is a normal part of family life, and we will not discourage parents from celebrating their child's successes.
- 9.2 However, if there are Health and Safety issues associated with this - i.e. the use of a flash when taking photos could distract or dazzle the child, and cause them to have an accident, we will encourage parents to use film or settings on their camera that do not require flash.
- 9.3 We will not allow others (visitors to school e.g. theatre groups or workshop providers) to photograph or film pupils during a school activity without the parent's permission.
- 9.4 We will not allow images of pupils to be used on school websites, publicity, or press releases, without express permission from the parent, and if we do obtain such permission, we will not identify individual children by name.
- 9.5 The school cannot however be held accountable for photographs or video footage taken by parents or members of the public at school functions.
- 9.6 At the start of each academic year parental consent to the taking and use of photographs and videos will be updated for each pupil
- 9.7 The allowing of photographs and videos will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

10 CONFIDENTIALITY and INFORMATION SHARING

(refer to the School Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy)

- 10.1 The school, and all members of staff at the school, will ensure that all data about pupils is handled in accordance with the requirements of the law, and any national and local guidance.
- 10.2 Any member of staff who has access to sensitive information about a child or the child's family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only disclosed to those people who need to know.
- 10.3 Regardless of the duty of confidentiality, if any member of staff has reason to believe that a child may be suffering harm, or be at risk of harm, their duty is to forward this information without delay to the designated Safeguarding Lead.

11 CONDUCT OF STAFF

- 11.1 The school has a duty to ensure that high standards of professional behaviour exist between staff and children, and that all members of staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries.
- 11.2 At all times, members of staff are required to work in a professional way with children. All staff should be aware of the dangers inherent in:
- working alone with a child
 - physical interventions
 - cultural and gender stereotyping
 - dealing with sensitive information

- giving to and receiving gifts from children and parents
- contacting children through private telephones (including texting), e-mail, MSN, or social networking websites.
- disclosing personal details inappropriately
- meeting pupils and families outside school hours or school duties

11.3 If any member of staff has reasonable suspicion that a child is suffering harm, and fails to act in accordance with this policy and Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, we will view this as misconduct, and take appropriate action

11.4 An agreed code of conduct in relation to safeguarding has been agreed and adopted by all adults working with children at Birkwood Primary School. Any member of staff who does not adhere to the policy will be subject to disciplinary procedures

11.5 An agreed Whistle Blowing policy in relation to safeguarding (appendix 1) to supplement to BMBC corporate policy has been agreed in order to support the school ethos where pupils and staff can talk freely about concerns knowing they will be listened to and appropriate action taken.

11.6 There are a range of mechanisms in place to ensure that pupils feel comfortable to express their concerns to adults for example:

- To the Parent Support Advisor or Inclusion Leader at their office
- Through encouragement to discuss issues at Ask it sessions
- Via the school council meetings
- An open approach to discussing issues with staff

12 PHYSICAL CONTACT AND RESTRAINT

12.1 Members of staff may have to make physical interventions with children. Members of staff will only do this in line with school policy on managing challenging behaviour.

12.2 All staff should have undertaken Team Teach training and interventions should be in accordance with the Team Teach principles.

13 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

13.1 If anyone makes an allegation that any member of staff (including any supply, volunteer or Governor) may have:

- Possibly committed an offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Behaved towards a child in a way which indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm if they worked regularly or directly with children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

13.2 The allegation will be dealt with in accordance with national guidance and agreements, as implemented locally by BSCP.

13.3 The Headteacher, rather than the designated member of staff, will handle such allegations, unless the allegation is against the head teacher, when the chair of governors will handle the school's response.

- 13.4 The Headteacher (or chair of governors) will collate basic information about the allegation, and report these without delay to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will discuss the concerns and offer advice and guidance on how the situation will be managed and if a strategy meeting will be required.
- 13.5 The Headteacher should not investigate the concerns or discuss with the alleged perpetrator without having spoken to the LADO.

14 BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- 14.1 Where the Governing Body transfers control of the use of the school premises to bodies (such as sports clubs) to provide out of school hours activities, we will ensure that these bodies have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies.

15 CONTRACTED SERVICES

- 15.1 Where the Governing Bodies contracts its services to outside providers, we will ensure that these providers have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the provider.

16 PROVISION TO HELP PUPILS STAY SAFE

- 16.1 Safeguarding permeates through all aspect of the wider school curriculum. The following examples are not exhaustive but give a flavour for how safeguarding is promoted at Birkwood Primary School.

Through a more personalised PSHCE programme that specifically meets the needs of our children, they learn to engage with others in a safe and mutually respectful way. Our robust anti-bullying policy is reinforced regularly. Pupils who have particular needs or difficulties in these areas are supported by a range of social and emotional support strategies and programmes, as well as receiving additional individual support from parents and staff.

Initiatives such Playground Buddies, Crucial Crew, School Council and Bike Safety, along with highly effective work with other agencies ensure that children are well-placed to keep themselves and other children safe in their everyday lives.

17 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 17.1 All adults in school will receive a copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and will be asked to sign to say that they have read and agree to follow its procedures. It will be discussed at least annually at staff meetings. Safeguarding and child Protection will be a regular agenda item at Staff Team Meetings.
- 17.2 The effectiveness of the policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the Governing Body annually in light of any specific incidents or changes to local/national guidance.

- 17.3 The designated governor for safeguarding will monitor one aspect of the school's child protection work termly and report back to the full governing body.
- 17.4 The Headteacher will report on safeguarding matters through the termly report and safeguarding will be a standing item on the agenda at each full governing body meeting. The Headteacher will also complete the Annual Headteacher's Safeguarding report which is submitted to the Local Authority after it has been agreed with the Governing Body.
- 17.5 Parents will be consulted via the parents' questionnaire and pupils via the school council and pupil's questionnaire annually.

18 PARENTS AND CARERS

- 18.1 Parents and carers will be informed that they can have a paper copy of the Child Protection on request.
- 18.2 The policy will also be available on the school website.
- 18.3 Schools should be proactive in their consultations and involvement with parents and carers where there are child protection concerns unless this would be prejudicial to the safety and wellbeing of the child/young person.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Governing Body reviews this policy every year. The Governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved. This policy will be reviewed in September 2022 (or before if required).

Signed _____ Headteacher Date _____

Signed _____ Chair of Governors Date _____

Appendix 1

Safeguarding Children: Whistle Blowing

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Head Teacher. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think what if I'm wrong - think what if I'm right

Reasons for whistleblowing

Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour in order to:

- prevent the problem worsening or widening
- protect or reduce risks to others
- prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistleblowing

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why
- Approach the Headteacher
- If your concern is about your immediate manager/Headteacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Chair of Governors, Mr Paul Sabin, or the Local Authority Designated Officer
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest
- Put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.

- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

Self reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, HR department and/or your professional or trade union.

"Absolutely without fail- challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong"

(reproduced with acknowledgement to "Sounding the Alarm" – Barnardos)

Appendix 2: Definitions and Symptoms of Abuse

There are four main categories of abuse – physical injury, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. The list of symptoms given is not exhaustive or comprehensive but consists of frequently observed symptoms. It is important to remember that most abuse involves more than one main type, for example, sexual and emotional abuse may be recognised together. These symptoms, for example cuts and grazes, may also be accidental and not a sign of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Actual or risk of physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and factitious illness by proxy. This includes excessive punishment.

Symptoms:

Behaviour changes/wet bed/withdrawal/regression	Finger marks
Frequent unexplained injuries	Broken bones
Afraid of physical contact	Cuts and grazes
Violent behaviour during role play	Cigarette burns
Unwillingness to change clothes	Cowering
Aggressive language and use of threats	
Bruising in unusual areas	
Changing explanation of injuries	
Not wanting to go home with parent or carer	

Neglect

Actual or risk of persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation. Extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Symptoms:

Lack of appropriate clothing	Dirty
Cold – complaining of	Body sores
Hunger – complaining of	Urine smells
Unkempt hair	No parental interest

Not wanting to communicate	Behaviour problems
Attention seeking	Lack of respect
Often in trouble – police	Bullying
Use of bad language	Always out at all hours
Lack of confidence – low self-esteem	Stealing
Jealousy	Significantly underweight

Sexual Abuse

Actual or risk of sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature. The involvement of dependent, immature children and adolescents in activities to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Symptoms:

Inappropriate behaviour – language	Withdrawn
Change of behaviour	Role play
Rejecting physical contact or demanding attention	Rocking
Physical evidence – marks, bruising	Knowledge
Pain going to toilet, strong urine	Stained underwear
Bruising/marks near genital area	
Drawing – inappropriate knowledge	
Relationships with other adults or children for example, being forward	

Emotional Abuse

Actual or risk of severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. It is important to remember that all abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment.

Symptoms:

Crying	Rocking
Withdrawn	Not wanting to socialise
Cringing	Bad behaviour

Aggression

Behaviour changes

Bribery by parent

Self infliction

Lack of confidence

Attention seeking

Isolation from peers – unable to communicate

Clingy

Afraid of authoritative figures

Treating others as you have been treated

Picking up points through conversation with children

Staff at Birkwood are aware and know how to reassure victims of abuse that they are being taken seriously and will be supported. Children at Birkwood will never be made to feel ashamed or that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Appendix 3: Specific Safeguarding Issues

The following are current issues raised by the government. This is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as necessary.

Birkwood Primary School provide all staff, including directors and volunteers with information and training where appropriate on all issues, including what signs to look out for and responsibilities of all staff.

Issues in bold are currently considered as specific issues within Barnsley.

- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Contextual Safeguarding*
- County Lines*
- **Domestic Violence**
- Fabricated or Induced Illness
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Gender-based violence
- Honour based violence
- **Mental health***
- Peer on peer abuse*
- Private fostering
- Radicalisation
- Serious violence*
- **Substance misuse**
- Trafficking

*denotes further information found in the Appendices of this policy.

More information about these issues can be obtained by contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Appendix 4: County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism¹⁰³ should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Further information on the signs of a child’s involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

County Lines can also be linked to **Serious Violence**. All staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

All staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Appendix 5: Contextual Safeguarding

What is Contextual Safeguarding?

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/assets/documents/Contextual-Safeguarding-Briefing.pdf>

All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) will consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

This Contextual Assessment guidance toolkit has been developed by The University of Bedfordshire with Hackney Children and Families Services to support practitioners to consider how to assess and develop responses to risk in schools. The toolkit is designed to support practitioners to carry out a contextual assessment within a secondary school context.

Schools have been identified as sites in which young people can experience and/or be safeguarded from abuse and violence. From experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence through to physical assaults, relationship-based abuse, bullying and grooming into exploitative networks, young people have told practitioners, researchers and journalists about risks they have faced in educational settings.

As such it is critical that when young people experience abuse and violence and this is in some way associated to their school environment or school relationships – that the school itself features within the process of assessment and intervention. If we want to address the factors that cause abuse, or provide an opportunity for abuse to occur, then these factors need to be identified explored and addressed – and school assessments is one way to achieve this.

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/publications/school-assessment-toolkit>

Appendix 6: Mental Health

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

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

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken, following the protocol set out in the policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The DfE has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Appendix 7: Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer-on-peer abuse and can take many forms. Birkwood Primary School has a zero tolerance policy towards peer-on-peer abuse and never perceives it as 'just banter' or 'having a laugh'. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals. Staff are aware that children can abuse other pupils, including through:

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying)
- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Upskirting
- Sexting
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

The signs of peer on peer abuse can be:

- absence from school or disengagement from school activities
- physical injuries
- mental or emotional health issues
- becoming withdrawn – lack of self esteem
- lack of sleep
- alcohol or substance misuse
- changes in behaviour
- inappropriate behaviour for age
- abusive towards others

To prevent peer on peer abuse at Birkwood we create an environment based on equality and informed choice allowing children to know their rights and what to do if they are unhappy about something. We understand our local community and the context in which children and young people at our school are growing up.

We ensure children know the risks by talking about peer on peer abuse in an age appropriate way. Staff create opportunities for children to weigh up risks and recognise that sometimes this means they will take risks we as adults and professionals disagree with. Our role is to encourage children to make the healthiest long-term choices and keep them safe from harm as far as possible. This in turn also gives children the opportunity to share any episodes of peer-on-peer abuse and feel confident the matter will be taken seriously.

We actively encourage safe relationships with their family, their peers and with staff, through an environment where it is OK to talk, even about the most difficult things.

Staff are aware of the signs and know what to do – recording and acting on information following safeguarding procedures and are confident to raise peer-on-peer abuse as a possibility, however are also aware that just because none has been reported – this doesn't mean it isn't happening. Each individual case will be managed, monitored, recorded and followed up as detailed in other sections of this policy. This includes supporting any child who has suffered from an incident and/or who needs support either from a victim or perpetrator perspective. When an incident involves sexual violence and/or sexual harassment school will also follow the school's Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy and guidance detailed within Part five of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021:

child on child sexual violence and harassment and Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, May 2018.

Appendix 8: Online safety

This section should be read alongside the school's E-Safety policy and the below online links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

At Birkwood Primary School, we recognise, as stated in the January 2021 update to Keeping Children Safe in Education',

'that the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm'.

Our effective approach to online safety empowers staff to protect and educate the whole school community in the use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate. This approach is underpinned by our whole school ethos towards online safety and the ever changing online domain(s).

The breadth of online issues/risks are considered and in particular the three areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

We will do everything reasonably possible to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT systems and ensure we have appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. In addition, we will consider how IT is a valuable tool for learning and manage the exposure to IT for educational benefit vs. harmful content. School will educate children regarding harmful online content and how to respond to such instances both in school and at home, in an age appropriate manner. Thereby school are not "over blocking", potentially leading to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regard to online teaching and safeguarding.

School also recognise that whilst filtering and monitoring is an important part of the online safety picture, it is only one part. We also pay close consideration to the whole community approach to online safety. This includes a clear policy on the use of mobile technology in school and also considers that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via 3G, 4G and 5G - school carefully considers how this is managed within school and how parents/carers can support their children at home. Should any incidents arise that are considered to be of a cause for concern and/or safeguarding nature, school will manage these incidents on an individual basis and in the appropriate way dependent on individual

factors (including if there has been episodes of sexual harassment). These incidents will be managed, monitored, recorded and followed up as detailed in other sections of this policy. This includes supporting any child who has suffered from an incident and/or who needs support either from a victim or perpetrator perspective. When an incident involves sexual violence and/or sexual harassment school will also follow the guidance detailed within Part five of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021: child on child sexual violence and harassment and Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, May 2018.

School provide support for children and parents/carers when learning online using the advice to support schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Another element that has become prevalent is harmful online challenges and online hoaxes. 'A hoax is a deliberate lie designed to seem truthful, and online challenges generally involve users recording themselves taking a challenge, and then distributing the video through social media channels, inspiring or daring others to repeat the challenge.'

An online challenge will generally involve users recording themselves taking a challenge and then distributing the resulting video through social media sites, often inspiring or daring others to repeat the challenge. Whilst many will be safe and fun, others can be potentially harmful and even life threatening.

In response to information about an online challenge or hoax, school will use a case-by-case assessment, establishing the scale and nature of the possible risk to children and young people, including considering (where the evidence allows) if the risk is a national one or whether it localised to the area, or institution.

School will use online safety protocols to ensure children are not exposed to such risks, including what they should do/who they should speak to, should they come across such content whether in school or at home. By doing this and using a case-by-case assessment, school carefully consider if a challenge or scare story is a hoax.

In dealing with any online challenge or hoax school will use the following advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes>