**Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

**Our ethos:**

Mazahirul Uloom London (MUL) is a learning community where all students are encouraged to have high aspirations for themselves and each other. Our staff are committed to helping our students grow into knowledgeable, respectful and confident citizens by providing a disciplined and safe environment where students learn effectively.

The school has a number of policies in place to help safeguard our students and staff; these include:

* Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
* Behaviour Policy
* Missing/Absent from education Child Policy
* Prevent Policy
* Anti-Bullying Policy
* E-Safety Policy
* Complaints Procedure Policy

These policies are available on the school website and can also be accessed at the school office.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal, Headteacher and trustees unless an incident, new legislation or guidance calls for the need to review the policy sooner.

MUL recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding students in education and is fully committed to this. The procedures within this policy apply to all staff (including supply staff), governors and volunteers working in the school and have been written in accordance with ***Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024*** and ***Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership supplementary guidance*** (THSCP). It is important that all practitioners working to safeguard children and young people fully understand their responsibilities and duties as set out in primary legislation and associated regulations.

**Core safeguarding principles**

• The welfare of the child is paramount and underpins all discussions and decision making

• All children have the right to have a life free from harm, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, all have equal rights to protection

• All staff including supply staff and volunteers have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm

• The DSL will ensure that all pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

**Purpose of policy**

• To provide all staff with key information to enable them to identify safeguarding concerns and know what action to take in response

• To ensure consistent good practice throughout the school

• To demonstrate the school’s commitment to safeguarding to the whole school community: pupils, parents and other partners

**Safeguarding legislation and guidance**

The following safeguarding legislation and government guidance have informed the content of this policy:

* Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (maintained schools only)
* Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 (Independent schools only, including academies and Free Schools)
* The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Independent schools only, including academies and Free Schools)
* The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
* The Teacher Standards 2012
* Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018
* Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
* What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2015

**THSCP Supplementary Safeguarding Guidance**

The following THSCP safeguarding guidance has informed the content of this policy:

* London Child Protection Procedures revised 5th Edition (London Safeguarding Children Board, March 2020)
* Tower Hamlets SCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Thresholds Guidance
* Tower Hamlets SCP Supplementary Guidance for Schools and Education Settings on Child Protection Procedures - September 2020
* Tower Hamlets SCP LADO Procedures and Flowchart re Allegations made against staff working in the children’s workforce - Information about reporting and managing allegations
* Tower Hamlets SCP Supplementary Guidance for Schools and Education Settings on Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff – September 2020

**Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership**

The Children’s Act 2004 as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 has brought about the establishment of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP). The Partnership coordinates the work of all agencies and ensures that this work is effective in achieving the best outcomes for Tower Hamlets children. The three key safeguarding partners have published arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

* **Local Authority**

James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children’s Services London Borough of Tower Hamlets

* ***Clinical Commissioning Group***

Selina Douglas, Managing Director TH CCG

* **Police**

Marcus Barnett, Commander, Central East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police

Keith Makin is the THSCP’s Independent Scrutineer who will act as a critical friend to all partners and agencies. All staff have been made aware of the new local arrangements especially the Governing body, senior leadership team, and the DSL. As a named relevant agency, the school is under a statutory duty to cooperate with the THSCP arrangements.

The school will engage with the borough’s Designated Safeguarding Leads forums, THSCP safeguarding training offer, and the school will participate in the borough’s section 175/157 and section 11 Safeguarding Self-Evaluation process submitting the completed self-evaluation when requested.

**Key Definitions**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing the impairment of a child’s physical and mental health or development
* ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes followed to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, carers, foster carers, and adoptive parents.

Staff refers to all those who work for the school or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Roles and responsibilities**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding arrangements within the school on a day to day basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at MUL is Khalil Goddard (the Headteacher).

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads is Miss Rahima Miah and Ml. Imdad al-Madani.(Principal)

The role of the DSL includes:

* ensuring all staff read and understand the school’s safeguarding policies and that procedures are followed by all staff
* advising and supporting staff as they carry out their safeguarding duty
* encouraging a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is when paramountcy of the welfare of the child underpins all systems, policies, procedures, and decision making
* promoting a culture of listening to the voice of the child and ensuring that there are formal and informal opportunities for that voice to be heard
* ensuring timely and accurate referrals are made to children’s social care, the police, or other agencies
* participating in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings
* liaising with the case manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where allegations are made against staff
* making staff aware of training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements available through the local safeguarding partner arrangements
* transferring the child protection file to a child’s new school and proactively contacting the new school in advance to help ensure a successful transition
* undergoing the required 2 day refresher training every 2 years as a minimum and receiving regular updates to maintain the knowledge and skills to carry out the role, including Prevent awareness training.

The Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL and support the DSL with safeguarding matters.

If the DSL is not available, concerns should be shared with the Deputy DSL.

All staff are expected to keep safeguarding values at the centre of their conduct. The best interests of the child should determine their behaviour and action.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to notice any physical, emotional or behavioural signs that a child may be suffering significant harm, We understand that harm means the ill-treatment or impairment of a child’s mental and physical health and/or development, including that caused as a result of witnessing the ill-treatment of another person and we understand that not all children will choose to talk, but may communicate through different ways. The school will therefore:

* Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
* Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried.
* Include opportunities in the PSHCE curriculum (including covering relevant issues through RSE) for children to develop the skills they need to recognize and stay safe from abuse.
* Ensure that staff are adequately trained to recognise the signs of abuse.
* Ensure that staff refer concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach. All staff understand the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence.

**Children who may be potentially more at risk of harm**

It is recognised that all children are susceptible but that some children may be more susceptible than others to risks of harm. This may include a child who:

• is disabled and has specific additional needs;

• has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);

• is a young carer;

• is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;

• is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;

• is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;

• is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;

• is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse etc.

• is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;

• has returned home to their family from care; and

• is a privately fostered child.

**Children in Need of a Social Worker**

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children who have been allocated a social worker may have experienced abuse, neglect and belong to a family that has many complex circumstances. The school recognises that these children will have experienced adversity and trauma that can leave them susceptible to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health. When making decisions about safeguarding, analysing risks and providing pastoral and academic support, the school will take seriously the fact that the child in need of a social worker will require enhanced support alongside that provided by statutory services.

**Children requiring Mental Health Support**

The school has an important role in supporting the mental well-being of children and to identify behaviour that may suggest a child is experiencing mental health problems. All staff recognise that mental health may be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health difficulty or be at risk of developing one. Staff are aware of the trauma and mental health impact on a child who has had adverse childhood experiences including abuse, bereavement and separation of parents. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

The school endeavours to prevent potential mental health difficulties by providing a warm and nurturing learning environment, promoting resilience and maintaining good communication with students and their families.

Where staff may have a concern regarding a student who may require mental health support, the concern should be immediately conveyed to the DSL or Safeguarding team via a completed concern form or conversation. If required, the DSL will liaise with and/or make a referral to outside agencies such as CAMHS for support.

**Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

Staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to safeguard Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The DSL will also fulfil the role of Designated Teacher for looked after children (LAC) and Care Leavers. They will work with relevant agencies and take immediate action to safeguard and provide support to this susceptible group of children.

**Children with SEND**

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

• assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration;

• the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and

• communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Staff are trained to understand and be aware of these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

**Children missing/absent from education**

The school closely monitors attendance, absence and exclusions. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation or mental health problems. The school follows up on absences as part of its safeguarding duty. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, and forced marriage.

In accordance with the school’s Attendance Policy, all absence concerns will be followed up by the school.

When a pupil does not return to school and the whereabouts of the child and their family are not known after the school has made initial inquiries, the school must refer to the Local Authority using a Missing Children referral form.

Contact: LBTH CME Officer, Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service, Saadia.Anwer@towerhamlets.gov.uk 020 7364 3426

**Whistleblowing**

We recognise that children/young people cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

The school’s whistleblowing policy can be found on the website and is available in hard copy upon request. Further guidance is contained within ***KCSIE 2024*** when there are concerns around the schools’ practices and/or the Headteacher.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285which is free & anonymous, more information can be found at nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing.

**Allegations against staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff including supply staff and volunteers, the school’s procedures will be followed. The procedures are compliant with KCSIE 2023 part 4 and THSCP supplementary guidance- Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff – September 2020.

An allegation is made against a member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) when a member of staff has:

* behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;

• possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

• behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or

• behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

When an allegation is made against a member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers), the Headteacher will be the case manager and take the lead in contacting the LADO.

On receipt of a report of an allegation, the Headteacher will make immediate contact with the Local Authority Designated Officer for an initial discussion.If the allegation concerns the Headteacher or Principal, then the Chair of Trustees shall make contact with the LADO.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

**LBTH Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Melanie Benzie**

**Email:** **Melanie.Benzie@towerhamlets.gov.uk** **or** **LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

**Telephone: 0207364 0677**

**Staff training**

All staff, including supply teachers and other visiting staff and those supporting school trips, are informed of the DSL’s name and the school’s policy for the protection of children in either of these:

* + During their first induction to the school
	+ Through the provision of a copy of this policy
	+ Through the staff/personnel handbook
	+ Information on relevant notice boards
	+ Whole staff training, meetings or briefings

Staff members are given Safeguarding training early on in the academic year. They are also expected to have read and understood Part One of KCSIE 2023.

Where a member of staff has missed this training, the DSL will hold a further safeguarding training session.

**Safer Recruitment**

The school’s safer recruitment procedures comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 part 3 and the local safeguarding partner arrangements by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant’s identity, qualifications and work history with extra emphasis on their online activity. At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

The school requests and ensures receipt of written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that relevant checks have been carried out and the supply or third-party staff are suitable to work with children.

The school also carries out checks on trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors.

The school maintains a Single Central Record of recruitment checks undertaken, which is regularly reviewed for compliance.

**Visitors**

Visitors are welcomed in a safe and secure manner.

All visitors must report to the school office. Where required, ID will be checked by school staff. Visitors will have access to the visitor Safeguarding leaflet.

Visitors must sign in upon arrival and sign out before leaving.

Where visitors will be in contact with students, a member of staff will be present at all times.

**Extended school and off-site arrangements**

Extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment and the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures apply even when off-site.

Where other organisations provide services, the school enquires about their effective safeguarding policies and the checks that they have carried out.

**Mobile Use and Camera Use**

Staff must refer to the Code of Conduct and E-Safety Policy for further guidance on using personal mobiles and taking photographs.

**Identifying abuse**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be carried out by adults and other children.

The school is aware that children can be at risk of abuse, harm and exploitation beyond the family home. Extra familial harms include sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence. All staff, especially the DSL and Deputy DSLs will consider whether children are at risk of harms and exploitation in environments outside the family environment.

**Indicators of Abuse**

**Physical**- 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.

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

**Emotional**- 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 cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**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.

The school is aware of the borough’s LBTH Neglect Guidance and understands its important role in identifying children who may be suffering from Neglect.

**Safeguarding Issues:**

**Child Sexual Exploitation**

CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Some of the following can be indicators of CSE:

• children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and

• children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.

• children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;

• children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;

• children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;

• children who misuse drugs and alcohol;

• children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and

• children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children and young people may not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and may not identify themselves as a victim. Therefore, the school will endeavour to communicate the risks of CSE to children via the PSHCE and RSE curriculum.

**Child Criminal Exploitation**

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines, see page 85 for more information), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

• children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;

• children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;

• children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;

• children who misuse drugs and alcohol;

• children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and

• children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity; drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the [National Referral Mechanism](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism) should be considered by the DSL.

**Serious youth violence**

All staff are aware of indicators, which may signal that 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.

**Online Harms**

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. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

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

• content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;

• contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and

• conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

The school understands its duty to keeping children safe online, therefore this policy should be used in conjunction with the school’s E-Safety Policy in order to understand the school’s filtering and monitoring system.

**Domestic Abuse**

This can be perpetrated by anyone living in the home of the child or who visits the child. This could include a parent, sibling or other relative. The child themselves could also be a perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse. It is often difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening, because it usually takes place in the family home and abusers can act very differently when other people are around. All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

The school has signed up to the Metropolitan Police’s Operation Encompass and on receipt of a notification will provide appropriate support to the child.

**Honour-Based Abuse**

So-called ‘honour-based abuse’ (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubts, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

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

In England and Wales, the practice of Forced Marriage is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

**Radicalisation and Extremism**

Children are susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools’ or colleges’ safeguarding approach.

• Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

• Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

• Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

The Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty explains schools’ duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

The school regularly undertakes Prevent training for staff delivered by the Prevent Education Officer; this enables them to be aware of risks related to radicalisation and extremism and act accordingly.

As part of the curriculum, there are many opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and how the school promotes fundamental British Values.

In LBTH the Prevent Education Officer is Iona.Karrman-Bailey@towerhamlets.gov.uk who can provide support with Prevent risk assessments, check lists and awareness training among staff and pupils.

In LBTH all Prevent referrals should be made through the Multi Agency Safeguarding Team.

**Peer on peer abuse**

Children may be harmed by other children. All staff recognise that children can abuse their peers and should follow the school’s policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. At the school all incidents of peer on peer abuse are treated very seriously and all forms are unacceptable. Abuse is abuse and will never be dismissed as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms and may be facilitated by technology, including:

• physical abuse such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling

• sexually harmful behaviour and sexual abuse including inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault or rape

• sexting including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content

• teenage relationship abuse – where there is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner

• upskirting – taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their knowledge, which is a criminal offence

• initiation/hazing - used to introduce newcomers into an organisation or group by subjecting them to a series of trials and challenges, which are potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusive.

• prejudice and discrimination - behaviours which cause a person to feel powerless, worthless or excluded originating from prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, for example, prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

The school’s national and Islamic curriculums aim to promote positive and respectful behaviour between peers. All staff remain vigilant of peer on peer abuse and report this to the DSL as per the school’s procedures. The DSL will contact Children’s Social Services and/or the police as necessary when a concern is reported.

**Peer on Peer Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

MUL ensures all staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. We understand when referring to sexual violence, it is referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

When referring to sexual harassment, we understand it to mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. All staff are aware this can be part of a wider pattern of abusive behaviour or a standalone event which could include:

* non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos
* sexualised online bullying
* unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
* sexual exploitation; coercion and threats
* upskirting

All staff understand it is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support and are aware that certain groups are potentially more at risk.

**Sexting**

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages. Creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

* take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
* share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it’s shared between children of the same age
* possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

If staff are made aware that a child has sent, received or been the subject of sexting, they should report it as a safeguarding incident. Staff should not view the image unless unavoidable. They should let the DSL know if they saw the image. The DSL will follow the guidance set out in the UKCIS advice document, ***Sexting in Schools and Colleges***.

**Bullying (including cyberbullying)**

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through the school’s anti-bullying policy and procedure.

**Homelessness**

Being homeless, being at risk of becoming homeless, presents a real risk to a child’s welfare. The DSL (or Deputy DSL) are aware of contact details and referral routes for the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children’s social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

In most cases, we will consider homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases, some young people could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children’s services will be the lead agency for these young people and the DSL (or Deputy DSL) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child’s circumstances.

**Children and the Court System**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children [5-11](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-5-to-11-year-olds) year olds and [12-17](http://formfinder.hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/ywp-12-17-eng.pdf) year olds). They explain each step of the process and outline the support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful for children for children and entrench conflict in families. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements [information tool](https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/) with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers. The DSL and Deputy DSL will work with all relevant agencies to ensure our students receive appropriate support through the court process.

**Children with Family Members in Prison**

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. [NICCO](https://www.nicco.org.uk/) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children. The DSL and Deputy DSL will work with all relevant agencies to ensure our students receive appropriate support throughout this process.

**Private Fostering**

Sometimes a child is in the care of someone other than their biological parents or legal guardian. The school will do all that is practicable to find out this information during the school’s admission. Sometimes the child transfers to a private foster care arrangement during their time at the school. Staff should inform the DSL if they believe this is the case. If it is found that a child is being looked after by someone for longer than 28 days, the school will inform the local authority.

**Young Carers**

It is estimated by the Children’s Society that 1 in 5 children are young carers and many are hidden and unidentified. School recognises that Young carers have the right to an assessment by the local authority to identify needs and support and the person they are caring for can have a reassessment of their needs. The DSL will seek information and support from the LBTH Young Carers Program when identifying young carers and refer accordingly: Young.Carers@towerhamlets.gov.uk

**Taking safeguarding action**

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”. Key points for staff to remember are:

• in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child (including calling 999)

• report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL (or the Deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL), no later than the end of the day.

• do not start your own investigation

• share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family

• complete a record of concern and hand the form directly to the DSL or Deputy DSL; these are available in the school office

• seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

**Early Help**

All staff are trained and prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help, which is providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life.

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. In the first instance staff should discuss early help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment; if this is the case, they will receive appropriate support from the DSL or Deputy DSL.

All staff should be aware of the early help process and understand their role in it. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases (when deemed appropriate by the DSL), acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.

The Tower Hamlets Early Help Strategy recognises the important role schools have in identifying children and families who are at risk of poor outcomes without early intervention.

All staff recognise that all children may benefit from Early Help but some children may benefit from Early Help more than others, including a child who:

• is disabled and has specific additional needs;

• has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);

• is a young carer;

• is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;

• is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;

• is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;

• is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;

• is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse

• is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;

• has returned home to their family from care; and

• is a privately fostered child.

The DSL will use an Early Help Assessment, EHA Reviews and Team Around the Child/Family meetings as appropriate when there is a multi-agency approach, and will make a referral to Children’s Social Care if the threshold has been met.

The DSL will contact the LBTH Early Help Hub for support and advice if required:

**LBTH Early Help Hub 0207 364 5006 (option 2)**

Alternatively, the DSL will complete an Early Help Enquiry form which can be accessed via https://bit.ly/2AA2WNy

The DSL will apply the LBTH Thresholds Guidance to decide on what level of safeguarding response is required as part of the early help response. If in doubt about the level of need the DSL will telephone the LBTH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub for a discussion.

MAST: **020 7364 5006 (Option 3) 020 7364 5601/5606**

Child Protection Advice Line **020 7364 3444**

If a child has been receiving early help support from the school and other agencies and there is no improvement in the child’s outcomes then the DSL will refer to Children’s Social Care.

When there is multi agency support in place for a child in the form of an Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family meetings, the DSL will consider whether to refer to the borough’s Social Inclusion Panel to aid with coordination of support, when requiring support and advice, and to help prevent escalation to Level 3 Needs: This.Child@towerhamlets.gov.uk

**Handling Disclosures**

When a child discloses that they have been or are being abused, they may feel ashamed, especially if the abuse is sexual, and feel frightened lest their abuser finds out they have made a disclosure. The child may have been threatened, they may have lost all trust in adults; or may believe that they are to blame for the abuse. Sometimes the child may not understand that what is happening is abusive.

 If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about possible abuse there are a number of things that should be done to support the child:

* Stay calm and listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying. If shocked by what is being said, try not to show it; rather reassure the child.
* Question normally without putting pressure on the child.
* Do not put words into the child’s mouth but note the main points carefully
* You may ask questions such as *“What happened?”* and *“When did it happen?”.* Do not go into too much detail because it could adversely affect any subsequent legal proceedings.
* It is ok to observe bruises but not to ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them.
* If a disclosure is made, the pace should be dictated by the pupil without them being pressed for detail by being asked such questions as “What did they do next?” or “Where did they touch you?” It is our role to listen not to investigate.  Use open questions such as “Is there anything else you want to tell me?” or “yes?” or “and?”
* Accept what the pupil says.  Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking questions such as “Why didn’t you tell me before?”
* Do acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you this.
* Do not criticize the perpetrator; this may be someone they love.
* **Do not promise confidentiality**; reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the designated teacher) and why.  It is important that you do not make promises that you cannot keep such as “I’ll stay with you all the time” or “It will be alright now”.
* Reassure the child and let them know they were right to inform us.
* Inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on.
* Inform the DSL immediately.
* Seek support if you feel distressed.

It is vital that our actions do not abuse the child further or prejudice further enquiries.

**Helpful things to say or show**
Show acceptance of what the child says
“I take what you are saying very seriously”
“I am pleased that you have told me. Thank you for telling me”
If appropriate, “It isn’t your fault and you are not to blame at all”
“I am sorry that happened to you”
“I will help you”

**Things not to say**
“Why didn’t you say something before?”
“I really can’t believe it”
“Are you sure this has happened?”
“Why?” “Where?” “When?” “Who?” “What?” “How?”
Do not make false promises to the child (such as confidentiality); be honest now, any false promises will be further abuse and betrayal of their trust
Never make statements such as “I am shocked!” or “Don’t tell anyone else”.

**Concluding the conversation**

* Reassure the child that they were right to tell you
* Let the child know what you are going to do next and tell them that you will let them know what is happening at each stage.
* Do not be tempted to try to investigate further the claims – this could lead to contamination of the evidence and could jeopardize any Police investigation and criminal prosecution activity.

### Recording Information

* Keep a full record of what was said.
* Make some brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards; record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, recording facts and not assumption and interpretation.  Notes must be signed and dated.
* Observed injuries and bruises are to be recorded.
* Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil
* It is important to keep these original notes and pass them to the DSL.
* All referrals to Social Services must be followed up within 24 hours in writing using the referral pro-forma.

As deemed appropriate, the school will contact and notify parents of disclosures and hold discussions around this. However, if there is a risk posed to the child by notifying the parents or if the school have been advised by Children’s Social Services or the police directly not to do so.

**Confidentiality and sharing information**

Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. Serious Case Reviews have highlighted failures in safeguarding systems in which people did not share information at the earliest opportunity or did not share at all. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. All staff will understand that safeguarding requires a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, Deputy DSL or the headteacher.

Any member of staff can contact children’s social care if they are concerned about a child but should inform the DSL as soon as possible that they have done so.

The DSL will have due regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to ensure that personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and they will adhere to the seven golden rules for sharing information. Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner. The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, as safeguarding and protecting children provide a legal basis for sharing information.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision to share has been taken. Child protection information will be stored securely separate from the pupil’s school file. Child protection information is stored and handled in line with the school’s Retention and Destruction Policy.

**Referring to Children’s Social Care**

The DSL will make a referral to children’s social care applying the LBTH Threshold Guidance if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, or the child is considered to be in need, that is a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services.

LBTH Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub**: 020 7364 5006 (Option 3) 020 7364 5601/5606**

**Child Protection Advice Line 020 7364 3444**

When the DSL completes a MASH referral form and sends it securely to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, the referral form will be accurate and sufficiently detailed to enable the MASH Assessment and Intervention Team to make a decision on the level of statutory response.

If the child is already known to Children’s Social Care, then the DSL will communicate safeguarding concerns with the allocated Social Worker.

**Escalation procedures**

If, after a referral to Children’s Social Care, the child’s situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child’s situation improves. In accordance with the Tower Hamlets Threshold Guidance Appendix D the DSL will first make contact with the team manager followed by the service manager followed by the divisional director. At every level of escalation there should be discussion and concerted effort to resolve any professional difference.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: MAST poster

Appendix 2: School record of concern form

Appendix 3: MAST interagency referral form

Appendix 4: THSCP Managing Allegations flowchart

Appendix 5: Visitor Safeguarding leaflet

**Policy date:** **June 2025**

**Review date:** **June 2026**

***Policy will be updated if and when legislation changes or is modified between review dates including any changes to the document Keeping Children Safe In Education.***