# RUNNYMEDE COLLEGE

EST. 1967

Delight, Ornament, Ability



# Safeguarding & Child

# Protection Policy

# (2022-23)

# Table of Contents

**Created and reviewed by:**

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**Approved by:**

Mr. F.M. Powell

**Date:**

June 2022

**Next Review:**

June 2023

## 1.1 Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18



It is defined as:
| protecting children from maltreatment | preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development | ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of **safe** and effective care | taking **action** to enable all children to have the best outcomes. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Protect** | **Prevent** | **Safety** | **Action** |

## 1.2. About this Policy

This policy is updated as and when required, drawing on feedback from staff, and the latest version is available to all school staff on the school network.

This policy is based on the document published on www.gov.uk: "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020" (*update - January 2021. Post EU Exit*), and "Working Together to Safeguard Children", July 2018, and has been adapted according to Spanish "Organic Act 8/2021, of 4 June, on the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents Against Violence" (***LOPIVI*** - *Ley Orgánica 8/2021, de 4 de Junio, de Protección Integral a la Infancia y la Adolescencia Frente a la Violencia*) https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2021/06/04/8/con

The school will always refer to this document as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice and decision-makings and will follow the local inter-agency procedures of the local Spanish authorities.

## 1.3. Monitoring and Review of this Document

This policy will be reviewed annually in July by the DSL team, working with the Headmaster and seeking contributions from all staff and will be published on Sept 1st each year.

## 2.1. Overview

At Runnymede, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, health and safety of our pupils, and operate on the principle that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

**Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.

All staff at Runnymede know that a range of other school policies are central to many aspects of this policy, and this document should therefore be read annually, in conjunction with the following, which will be available to everybody via the internal school network:

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- SEN Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

## 2.2. Our Aims and Responsibilities

Alongside the Runnymede Code of Conduct, this safeguarding document provides a framework within which pupils and all members of the school community can work together to achieve our common aims. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

A necessary background to our rich variety of activity is discipline, conceived as respect for oneself, for others and for the school. We believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear, developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

- Our aims:

- Proactively teach pupils about safeguarding
- Ensure that the necessary systems and procedures are in place to protect pupils
- Act in the best interests of the child

## 2.3. Who this Policy Applies to

This policy applies to all pupils and all school staff (including teaching, non-teaching, residential, pastoral, support, peripatetic, contract staff and ancillary staff, voluntary, off-site staff and any other adults working at the school). This includes when being educated off-site and undertaking an educational visit. In this document, all references to "staff" or "members of staff" should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned, unless otherwise stated.

## 2.4. Key People and Contacts

The following pages outline the contact details of named staff at Runnymede College, as well as external agencies linked to child protection and safeguarding.

| School Contacts | Name | Email Address |
|---|---|---|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (Whole School) & School Nurse | María Mínguez | nurse@runnymede-college.com |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (Senior), Deputy Head for Pastoral Care | Mark Blake | mblake@runnymede-college.com |
| Deputy DSL (Whole School) and Assistant Headmistress | Georgina Powell | gpowell@runnymede-college.com |
| Deputy DSL (Junior) & Junior Head | Joanna Barr | juniorhead@runnymede-college.com |
| Deputy DSL (Senior) & Senior Deputy Head | Annabel Hawkins | ahawkins@runnymede-college.com |
| Educational Psychologist | Peter Rouco | prouco@runnymede-college.com |
| Headmaster | Mr Frank Powell | headmaster@runnymede-college.com |

| Local Authority Contacts | Telephone |
|---|---|
| Local Board for Safeguarding Children in Alcobendas Defensor del Menor | 915634411 |
| Local social services - Alcobendas | 916637001 |
| National Telephone Number for Information and Advice on Children's' Issues-Advice Service | 900100033 |
| Women and children's' support services Team Comandancia de Madrid de la Guardia Civil, Alcobendas | 916621293 |

| | |
|---|---|
| CIASI (Child Sexual Abuse Intervention Center) | 914208572 / 914208568 |
| Local Police Emergency | 112 |
| Local Alcobendas Police (GRUME) | 916592040 |
| Agentes Tutores Alcobendas | 636605318 |
| | agentetutor@aytoalcobendas.org |

## 2.5. The Responsibility of School Management

It is the responsibility of school management to ensure the effective implementation of, and adherence to safeguarding practices in the school.

The school has a staff Code of Conduct that includes but is not limited to: acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

Where reasonably possible, the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student. This goes beyond the legal minimum and gives the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

## 2.6. Staff Responsibilities

All staff have the following responsibilities:

- Contribute to providing a safe environment in which all children can learn and flourish

- Know what to do if a child tells reports abuse or neglect

- Know what to do when concerned about the behaviour or conduct of an adult in the school

- Manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality

- Identify children who may benefit from Early Help Assessment.

- Refer any concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy DSL

- Be aware of our local Early Help Assessment process and our role in it

- Be aware of the process for making a referral to Children's Social Care and understand our role in statutory assessments

## 2.7. The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Headmaster will always ensure that an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school leadership team, is appointed to the role of DSL. The DSL should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection as well as creating a culture of safety, equality and protection in the school. This is explicit in the role-holder's job description. Article 35 of the LOPIVI Act states that every school in Spain will have a "*Coordinador de Bienestar y Protección",* which is equivalent to the already existing figure at school, the DSL.

This person should have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. They should be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part

in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or to support other staff to do so, and to contribute to the assessment of children.

During term time, the DSL and/or a deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. It is a matter for the school and the DSL to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

There are 5 key elements to the DSL role. They will:

- Have the required knowledge, skills, expertise and experience to take the responsibility for safeguarding arrangements

- Manage referrals

- Work with others

- Train

- Raise awareness

Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, as set out above, remains with the DSL. This responsibility will not be delegated.

Full description of the DSL role at **Annex I**

## 2.8. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

The school may choose to have one or more deputy DSLs. Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role should be explicit in the job description. Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the DSL; this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

## 2.9. Working with Others

The DSL is expected to:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority/children's social care as required;

- Support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care

The member of the senior leadership team who is appointed as DSL must be able to discharge that role with sufficient independence, particularly in relation to any allegations involving the proprietor or members of the proprietor's family. This may involve including in the appointment as DSL, written confirmation that part of the duties of the post involve contacting the relevant designated person in the Spanish local authority on any matter that the DSL considers cannot be

properly dealt with internally. Consideration could also be given to providing the DSL with access to external advice from an appropriate company or legal service. The DSL is expected to:

- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

- Act as a point of contact with the three Spanish safeguarding partners;

- Liaise with the Headmaster to inform him of issues

- As required, liaise with the "Headmaster" and the Safeguarding Team at the local authority for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member;

- Liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Technicians, and SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) or the named person with oversight for SEN in the school) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies; and

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.

### 2.9.1. Raising Awareness

The DSL should:

- Ensure the school's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;

- Ensure the school's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this;

- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this; and

- Link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.

### 2.9.2. Information Sharing

- Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect.

- The school is aware that among other obligations, the **Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR** place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

- The school understands that the **Data Protection Act 3/2018 and GDPR** do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. 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.

- When receiving child protection files, the school will ensure key staff such as DSLs and SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN, are aware as required.

- Where children leave the school, the DSL should ensure that the child protection files be transferred separately from the main pupil file within a period of 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within the first 5 days of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives.

- In addition to the child protection file, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

## 2.10. Staff Training

At the point of induction, all staff will be given access to the present document and will be made aware that this Policy must be consulted in the case of any safeguarding concerns and should be read annually. All staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

### 2.10.1. Training of the DSL

The DSL and any deputies will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years.

In addition to their formal training as set out above, their knowledge and skills should be updated, (for example via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments), at regular intervals, and at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

## 2.11. Safer Recruitment

- The school is committed to preventing people who pose a risk of harm from working with children, and adheres to its statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised. The school has written recruitment and selection policies and procedures in place (e.g references kept and checked; Single Central Record/DBS certificate; digital screening).

- The school ensures that at least one of the people who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.

- The school may choose appropriate training and may take advice from the other safeguarding partners in doing so. The training covers, as a minimum, the content of this guidance.

- For more information on safer recruitment, please refer to the document *Runnymede College Safer Recruitment Policy*.

## 2.12. The Role of School Staff in Safeguarding

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

In cases where a safeguarding issue is detected, the school can use a range of arrangements, depending on the information available. The school will always work cooperatively with external agencies, including the local authority and the police.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and, if appropriate, the police) is made immediately by the DSL, who should follow the local authority's referral process. If the DSL is not available, then there should be no delay in the school making a referral.

- All staff should be aware of systems within the school which support safeguarding and these will be explained to them as part of staff induction. This includes:

  o The child protection policy;

  o The pupil and staff Code of Conduct;

  o The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and

  o The role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any deputies).

  o A copy of school policies and a copy of Part One of the latest version of the Department of Education's guidance document Keeping children safe in education are provided to staff at induction.

- All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

- All staff are aware of their local early help assessment process and understand their role in it.

For detailed information on the process to follow when reporting a safeguarding concern, see the **Annex I: Process of detection & notification** and **Annex II: Safeguarding Protocol**.

## 2.13. Early Help Assessment

Early help assessment 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. The school understands that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.

If early help is appropriate, the DSL (or deputy DSL) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

According to LOPIVI, the article 18 establishes that at the beginning of each school term, the DSL together with the Pastoral Head shall provide the pupils with all the information, which must be available in accessible formats, on the procedures for reporting situations of violence regulated by law, including telephone helplines for children and adolescents, who to talk to (DSL, Head of Pastoral, Head of Year, Form Tutor, Psychologist) in case they need help, and their location in Runnymede Campus.

This information shall be permanently updated in a visible and accessible place, shall adopt the necessary measures so that pupils can consult it freely at any time, allowing and facilitating access to these communication procedures and to the existing helplines.

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

## 3.1. Neglect

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

## 3.2 Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children might be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

### 3.2.1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse that 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.

### 3.2.2. Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, which 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; seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, or 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.

### 3.2.3. Sexual Abuse

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. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

### 3.2.4. Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological;

- Physical;

- Sexual;

- Financial; and

- Emotional

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame his- or herself 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.

## 3.3. Sexual Violence

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. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

## 3.4. Sexual Harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. 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.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;

- Sexual "jokes" or taunting;

- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (the school should consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and

- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:

  - Non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;

  - Sexualised online bullying;

  - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and

  - Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

## 3.5. Child on Child Abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

• Bullying (including cyberbullying);

• Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;

• Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;

- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;

- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;

- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and

- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

## 3.6. Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

We understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, is harmful to children. We have an Anti-Bullying Policy that sets out our aim of ensuring no child becomes a victim of any form of bullying and the work we carry out in school to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is known to be unacceptable. We will always take seriously any reports of bullying and respond appropriately.

We understand that bullying may take different forms and may include, as examples, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and bi-phobic behaviours. Any such reported or observed incidents will be dealt with in accordance to the guidelines set out in our Anti-Bullying Policy.

## 3.7. Online Safety

We recognise that pupils' use of the Internet is an important part of their education but there are risks of harm associated with its use. We have an Online Safety Policy that addresses how we seek to minimise those risks in school and teach children how to stay safe when using the Internet in their lives outside of school. We also recognise that all members of staff must always be mindful of the need to follow our Policy of acceptable use of our IT equipment.

It is fundamental to be aware of some of the potential dangers that the Internet can pose, including:

- Access to illegal, harmful or inappropriate images, video games or other content

- Unauthorised access to/loss of/sharing of personal information

- The risk of being subject to grooming

- The sharing/distribution of personal images without an individual's consent or knowledge

- Inappropriate communication/contact with others, including strangers

- Sexting

- Implications of geo-location

- Cyber-bullying

- An inability to evaluate the quality, accuracy and relevance of information on the Internet

- The potential for excessive use, which may have a negative impact on the social and emotional development and learning of a young person.

Material published by pupils and staff in a social context which is considered to bring the school's reputation into disrepute or considered harmful to, or harassment of, another child or member of the organisation, will be considered a safeguarding issue and a breach of conduct and behaviour and treated accordingly.

## 3.8. Mental Health

All staff should also be 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. Staff however, 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.

It is key that staff are aware of 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 should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The school has published advice and guidance including a range of resources to support staff to promote heath, wellbeing and resilience among our students, in the "Mental Health Handbook"

## 3.9. Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. We ensure our child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

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

- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;

- 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. To address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

## 4.1. Signs of Abuse

The school recognises that children develop and mature at different rates, so what may be a cause for concern in a younger child, might be normal behaviour for an older child. If a child looks or acts a lot older or younger than their age, this could be a cause for concern.

However, if a child develops more slowly than others of a similar age and there's not a cause such as physical or learning disabilities, it could be a sign they're being abused.

According to the NSPCC, there are four universal signs of neglect that can be applied to all age groups:

- The child is often left home alone or with strangers

- The child shows a poor bond (attachment) with a parent

- The child is violent towards other children

- The child lacks social skills and has few or no friends

### 4.1.2. Signs of Abuse in Under 5s

- Doesn't cry or respond to parent's presence or absence from an early age

- Reaches developmental milestones late, such as learning to speak, with no medical reason

- Significantly underweight but eats well when given food.

### 4.1.3. Signs of Abuse in 5-11 Year-Olds

- Becomes secretive and reluctant to share information.

- Reluctant to go home after school.

- Unable to bring friends home or reluctant for professionals to visit the family home.

- Poor school attendance and punctuality, or late being picked up.

- Parents show little interest in child's performance and behaviour at school.

- Parents are dismissive and non-responsive to professional concerns.

- Is reluctant to get changed for sports etc.

- Wets or soils the bed.

### 4.1.4. Signs of Abuse in 11-16 Year-Olds

- Drinks alcohol regularly from an early age.

- Is concerned for younger siblings without explaining why.

- Becomes secretive and reluctant to share information.

- Talks of running away.

- Shows challenging/disruptive behaviour at school.

- Is reluctant to get changed for sports etc.

## 4.2. Signs of neglect

Neglect can be extremely difficult to identify, making it hard for professionals to take early action to protect a child.

Having one of the signs or symptoms below does not necessarily mean that a child is being neglected. However, if a child shows notice multiple, or persistent, signs then it could indicate the presence of a serious issue.

Children who are neglected may have:

- Poor appearance/hygiene:

    - Arrive at school unwashed or dirty

    - Have unwashed clothes

    - Have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat

    - Seem hungry or arrive at school without having breakfast or any lunch money

    - Have frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants.

- Health and development issues, such as:

    - Untreated injuries, medical and dental issues

    - Repeated accidental injuries caused by lack of supervision

    - Recurring illnesses or infections

    - Lack of appropriate medicines

    - Missed medical appointments such as vaccinations

- Poor muscle tone or prominent joints

- Skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm

- Thin or swollen tummy

- Anaemia

- Tiredness

- Faltering weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones (known as failure to thrive)

- Poor language, communication or social skills.

- Housing and family issues:

  - Living in an unsuitable home environment, for example a very dirty house/flat, or not having any heating

  - Left alone for a long time

  - Taking on the role of carer for other family members.

## 4.3. Signs of Grooming in Children

According to the NSPCC, the signs of grooming are not always obvious and groomers will often go to great lengths not to be identified.

If a child is being groomed, he/she may:

- Be very secretive, including about what they are doing online

- Have older boyfriends or girlfriends

- Go to unusual places to meet friends

- Have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain

- Have access to drugs and alcohol.

In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour, but you may notice unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, or inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age.

For further information on grooming online, as well as child sexual exploitation online, please see the school's Online Safety Policy above.Please note that the above lists are not exhaustive and staff should always use their professional judgment and discuss any concerns with the DSL.

If staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the referral process as set out in this guidance. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do, they should speak to the DSL (or a deputy).

Any decisions are for the school to make on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

## 5.1. Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support;

- The alleged perpetrator; and

- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic) and should be kept under review. At all times, the school will actively consider the risks posed to all pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The DSL (or a deputy) will ensure they are engaging with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. Any such professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting their pupils and students and updating their own risk assessment.

## 5.2. Action Following a Report of Sexual Violence and/or Sexual Harassment

The school will carefully consider any report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The DSL (or deputy DSL) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the school's initial response. Important considerations will include:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;

- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;

- The ages of the children involved;

- The developmental stages of the children involved;

- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?;

- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;

- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff; and

- Other related issues and wider context.

As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, all staff will act in the best interests of the child. In all cases, the school will follow general safeguarding principles as set out throughout this guidance. Immediate consideration will be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted).

The starting point regarding any report will always be that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

## 5.3. Initial Considerations When the Report is Made

Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school will also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport to and from the school, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport, should be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions

## 5.4. Options to Manage the Report

The school will consider every report on a case-by-case basis. When to inform the alleged perpetrator will be a carefully considered decision. Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, the school will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this will not stop the school taking immediate action to safeguard their children, where required. There are four likely scenarios for the school to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

### 1. Manage Internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help assessment or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the anti-bullying policy and by providing pastoral support.

### 2. Early Help Assessment

In line with 1 above, the school may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life.

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

### 3. Referrals to Children's Social Care

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, the school will make a referral to local children's social care.

- At the referral to children's social care stage, the school will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of children's social care.

- If a referral is made, children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.

- Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the school (especially the DSL or a deputy) will work alongside and cooperate with the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

- The school will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. The DSL (or a deputy) will work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the school takes do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator, any other children directly involved in the safeguarding report and all children at the school will be immediate.

- In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The school (generally led by the DSL or a deputy) will be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the DSL (or a deputy) will consider other support mechanisms such as early help assessment, specialist support and pastoral support.

## 4. Reporting to the Police

- Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to children's social care (as above).

- It is important that the DSL (and their deputies) are clear about the local process for referrals and follow that process.

- Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this should be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

- At this stage, the school will generally inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school is supporting the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of children's social care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

- Where a report has been made to the police, the school should consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

- All police forces in Spain have specialist units that investigate child abuse (GRUME). The names and structures of these units are matters for local forces. It will be important that the DSL (and their deputies) are aware of their local arrangements.

- In some cases, it may become clear very quickly, that the police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, it is important that the school continue to engage with specialist support for the victim as required.

*NB: in all of the above scenarios:*

- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded (written or electronic).

## 5.5. Managing Any Delays in the Criminal Process

- There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. The school will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children in the school.

- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, it will be important for the DSL (or a deputy) to work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

- If the school has questions about the investigation, they will ask the police.

## 5.6. The End of the Criminal Process

- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its risk assessment, the school will ensure relevant protections are in place for all the children at the school and consider any suitable action in light of its behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in the same school as the victim, the school will be very clear as to its expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding his or her behaviour and any restrictions that are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator's timetable.

- Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or students in the school. The school will ensure that both the victim and alleged perpetrator remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

- Where there is a not guilty verdict, the school will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with his or her case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The school will discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. The alleged perpetrator is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

## 5.7. Safeguarding and Supporting the Victim

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim. The school will:

- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. The school is aware that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator.

- Understand that the needs and wishes of the victim are paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important he/she feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible.

- Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority will be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them.

- Ensure that the victim is never made to feel that he/she is the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.

- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support will be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape.

The school recognises that:

- A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While the school will avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, the school will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

- Victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, the school will ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor or DSL) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult will be the victim's. The school will respect and support this choice.

- It may be necessary for the school to maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time. The school is prepared for this and will work with children's social care and other agencies as required.

- The school will do everything they reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report he/she has made.

Whilst the school will provide all the necessary support to help the victim to remain in the school, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school will be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This will only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

If the victim does move to another educational institution (for any reason), the new educational institution will be made aware of any ongoing support needs. The DSL will take responsibility to ensure this happens (and will discuss with the victim and, where appropriate his/her parents or carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file.

## 5.8. Safeguarding and Supporting the Alleged Perpetrator

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator:

- The school will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, they need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions.

- The school will consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.

- The school will consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviours in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice will be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police.

- If the alleged perpetrator moves to another educational institution (for any reason), the new educational institution will be made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The DSL will take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.

## 5.9. Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

- All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing.

- The records created in accordance with this policy may contain personal data. The school has a number of privacy notices explaining how the school will use personal data for the benefit of pupils and parents. The privacy notices are published on the school's website.

- In addition, staff must ensure that they follow the school's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy. This includes the school's data protection policy and information security policy.

- All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the school's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

## 6.1. Whistleblowing

All adults have a responsibility to report any concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including in relation to the care and protection of a pupil or pupils. If a member of staff believes that best practice in this area is not being adhered to or that practice may put a pupil or pupils at risk, they should report any concern to the Headmaster.

If the concern relates to the Headmaster, they should contact the DSL. If the concern relates to both the Headmaster and DSL they should contact a relevant person in NABSS or the local authority.

[Please see the 'key people and contacts' page in this document for the contact details of the above staff at Runnymede]

Concerns raised about whistleblowing are distinct from concerns or allegations about an adult's suitability to work with or have access to children.

Staff should raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the school or potential failures by the school or its staff to properly fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities. Such concerns will be taken seriously.

No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine concern about unsafe practice, provided that they do so in good faith and follow the whistleblowing procedures.

Where an adult feels unable to raise a concern about poor safeguarding practice at Runnymede or where they feel that their concern is not being addressed, they can raise their concern externally using either of the routes below:

## 6.2. What School Staff Should do if They Have Concerns About Safeguarding Practices Within the School

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime and know that the senior leadership team will take such concerns seriously.

Appropriate whistleblowing procedures should be put in place for such concerns to be raised with the school's senior leadership team.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them, such as the local child protection authority, which will be able to provide detailed advice and guidance.

## 6.3. Low-level Concerns

- For the purpose of this document, a low-level is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult (including members of staff) may have acted in a manner inconsistent with the school's Code of Conduct. It may also refer to a general sense of unease as to the adult's behaviour – even if not linked to a particular act or omission – particularly towards or around children.

- The school is committed to its duty of care to pupils and will always act, including if alerted to the possibility of abuse arising from situations or persons outside the school setting.

- The notification and prompt handling of all concerns about adults is fundamental to safeguarding children. It helps to identify and prevent abuse and to protect adults against misunderstandings or misinterpretations. It also encourages openness, trust and transparency and it clarifies expected behaviours.

- Those raising concerns or reporting allegations in good faith will always be supported, and adults in respect of whom concerns or allegations have been raised will not suffer any detriment unless the concern or allegation is found to be substantiated.

- If you are concerned about the behaviour or actions of any adult, speak to the DSL or Headmaster.

### 6.3.1. Reporting Low-Level Concerns

Low-level concerns should be reported to the DSL or to the Headmaster as soon as reasonably possible and, where the concern relates to a particular incident, within a maximum of 24 hours of becoming aware of it.

### 6.3.2. Reporting Low-Level Concerns about Self (Self-Reporting)

From time to time, an individual may find him/herself in a situation which might appear compromising to others or which could be misconstrued. Equally, an individual may for whatever reason have behaved in a manner which on reflection he/she considers falls below the standard set out in the Code of Conduct. Self-reporting in these circumstances is encouraged as it demonstrates both awareness of the expected behavioural standards and self-awareness as to the individual's own actions or how they could be perceived. As such, the school sees self-reporting of low-level concerns as an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

### 6.3.4. Reporting Low-Level Concerns About an Adult

From time to time, an individual may notice behaviour or actions in others, which leave them concerned. These are behaviour or actions that fall short of a formal allegation of abuse, and tend to be behaviours that indicate that our Code of Conduct has not been met. Any such concerns can be dealt with as a Low-Level Concern.

### 6.3.5. The Handling of Low-Level Concerns

The DSL will discuss all low-level concerns s/he receives with the Headmaster as soon as possible. In the case of a specific act of misconduct, this discussion must take place within 24 hours of becoming aware of it. The Headmaster will, in the first instance, determine whether it is a low-level concern and should not be reclassified as an allegation and dealt with under the appropriate procedure (outlined later in this document).

The circumstances in which a low-level concern might be reclassified as an allegation are where:

- The threshold is met for an allegation

- There is a pattern of low-level concerns which collectively amount to an allegation or

- There is other information which, when taken into account, leads to an allegation.

Where the Headmaster is in any doubt whatsoever, advice will be sought from the DSL, if necessary on a no-names basis.

## 6.4 Dealing with Allegations

Allegations represent situations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm to children if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This procedure applies to all adults in the school if it is alleged that they have:

- 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; or

- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.

An allegation may be triggered by one specific incident or by a pattern of behaviour by the adult, or low-level concerns which when considered collectively amount to an allegation.

Allegations about staff or volunteers, including the DSL, should be reported to the Headmaster immediately. The adult to whom the concern or allegation relates should not be informed. If the allegation is about the Headmaster, it must be referred to the DSL and the Junior/Senior Head.

For detailed information on the process for reporting an allegation, please refer to **Annex I: Process of detection & notification** and **Annex II: Safeguarding Protocol**.

## 6.4.1 Outcome of an Allegation

The following definitions will be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;

- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;

- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;

- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence;

- **Unfounded: t**o reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation being made.

## 6.4.2 Supporting Those Involved

Individuals will be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the children's social care services or the police. The Headmaster will appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. For staff working on school premises, that may include support via the local authority occupational health or employee welfare arrangements. Particular care will be taken when employees are suspended to ensure that they are kept informed of both the progress of their case and current work-related issues. Social contact with colleagues and friends should not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved will be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or children's social care services need to be involved, the Headmaster will not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents or carers. Parents or carers will also be kept informed about the progress of the case and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed but the parents or carers of the child should be told the outcome in confidence.

Parents and carers will also be made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers whilst investigations are ongoing as set out in section 141F of

the **Education Act 2002** (see paragraphs 206-207). If parents or carers wish to apply to the court to have reporting restrictions removed, they will be told to seek legal advice.

In deciding what information to disclose, careful consideration will be given to the provisions of the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

### 6.4.3 Confidentiality

The school recognises the extreme importance of maintaining confidentiality and guarding against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, and are voided if the individual to whom the restrictions apply goes public themselves or gives written consent for another to do so, or if a judge lifts restrictions in response to a request to do so.

The legislation imposing restrictions makes clear that "publication" of material that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation is prohibited. "Publication" includes "any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public." This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site would be in breach of the reporting restrictions (if what was published could lead to the identification of the teacher by members of the public).

The Headmaster will take advice from the Safeguarding Team, police and children's social care services to agree the following:

- Who needs to know and, importantly, exactly what information can be shared;

- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip;

- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and

- How to manage press interest if, and when, it should arise.

### 6.4.4 Timescales

It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible and is consistent with a fair and thorough investigation.

For those cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious, they will be resolved within one week. Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the Headmaster to deal with it, although if there are concerns about child protection, the Headmaster will discuss them with the Safeguarding Team.

In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Headmaster will instigate appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing will be held within 15 working days.

## 6.4.5 Suspension

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person will be evaluated and managed in respect of the child (or children) involved in the allegations. In some rare cases that will require the Headmaster to consider suspending the accused until the case is resolved. Suspension is not an automatic response when an allegation is reported: all options to avoid suspension will be considered prior to taking this step.

Suspension will be considered only in a case where there is cause to suspect that a child/children at the school is/are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. The Headmaster will consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at the school or until the allegation is resolved, and may seek advice from the personnel adviser and the Safeguarding Team. In cases where the school is made aware that an interim prohibition order has been made in respect of an individual who works at the school, immediate action will be taken to ensure the individual does not carry out work in contravention of the order, i.e. pending the findings of the TRA investigation, the individual must not carry out teaching work.

The Headmaster will also consider whether the result that would be achieved by immediate suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. In many cases an investigation can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. If the Safeguarding Team, police and children's social care services have no objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation, the Headmaster will be as inventive as possible to avoid suspension. Based on assessment of risk, the following alternatives will be considered by the Headmaster before suspending a member of staff:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned;

- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;

- Redeploying to alternative work in the school so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children;

- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted; or

- Temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or work for the local authority or academy trust.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification for such a course of action will be agreed and recorded by both the Headmaster and the Safeguarding Team. This will also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected. Written confirmation will be dispatched within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. The person will be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and be provided with their contact details.

## 6.4.6 Information Sharing

In a strategy discussion or the initial evaluation of the case, the agencies involved should share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school will ask the police to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school disciplinary process. This will be done as the investigation proceeds and will enable the police to share relevant information without delay at the conclusion of their investigation or any court case.

## 6.4.7 Actions Following a Criminal Investigation or a Prosecution

**Substantiated Allegations**

If the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the school ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services, the Safeguarding Team will discuss with the Headmaster and their personnel adviser whether the school will decide to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required; and, in the case of a member of teaching staff, whether to refer the matter to the TRA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

The school is legally required to make a referral to the DBS where they think that an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

If the teacher is of Spanish nationality, the matter will be referred to the *Consejería de educación de Madrid.*

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the Headmaster will consider how best to facilitate that. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The Headmaster will also consider how the person's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still a pupil or student at the school.

The Safeguarding Team will review the circumstances of the case with the Headmaster to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. This will include issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff, the duration of the suspension and whether or not suspension was justified. Lessons should also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The Safeguarding Team and Headmaster will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

**Malicious or Unsubstantiated Allegations**

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated or malicious, the Safeguarding Team will refer the matter to the children's social care services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of support, or may have been abused by someone else. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Headmaster will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) or adult(s) who made it; or whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person(s) responsible, even if he or she were not a pupil.

# 6.5. Record Keeping

## 6.5.1. Low-Level Concerns

Where a low-level concern has been communicated, a confidential record will be kept in a central file logging all low-level concerns. This is necessary for the identification of any patterns. However, no record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file (and no mention made in job references) unless either:

a) The concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as an allegation as above; or

b) The concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious to result in formal action under the school's grievance, capability or disciplinary procedure.

## 6.5.2. Allegations

Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, will be kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused, and a copy provided to the person concerned.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time.
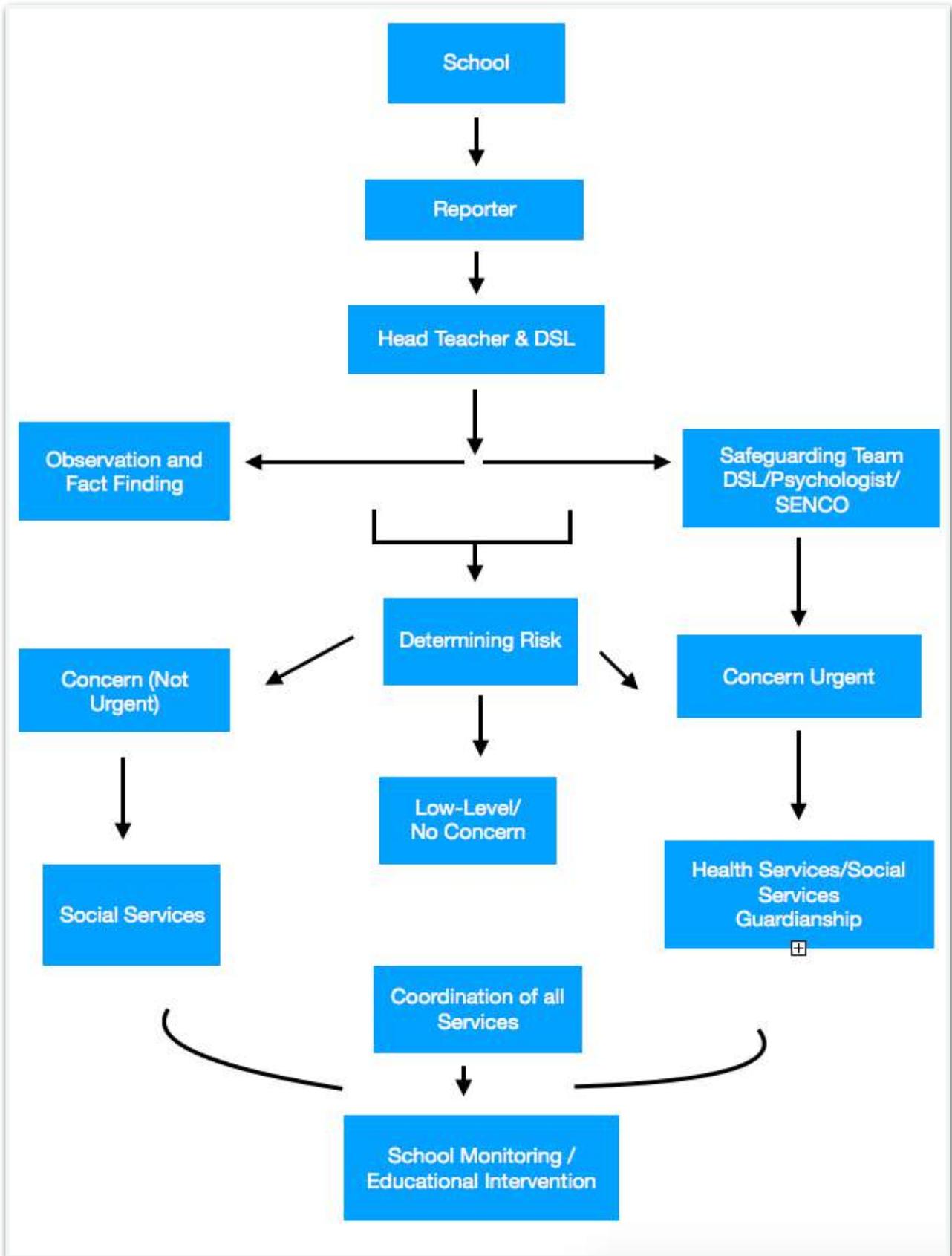
## 6.6. Ongoing Proactive Work to a Contextual Whole-School Approach

The school's response to concerns/allegations of child on child abuse should be part of ongoing proactive work by the school to embed best practice and take a contextual whole-school approach to such abuse. As such, the school's response can become part of its wider prevention work. This response may include the school asking itself a series of questions about the context in which an incident of child on child abuse occurred in the school, the local community in which the school is based, and the wider physical and online environment, such as:

- What protective factors and influences exist within the school (such as positive peer influences, examples were child on child abuse has been challenged etc.) and how can the school bolster these?

- How (if at all) did the school's physical environment contribute to the abuse, and how can the school address this going forwards, for example by improving the school's safety and supervision?

- Did wider gender norms, equality issues and/or societal attitudes contribute to the abuse?

- What was the relationship between the abuse and the cultural norms between staff and students, and how can these be addressed going forwards?

- Does the abuse indicate a need for staff training on, for example, underlying attitudes, a particular issue or the handling of particular types of abuse?

- How have similar cases been managed in the past and what effect has this had?

- Does the case or any identified trends highlight areas for development in the way in which the school works with children to raise their awareness of and/or prevent child on child abuse, including by way of the school's PSHE curriculum and lessons that address underlying attitudes or behaviour such as gender and equalities work?

- Are there any lessons to be learnt about the way in which the school engages with parents to address child on child abuse issues?

- Are there underlying issues that affect other schools in the area and is there a need for a multi-agency response?

- Does this case highlight a need to work with certain children to build their confidence and teach them how to identify and manage abusive behaviour?

- Were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently and/or to address common themes amongst the behaviour of other children in the school?

School

↓

Reporter

↓

Head Teacher & DSL

↓

Observation and Fact Finding ← → Safeguarding Team DSL/Psychologist/ SENCO

Determining Risk

Concern (Not Urgent)

Low-Level/ No Concern

Concern Urgent

Social Services

Health Services/Social Services Guardianship

Coordination of all Services

↓

School Monitoring / Educational Intervention

The school safeguarding protocol provides the sequence of steps to be taken once a "concern" has been reported. Modifications have been introduced to this guide in order to make it relevant to the Runnymede context, as we use "*MyConcern*" software as the official reporting system.

1- A concern may be reported to the system by any member of staff:

- Once logged into the system, click "Report a Concern"

- Name (s) of Pupil(s): Typing the first three/more letters of a pupil's name and clicking search will allow to find the name.

- Concern Summary: Summarise the concern in a few words (e.g anxiety, online safety)

- Send Concern to: Select a Notification group (e.g Junior Safeguarding Leads)

- Details of Concern: Optional space to write more in depth description of the concern.

- Location of the Incident: Specify where the concern took place

- Decide whether the concern needs to be dealt urgently by ticking the box.

- Action taken: fill out if it has already been taken.

- Attachment: may upload files (e.g emails, pictures)

2- The concern will be notified to the DSLs via email.

3- The DSL will then open the concern to:

- Assign **category/categories** to that concern (e.g poor sleep, attendance)

- Assign a **Level of need** for the pupil (red, amber, yellow or green)

- Share this information from MyConcern with relevant individuals on a need-to-know basis (e.g Class teacher, P.E teacher) adding them to a single concern or to the whole pupil profile, as a team member. The team members will gather the necessary information to determine whether the concern constitutes a significant risk for the child.

- Assign tasks (or ask team members to assign tasks) and/or take action. Which may include:

  - Speak to the pupil (offer online counselling, strategies, etc.)

  - Contact parents/specialist (inform, ask for further information)

  - According to the level of need, might need to refer the case to social services and/or Police.

4- Team members will continue to **monitor** the pupil, **record** any change into the system and **review** the actions taken and consider next steps.

*MyConcern* is a secure and trusted safeguarding software developed by child protection experts, used by us as well as other schools, colleges and several organisations in the UK and worldwide. It supports the recording, reporting and management of all well-being concerns, informing decision making and enabling early intervention.
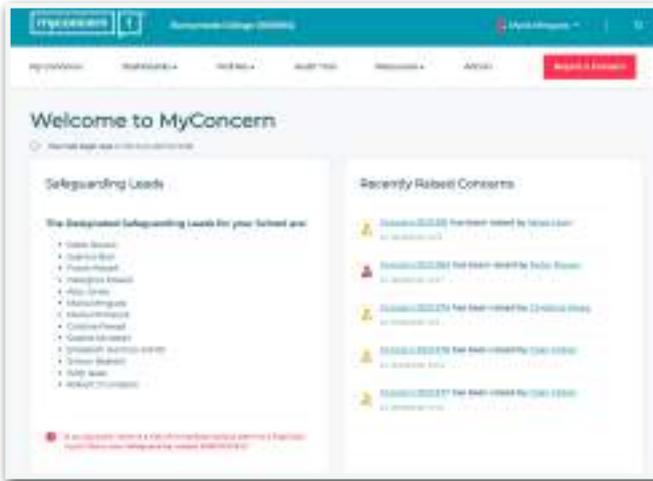


Staff can easily record and manage any safeguarding concerns as they occur. It is a safe and secure software, which complies with our GDPR requirements and provides a platform to, not only create a team around the child, young person or adult at risk, but also to securely transfer safeguarding records to other organisations and trusted external partners, even those who do not have *MyConcern* installed.

The minute a concern is reported, the DSLs can manage and prioritise actions, delegate tasks and follow up every step of the way. The safeguarding lead has the additional access to support the management, prioritisation and ongoing action that needs to be taken. Creating a pathway throughout the pupil school life, which will ensure their wellbeing and understanding of all the educational community. High-level data allows Safeguarding Leads to spot trends and enable early intervention.

It also allows DSLs the ability to redact confidential or irrelevant data from PDF chronologies. These can then be shared in the peace of mind that no data protection rules have been compromised. It is ISO 27001 Information Security Management certified and Cyber Essentials Plus accredited.

## Report a Concern

**Name(s) of Pupil(s)**

Please enter at least 3 characters to search 🔍

ℹ Please add the Pupil(s) who are the subject of this concern and add any other Pupil(s) you wish associated to it.

**Concern Summary**

e.g. Injury - Megan arrived at School this morning with a badly bruised right eye

**Send Concern to**

Please Select a Notification Group ⌄

**Concern Date/Time**

DD/MM/YYYY hh:mm

**Details of Concern**

There is no need to repeat the Concern Summary

**Location of incident**

Not Applicable ⌄

☐ Is this Concern urgent?

**Action taken**

**Attachment**

[                                                              ] Select File

ℹ Please attach any media that is relevant to this concern.

Submit Concern

Below is a set of guidelines that staff should take on board when dealing with individual/small groups of children. It is important to be mindful at all times of your behaviour in relationship to individual/small groups of children and of the potential risk of an allegation.

Staff should take necessary precautions in order to minimise the opportunity for an allegation to be made against them. This is generally about exercising common sense, but all staff should specifically take note of the following:

- Whenever possible, try not to be alone in a room with a child, regardless of gender. If you are on your own with a child, leave the door open and inform a colleague if possible. Always keep an appropriate distance between you and the child.

- Do not engage in conversations about your personal life with children.

- Keep boundaries very clear between you and children, particularly if the conversation involves relationships, emotions and sexual content.

- Do not exchange mobile phone numbers with children. If possible, do not have your mobile phone out when dealing with an individual child.

- Do not accept children (or their family members) as 'friends' or links on social networking websites or mobile phone apps.

- If a child wishes to disclose personal information to you, ensure that they understand that you cannot guarantee confidentiality. Do not probe a child about their personal life unless they approach you. Avoid giving advice to children about their relationships.

All pupils at Runnymede must be able to place their trust and confidence in any adult working in the school. They must feel sure that they can speak about any worries or concerns they may have and that they will be listened to, taken seriously and responded to appropriately. All staff must therefore know what to do if a child chooses to talk to them about any matter which raises child protection concerns.

All staff must:

- Listen to what the child is saying without interruption and without asking leading questions. Do not prompt or insert your own language.

- Respect the child's right to privacy but do not promise confidentiality;

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in sharing;

- Explain to the child that in order to keep him/her safe from harm the information that has been shared must be passed on;

- Report what has been disclosed to the DSL as soon as possible, or in their absence, one of her deputies;

- Record, as soon as possible, but always on the same day, what was said, using the child's actual words, using the Safeguarding referral form;

- Remember that if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral can and should be made to children's social care immediately. If the child's situation does not seem to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration.

Runnymede adheres to the following principles when organising changing facilities for children:

- Boys and girls should change separately after they reach Year 2 and have separate changing areas.

- All pupils will be treated fairly and with respect for their privacy and dignity.

- The school will make adequate and sensitive arrangements for changing which take into account the needs of pupils with disabilities and children from different religions, beliefs and cultural backgrounds or gender identity.

- Adults must always change or shower privately; never in the same space as children.

- Beyond Key Stage 2 Adults should leave the room whilst children are changing, and avoid repeatedly going in and out without good reason.

- It should not be necessary for adults to remain in the room in order to maintain good behaviour; being in close proximity and pupils being aware of this should be enough.

- Pupils should know that adults will enter the room if necessary – in response to a disturbance, for example.

- If there is a need for an adult to enter the room, it is recommended that they alert pupils to this by announcing it to give pupils the opportunity to cover up if they want to.

- Where possible, female staff should supervise girls and male staff should supervise boys. Beyond Key Stage 2 this should always be the case.

- The school will encourage pupils of all ages to be as independent as possible, considering prompting and giving verbal help/encouragement before offering physical assistance.

Nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our pupils. We ask that you take some time to familiarise yourself with some key safeguarding points.

- Runnymede is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils and expects all staff and visitors to share this commitment.

- Any visitor to the school will be issued with a visitor's pass to ensure he/she is easily identifiable to both pupils and staff.

- We have CCTV recording units in different areas of the school site to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

- If you have a safeguarding or child protection concern, please contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.