

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (1 year reviews)

April 2026

The Paddock is a calm and nurturing alternative provision in Shropshire, offering personalised, research-informed support for young people who need a smaller, more flexible approach to learning. We specialise in helping academically capable students who currently find mainstream environments overwhelming, providing a peaceful space where they can re-engage, rebuild confidence, and thrive.

The Aims of The Paddock Community

We recognise that we have both a moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard our young people partners and staff, and to promote the welfare of the whole community. It is our commitment that we will provide support and address issues as soon as they emerge. Our environment is safe, peaceful and welcoming and our young people partners are respected and valued.

The purpose of this policy statement is...

- To protect children and young people who attend The Paddock from harm. This includes the children of adults who are involved with The Paddock.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people, and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Paddock, including senior managers and the advisory board, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England and which provides the framework for safeguarding and child protection in England. It makes clear the expectations and requirements around duties of care to children and creates accountability for these. The main legislation in England is the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

A useful summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection or follow the links below for independent pieces of legislation and guidance...

- [Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 \(Independent schools only, including academies and CTCs\)](#)

- [The Education \(Independent Schools Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(Independent schools only, including academies and CTCs\)](#)
- [Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 \(maintained schools only\)](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [The Teacher Standards 2012](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2025](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSiE\) 2025](#)
- [Education and Training \(Welfare of Children\) Act 2021 \(Post 16 providers\)](#)
- [Information Sharing 2024](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010 guidance \(2015\)](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges 2026](#)
- [DfE Data Protection Guidance for schools 2025](#)
- [Protecting children from radicalisation 2023](#)

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- role description for the designated safeguarding officer
- dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person
- managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- recording concerns and information sharing
- child protection records retention and storage
- code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- behaviour codes for children and young people
- photography and sharing images guidance
- safer recruitment
- online safety
- anti-bullying
- managing complaints
- whistleblowing
- health and safety
- induction, training, supervision and support
- adult to child supervision ratios.

Our values at The Paddock

We believe that children and young people should never experience any form of abuse, and we are committed to promoting their welfare at all times. We recognise our responsibility to keep every child and young person safe, and we are dedicated to practising in a way that consistently protects them.

We recognise that the welfare of children is paramount in every aspect of our work and in all decisions we make. We recognise that promoting children's wellbeing requires strong partnership working with young people, their parents and carers, and other agencies. Every child, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has an equal

right to protection from all forms of harm or abuse. We also acknowledge that some children are particularly vulnerable due to previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, or other factors, and therefore may require additional safeguards to ensure they remain safe from abuse. More information for vulnerable groups can be found by following these links...

- [safeguarding children who come from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities](#)
- [safeguarding d/Deaf and disabled children and young people](#)
- [safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people](#)
- [safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\).](#)

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by...

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people (DSL), a deputy and a lead advisory board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- ensuring all staff and volunteers read and understand KCSiE 2025 as required and relevant to their role at The Paddock.
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- any visits to The Paddock by professionals will be booked in advance and the DSL made aware
- community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, guidelines, and procedures
- the name of the designated members of staff for child protection, the DSL/DDSL are clearly advertised in the buildings with a statement explaining The Paddock's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Key Personnel

Role	Name	Email	Telephone
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Luke Baker	luke@thepaddockap.co.uk	07917356412
Deputy DSL	tbc	admin@thepaddockap.co.uk	
Deputy DSL	tbc		

Directors	Luke Baker Kate Baker Esther Bains Devdeep Bains
Principal	Luke Baker
Chair of Advisory Board	James Morris

Roles and Responsibilities

The Advisory Board

- All members of The Advisory Board understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely, to ensure that there is an effective Child Protection and Safeguarding policy together with a staff behaviour policy (code of conduct).
- Child protection, safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations policies and procedures, including the staff behaviour policy (code of conduct), are consistent with Local Authority (LA) guidance and statutory requirements, are reviewed annually and that the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is publicly available on The Paddock's website or by other means.
- Ensures that all staff including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with The Paddock's child protection and safeguarding policy and staff Code of Conduct.
- All staff have read the appropriate sections of KCSiE 2025, and mechanisms are in place to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance.
- The Paddock operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations and by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training.
- The Paddock has procedures for dealing with reports of abuse against staff (including the Principal), supply staff, volunteers and against other children and that a referral is made to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have had they not resigned.
- A member of the Advisory Board, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the local authority (LA) on Child Protection issues and in the event of a report of abuse made against the Principal.
- A member of the senior leadership team (SLT) has been appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that the role is explicit in the role holder's job description.
- On appointment, the DSL and deputy(ies) undertake appropriate Level 3 identified training every two years.
- All professionals working consistently with vulnerable pupils should receive robust supervision and guidance.
- All other staff have safeguarding training updated as appropriate; but at least annually.

- At least one member of the Advisory Board has completed safer recruitment training to be repeated every five years.
- Young people are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health and economic education (PSHE) and/or for maintained schools through relationship and sex education (RSE).
- Appropriate safeguarding responses are in place for children and young people who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place
- Enhanced DBS checks (without barred list checks unless the board member is also a volunteer at the school) are in place for all Advisory Board Members.
- Any weaknesses in Child Protection are remedied immediately.

The Principal

- the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is effective, and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff and volunteers.
- sufficient time, training, support, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, is allocated to the DSL and deputy(ies) DSL(s) to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at child protection and other necessary meetings.
- where there is a safeguarding concern that the child's wishes, and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- systems are in place for children and young people to express their views and give feedback which operate with the best interest of the child at heart.
- all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle-blowing procedures.
- Children and young people are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online.
- liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), before taking any action and on an ongoing basis, where an allegation is made against a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer;
- anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring).
- will liaise with the Principal to inform him or her of issues - especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and children to have an Appropriate Adult
- acts as a source of support and expertise in carrying out safeguarding duties for the whole school community.
- will have the necessary knowledge and understanding to recognise possible children at risk of contextual and/or extra familial abuse or exploitation.
- encourages a culture of listening to children and young people and taking account of their wishes and feelings.

- is appropriately trained with updates every two years and will refresh their knowledge and skills at regular intervals but at least annually.
- will refer a child or young person if there are concerns about possible abuse, to [Family Connect](#), and act as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Enquiries must be followed up in writing, if referred by telephone.
- will keep detailed, accurate records, either written or using appropriate online software, of all concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral. The rationale for all decision making will be recorded alongside concerns.
- will ensure that an indication of the existence of the additional file is marked on the pupil records.
- will ensure that when a pupil leaves the Paddock, relevant child protection information is passed to the relevant school (separately from the main pupil file)
- in addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the DSL of information that would allow the relevant school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives. All transfers should be made securely.
- will liaise with the LA, its safeguarding partners and work with other agencies and professionals in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- has a working knowledge of Local Authority (LA) Safeguarding Children procedures.
- will ensure that either they, or another staff member, attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings; contribute to assessments, and provide a report where required which has been shared with the parents/carers.
- will ensure that if a pupil has a child protection plan and is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days their social worker will be alerted to the fact.
- will ensure that all staff sign to say they have read, understood, and agree to work within the school's child protection policy, behaviour policy, staff Code of conduct and KCSiE 2025 and ensure that the policies are used appropriately.
- will organise child protection and safeguarding induction, regularly updated training, and provide a minimum of annual updates on (including online safety) for all school staff, keep a record of attendance and address any absences.
- will contribute to and provide, with the Principal and Chair of Advisory Board, the "Audit of Statutory Duties and Associated Responsibilities" (S175/157 audit) to be submitted annually to the relevant Local Authority (LA).
- understands locally agreed processes for providing early help assessments and intervention and will support members of staff where Early Help is appropriate, or completion of the exploitation tool is necessary;
- will ensure that the name(s) of the designated member(s) of staff for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and deputies, are clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)

- are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the deputy will assume all the functions above.

All Paddock staff and volunteers

- understand that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.

- consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child.
- have a role to play in ensuring there is a whole school approach to safeguarding, including promoting a culture of zero tolerance towards any form of abuse, including child on child abuse.
- will be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, both familial and contextual; and recognise that contextual harm can take a variety of different forms.
- know how to respond to a pupil who alleges or appears to be the victim of abuse through delivery of 'Working together to Safeguard Children', and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'.
- will refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the DSL or if necessary, where the child is at immediate risk to the police or [Family Connect](#).
- will be aware of the Local Authority Professional Differences (Escalation) policy or the duty to report concerns if the DSL fails to do so without reasonable cause.
- are aware of the Early Help process and understand their role within it including identifying emerging problems for children who may benefit from an Early Help assessment, liaising with the DSL in the first instance and supporting other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment through information sharing. In some cases, staff may act as the Lead Professional in Early Help cases
- will provide a safe and nurturing environment in which children can learn.

Confidentiality

The paddock recognises that effectively meeting a child's needs, safeguarding their welfare, and protecting them from harm requires strong inter-agency collaboration in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2025)*, including the sharing of information between professionals when concerns arise. All staff understand that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies to safeguard children, and that the Data Protection Act 2018 does not prevent information sharing where withholding it would place a child at risk of harm. Staff are also aware that they cannot promise a child confidentiality if doing so would compromise their safety or wellbeing. At the same time, we acknowledge that child protection matters are deeply personal to children and families, and therefore must be treated confidentially; the Principal or DSLs will only share information with staff on a strictly need-to-know basis. We will always aim to inform parents or carers of our intention to refer a child to Family Connect unless doing so would increase the risk of harm or interfere with a criminal investigation. When uncertain, we will seek guidance from Family Connect.

Child Protection Procedures

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are all forms of child maltreatment, and they may occur when someone inflicts harm on a child or fails to act to prevent harm. Children and young people can be abused within their family, in institutional or community settings, by people they know or by strangers. Abuse may occur entirely online, or technology may be used to facilitate abuse that happens offline. Children and young people may be harmed by adults or by other children. Abuse, neglect and exploitation can also take place outside the home — known as contextual safeguarding — and may include, but are not limited to, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, and radicalisation. Further details about the four categories of abuse — physical, emotional, sexual and neglect — and indicators that a child may be experiencing harm can be found later in this document. Any child, in any family, in any school, could become a victim of abuse, and staff and volunteers must always maintain the mindset that "It could happen here."

There are also several specific safeguarding concerns that we recognise our pupils may experience ...

- child absent from education
- child missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- child criminal exploitation
- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic abuse
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- mental health
- private fostering
- radicalisation
- county lines
- youth produced sexual imagery (sexting) and sextortion (financially motivated sexual extortion)
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking
- child on child abuse
- up skirting
- serious violence

We also recognise that abuse, neglect, exploitation and wider safeguarding concerns are often complex and rarely occur as isolated incidents that fit neatly into a single definition or label. Staff and volunteers understand that, in most cases, multiple issues overlap and interact with one another. They also recognise that harm can occur when children and young people witness the ill treatment of others, particularly when they see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its impact.

All staff and contractors will receive this safeguarding policy before beginning work for Reach for Inclusion and must undergo a DBS check before carrying out any role that involves unsupervised or regular contact with young people or access to sensitive or personal data. Designated safeguarding staff will complete designated person training, and referees for new staff will be asked whether any safeguarding concerns have previously been raised about applicants. All staff will receive safeguarding training, with annual refreshers, covering key areas such as abuse and neglect, child-on-child abuse, and extremism and radicalisation. DBS disclosure numbers will be securely recorded in a protected digital format.

If staff or volunteers notice any indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation, or any signs that a child or young person may be at risk of harm, they should record their concerns on an Expression of Concern form and pass it to the DSL. If concerns are discussed verbally with the DSL, they must also be recorded in writing. There will be times when staff or volunteers suspect a young person may be at risk without having concrete evidence — perhaps the child or young person's behaviour has changed, their artwork appears unusual, or their writing suggests confusion or distress, or there may be physical or unclear signs. The Paddock recognises that such signs may stem from a range of factors, such as family changes, bereavement, illness, or accidents, but they may also indicate abuse or a need for safeguarding. In these situations, staff should give the child an opportunity to talk, and it is appropriate to ask if they are okay or if help is needed. If, after an initial conversation, the

member of staff remains concerned, they must discuss this with the DSL and record the details in writing. If a child or young person begins to disclose that they are being harmed, staff must follow the guidance for responding to a report of abuse or behaviours that suggest abuse. We recognise that it takes significant courage for a child or young person to speak up—they may feel ashamed, frightened, guilty, threatened, distrustful of adults, or unaware that what they are experiencing is abuse. A child or young person who discloses abuse may need to repeat their story to police or social workers, so it is essential that their first experience of speaking to a trusted adult is handled with sensitivity and care.

During their conversation with the young person staff will:

- listen to what the child or young person has to say and allow them to speak freely.
- remain calm and not overreact or give any indication of being shocked or alarmed – the child or young person may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener.
- reassure the child or young person that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how difficult it is for the child or young person and allow them time to talk.
- take what the child or young person is telling them seriously.
- avoid asking leading questions, where possible allow the child or young person to take the lead.
- limit questions to those necessary to try and obtain a context.
- where sexual abuse has been alleged or a report of criminal abuse do not ask additional questions telephone Family Connect for advice, however, do not stop the child or young person talking.
- avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations.
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child or young person who is being abused.
- avoid admonishing the child or young person for not telling them sooner.
- tell the child what will happen next or young person.

If a child or young person speaks to any member of staff about risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member must explain that they cannot keep secrets and will need to pass the information on. The member of staff should then write up the conversation as soon as possible on an Expression of Concern form, using the child's own words wherever possible. This should be treated as a priority. The record must be signed and dated, include the staff member's printed name, and state where the conversation took place and who else was present. Once completed, the record should be handed directly to the DSL.

Notifying parents

The Paddock will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents, and this will be handled sensitively, with the DSL or DDSL usually making contact when a concern, suspicion, or report arises. However, if informing parents is believed to increase the risk to the child or worsen the situation, the school will first seek advice from Family Connect, for example in cases involving familial sexual abuse. In situations where there are concerns about forced marriage or honour-based violence, parents must not be informed that a referral is being made, as doing so may place the child at significantly greater risk; in some circumstances, it may also be appropriate to contact the police.

Making a referral

Concerns that a child may have been abused must be reported immediately to the DSL, who will help determine whether a referral to Family Connect or other support is required, in line with the local authority's threshold guidance. If a referral is needed, the DSL should make it without delay,

and systems must be in place to ensure this can happen; however, any staff member can make a referral themselves if they believe one is necessary and it has not yet been made. The child — where appropriate to their age and understanding — and their parents will be informed that a referral is being made unless doing so would increase the risk to the child. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL or the person who made the referral must press for reconsideration to ensure concerns are addressed and the child's circumstances improve. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral must be made to Family Connect and/or the police without delay. Where referrals are made by someone other than the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

Key terms and associated actions

Abuse is a form of child maltreatment in which someone harms a child or fails to act to prevent harm. Harm may involve physical injury, but it can also include non-physical ill treatment, such as the emotional impact of witnessing the mistreatment of others — particularly relevant in cases of domestic abuse where children may see, hear, or experience its effects. Children can be abused within their family, in institutional or community settings, by people they know or, less commonly, by strangers. Abuse may occur entirely online, or technology may be used to facilitate abuse that happens offline. Children may be harmed by adults or by other children.

Physical abuse is a form of harm that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical injury to a child. It can also occur when a parent or carer fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child, known as Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII), which is a relatively rare but serious form of abuse. When concerns arise about FII, professionals must work collaboratively, carefully evaluating all available evidence to understand the reasons behind a child's signs and symptoms. Throughout this process, it is essential that professionals keep an open mind to ensure that no crucial information is overlooked.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe and harmful effects on their emotional development. It may involve making a child feel worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only when meeting someone else's needs. Emotional abuse can include denying a child the chance to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or mocking how they communicate. It may also involve imposing expectations that are inappropriate for the child's age or stage of development, such as interactions beyond their capability, excessive overprotection, restricting exploration and learning, or preventing normal social interaction. Emotional abuse can occur when a child sees or hears the ill treatment of others, and it may include serious bullying — online or offline — that causes a child to feel frightened or in danger, as well as the exploitation or corruption of children. While emotional abuse can occur on its own, some level of emotional harm is present in all forms of child maltreatment.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, which may or may not involve physical violence and may occur whether or not the child understands what is happening. These activities can include physical contact, such as assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts like masturbation, kissing, rubbing, or touching over clothing. Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in viewing or producing sexual images, watching sexual acts, encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Abuse can take place online, and technology may be used to facilitate abuse that occurs offline. Sexual abuse is not perpetrated solely by adult males; women and other children can also commit acts of sexual abuse.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, and it is likely to result in serious impairment of their health or development. It can occur during pregnancy, for

example through maternal substance misuse, and after birth may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter—including exclusion from the home or abandonment—failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger, failing to ensure appropriate supervision (including the use of unsuitable caregivers), or failing to secure necessary medical care or treatment. Neglect can also include a lack of responsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse accounts for at least a quarter of all violent crime and includes actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or sexual abuse, involving one person exerting power and control over another. It can affect anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, religion, or ability, and may involve multiple forms of abuse. The term *domestic abuse* reflects that controlling and abusive behaviours do not always involve physical violence; actions such as slapping, punching, kicking, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours are all forms of abuse. Living in a home where domestic abuse occurs is harmful to children and can seriously affect their behaviour, wellbeing, and understanding of healthy relationships. Children who witness domestic abuse are themselves victims and may have suffered or be at risk of significant harm, and staff remain alert to the signs and symptoms of this. Legislation introduced in 2021 recognises that any child who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse, and is related to either the victim or the perpetrator, must also be regarded as a victim. The law also lowered the age threshold for domestic abuse-related criminal offences from 18 to 16, acknowledging that young people can experience abuse within their own relationships.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE) are forms of abuse in which an individual or group exploits an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This power imbalance may stem from factors such as age, gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, or access to resources. Exploitation may involve an exchange for something the child believes they need or want, or it may benefit the perpetrator financially or through increased status. Abuse can be carried out by individuals or groups, by males or females, and by adults or other children. It may occur as a single incident or a series of events, ranging from opportunistic to highly organised, and may involve force, enticement, violence or threats. Children can be exploited even when the activity appears consensual, and exploitation can occur both online and offline. Any concerns that a child is being, or is at risk of being, sexually or criminally exploited must be reported immediately to the DSL.

The Paddock recognises the strong link between persistent absence or truanting and CSE/CCE, and staff should consider these risks and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents. The DSL will use the LA Exploitation Guidelines whenever concerns arise, and this will help determine whether a Family Connect referral is required; if unsure, the DSL will seek advice from the Education Safeguarding Service or Family Connect. If a child is in immediate danger, the police must be contacted on 999.

The Paddock also recognises that children and young people often do not see themselves as victims due to the coercive nature of exploitation and may resist staff involvement, but staff must still act on their concerns. The Paddock includes education on the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation within the PSHE and RSE curriculum, helping young people partners understand grooming, recognise risk—including online—and know how to seek help.

Child on child abuse

KCSIE 2025 sets out a clear zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour, and staff and volunteers must never downplay inappropriate comments or actions as this risks normalising abuse. All staff and volunteers understand that children can abuse other children, both inside and outside the setting and online, and are trained in the school's policy and procedures, recognising the important role they play in preventing and responding to concerns. Staff and volunteers also understand that the absence of reports does not mean abuse is not occurring, and any concerns—whether or not there have been disclosures—must be shared with the DSL or a DDSL. Staff are expected to challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers, as dismissing such behaviours can create an unsafe culture where abuse becomes normalised and children feel unable to report it. Child-on-child abuse may include bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying), abuse in intimate relationships between children, physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, upskirting, and initiation or hazing-type violence or rituals, including those with an online element. We recognise that any child can be vulnerable to child-on-child abuse due to peer influence, particularly during adolescence, and staff remain alert to signs among all pupils. Research shows that child-on-child abuse may affect boys and girls differently, with girls more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators, though all abuse is unacceptable and taken seriously. Children with SEND are three times more likely to be abused than their peers, and some children may be at increased risk due to characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs.

Youth produced sexual imagery

The widespread practice of children sharing images and videos through text, email, social media or messaging apps has created opportunities for them to produce and distribute sexual imagery, which is illegal when it involves anyone under 18. Youth-produced sexual imagery includes situations where a child creates and shares sexual images of themselves with another child, where a child shares sexual imagery created by another child with either a peer or an adult, or where a child possesses sexual imagery created by another child. All such incidents must be treated as safeguarding concerns and managed in line with government guidance.

Cases involving adults sharing sexual imagery of anyone under 18, or adults sending sexual imagery to a child, constitute child sexual abuse and must be responded to accordingly. There has also been a rise in "sextortion," where young people or adults are coerced into paying money or meeting financial demands to prevent the release of sexual or indecent images; this financially motivated sexual extortion prompted the National Crime Agency's CEOP Command to issue an alert to all education settings in April 2024.

If staff become aware of an incident involving youth-produced sexual imagery, they must follow child protection procedures and inform the DSL immediately, confiscating the device involved and placing it in flight mode or switching it off, without viewing, copying or printing the imagery. The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with relevant staff and, where appropriate, speak with the children involved. Parents should be informed early unless doing so would place the child at risk. A referral to Family Connect or the police must be made immediately if the incident involves an adult, if there is evidence of coercion, blackmail or grooming, if the child lacks capacity to consent, if the imagery depicts sexual acts that are developmentally inappropriate or violent, if the imagery involves sexual acts or anyone aged 12 or under, or if there is concern that a child is at immediate risk of harm, such as presenting with suicidal thoughts or self-harm. If none of these factors apply, the DSL will use professional judgement—alongside the Principal where appropriate—to assess risk and decide whether the matter can be managed internally, recording all decisions and actions taken. In making this judgement, the DSL will consider factors such as age differences between those involved, any coercion, whether the child knew the imagery was being shared, the child's

vulnerability, the severity of the imagery, the child's understanding of consent, the extent of distribution, and any wider contextual concerns. All incidents, actions taken, decisions not taken, and outcomes will be recorded in line with safeguarding recording procedures.

County Lines

County lines refers to gangs and organised criminal networks that export illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other “deal lines,” operating both locally and across the UK without any required distance of travel. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money, with offenders frequently using coercion, intimidation, violence—including sexual violence—and weapons to ensure compliance. Children may be targeted and recruited in a range of locations, including schools, alternative provisions, children's homes and care homes, and increasingly through social media. Many children become trapped in this exploitation through manufactured drug debts or threats of serious violence and kidnap towards them or their families if they try to leave.

Indicators of CSE and CCE may also apply to county lines involvement, alongside additional signs such as children going missing and being found far from home, involvement in serious violence, receiving drug requests via a phone line, transporting drugs or money, being exposed to internal concealment (“plugging”), being found in unknown accommodation such as “trap houses” or hotels linked to drug activity, owing a “debt bond,” or having their bank accounts used for drug dealing. Where a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral will be considered, alongside exploring support available from local services or third-sector organisations specialising in county lines exploitation.

Preventing Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies that can lead to terrorism. The Prevent Strategy defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values—democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs—and includes calls for the death of members of the armed forces. The Crown Prosecution Service further defines extremism as behaviour that encourages, justifies or glorifies terrorist violence, provokes others to commit terrorist acts or serious criminal activity, or fosters hatred likely to lead to inter-community violence. There is no single profile of an extremist, and most individuals with radical views do not engage in violence. Pupils may become vulnerable to radicalisation due to a range of social, personal and environmental factors, which extremists may exploit to distance them from their families and communities. Indicators of susceptibility can include identity struggles, personal or family challenges, feelings of isolation, experiences of discrimination, unmet aspirations, involvement in criminality, or difficulties linked to special educational needs. More critical risk factors may include contact with extremist recruiters, accessing violent extremist websites or literature, using extremist narratives to explain personal disadvantage, justifying violence, seeking to join extremist groups, significant changes in behaviour or appearance, or high levels of social isolation. Under the Prevent Duty, schools must have due regard to preventing people from being drawn into terrorism. Channel is a voluntary, confidential early-intervention programme that provides support to individuals identified as being susceptible to radicalisation, and Prevent referrals may be considered by a multi-agency Channel panel to determine whether support is needed.

- [Revised Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales \(school specific paras 57-76\)](#)
- [The Prevent Duty, for Further Education Institutions](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>
- Further information can be obtained from the [Home Office website](#).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003 and is recognised as a form of child abuse and violence against women. Teachers have a mandatory duty to report any known cases of FGM involving a girl under 18—identified in the course of their professional work—to the police. This duty applies to anyone in The Paddock who is employed or engaged to carry out teaching work, regardless of whether they hold qualified teacher status. The responsibility to report rests with the individual who becomes aware of the case and cannot be passed to the DSL, although the DSL must still be informed. If a teacher is told by a girl under 18 that FGM has been carried out on her, or if the teacher observes physical signs indicating that FGM has taken place and there is no reason to believe it was medically necessary, they must personally make a report to the police force where the girl resides by calling 101. This report must be made by the end of the next working day.

The Paddock staff are trained to recognise the risk indicators of FGM. Any concerns about FGM that fall outside the mandatory reporting duty must still be reported in line with The Paddock's child protection procedures. Staff should be particularly alert when female pupils express worries about going on a long holiday during the summer break, and they should also consider whether other girls in the family or wider practising community may be at risk. Where there is a risk to life or an immediate likelihood of serious harm, the teacher must contact the police straight away, including dialling 999 if necessary. Under no circumstances should a teacher or any other member of staff examine a girl.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage occurs when one or both individuals do not, or in the case of some people with learning disabilities cannot, consent to the marriage and are coerced into it. Coercion may involve physical, psychological, financial, sexual or emotional pressure, and may include violence or abuse. Forced marriage is an appalling and indefensible practice, recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, a type of domestic and child abuse, and a serious violation of human rights. Since June 2014, forcing someone to marry has been a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. It is distinct from an arranged marriage, where families may help organise the marriage but the final decision to marry remains with the individuals involved. The Paddock staff must never attempt to intervene directly or through a third party; instead, they must contact Family Connect or the police. Since 27 February 2023, it has also been an offence to carry out any conduct intended to cause a child to enter into a marriage before their eighteenth birthday, regardless of whether violence, threats, coercion or deception are involved.

Honour based Abuse

Honour-based abuse (HBA) refers to a range of practices used within families or social groups to control behaviour and protect perceived cultural or religious beliefs linked to "honour." Such abuse may occur when perpetrators believe a relative has brought shame on the family or community by breaking an honour code. HBA may be directed at individuals who form relationships outside their culture or religion, seek to leave an arranged or forced marriage, or engage in activities or wear clothing considered non-traditional within their community. It is a violation of human rights and may constitute domestic and/or sexual abuse. There is no honour or justification for violating the rights or safety of others.

If staff have any concern that a child may be at risk of honour-based abuse (HBA) or may already have suffered from it, they must speak to the DSL or a deputy without delay. As appropriate, the DSL will follow local safeguarding procedures, which may include contacting Family Connect or the local social care team, and, if necessary, the police.

Allegations against staff

All Paddock staff must take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child, and wherever possible, interviews or one-to-one work with children or parents should take place in view of other adults. Guidance on safe conduct, including the appropriate use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers, is provided during induction. We recognise that young people partners may make allegations against staff, or staff may have concerns about the behaviour of a colleague. Any such report or information suggesting that a person may be unsuitable to work with children must be passed immediately to the Principal. The Principal will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the earliest opportunity before taking any further action. If the allegation concerns the Principal, the staff member receiving the report must inform the Advisory Board Chair, who will contact the LADO without notifying the Principal.

The Paddock follows the guidance in KCSIE 2025 and the school's Managing Allegations policy. Suspension of a staff member (other than the Principal) will be considered carefully, with advice from the LADO and an HR consultant; if the allegation concerns the Principal, the Advisory Board Chair will make this decision. Allegations involving the proprietor of an independent alternative provision will be referred directly to the LADO. The school also has procedures for suspending the contract of a community user if an allegation arises in that context. Staff, parents and advisory board members are reminded that it is a criminal offence to publish any information that could identify a teacher who is the subject of an allegation, including through verbal conversations or posts on social media.

Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff do not feel able to do the same. All staff must understand their duty to speak up about any concerns relating to the management of child protection, including the attitudes or actions of colleagues, unsafe practice, or potential weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements. If concerns need to be raised outside the school, staff should follow the Whistleblowing Policy and contact the LADO in the first instance.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who feel unable to raise concerns internally and can be contacted on 0800 028 0285 (Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM–8:00 PM) or via help@nspcc.org.uk. Any whistleblowing concerns relating to the Principal must be directed to the Advisory Board Chair, whose contact details are readily available to staff.

GDPR

The Paddock will retain relevant, accurate and non-excessive personal information relating to safeguarding concerns for a period of seven years for Child Protection and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults. Records relating to concerns about an adult working with children or vulnerable adults will be kept for ten years, or longer where necessary. When the retention period ends, the Safeguarding Lead at The Paddock will securely delete the records in the presence of another member of staff.

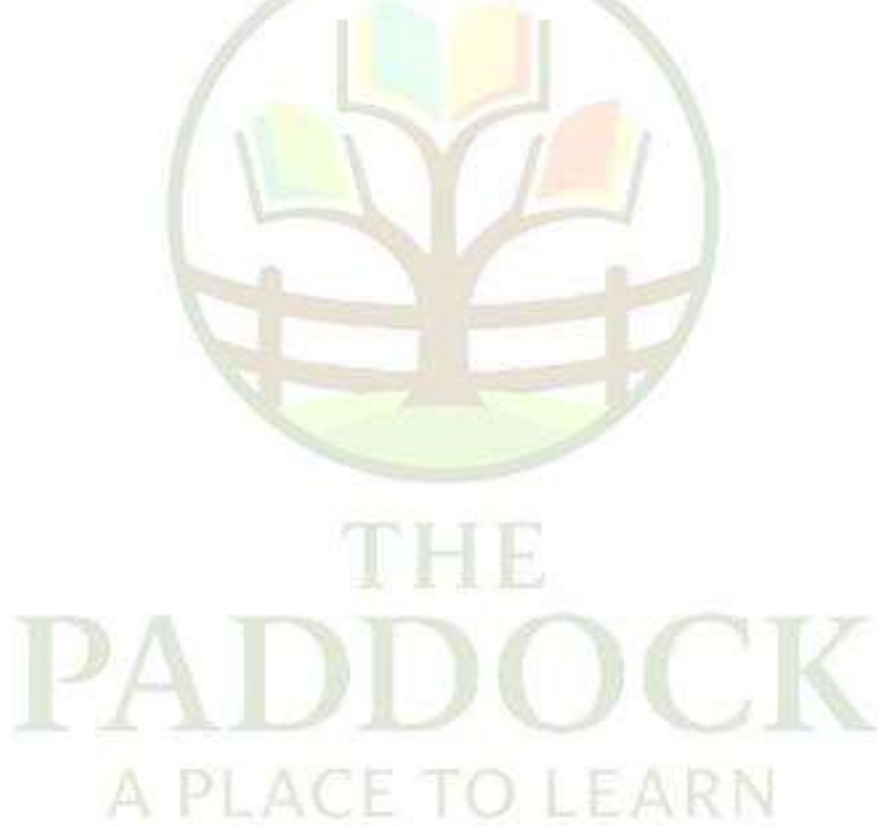
All safeguarding concerns will be stored electronically in an encrypted file, accessible only to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. A log will be maintained of all individuals who access these confidential files. Information relating to child protection or adult safeguarding concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate safeguarding file for each child, young person or vulnerable adult. The Paddock will also retain records of concerns raised about a child or vulnerable adult's welfare that were not shared with the police or social care.

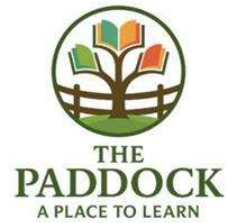
Policy	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Date created	April 2026
Date reviewed	
Date of Next review	April 2027
Signed	
Luke Baker	L. Baker

Appendix 1 – Expression of Concern Form

Appendix 2 – Responding to a concern about a child or young person

Appendix 3 – Telford and Wrekin Council Safeguarding contacts





Expression of Concern Form

Young Person's name:

Date of birth:

Class/year group:

Ethnicity:

Any disability or special needs:

What are your concerns about the pupil?

Please provide a description of any incidents or observations including dates and times

1. What have you observed and when?

Include anything you have personally witnessed. Be clear about what is fact and what is your opinion.

2. What have you been told and when?

Include anything the child or another person has told you. Use exact words if possible. Be clear about who has said what

3. What have you heard and when?

Include any information you have heard from a third party relating to the concern

4. What action have you taken in response to this concern?

Have you contacted anyone else in relation to the concern?

If the child has a physical injury, have you sought medical advice?
Has the child received any medical attention in relation to the injury?

Date and time of this record:

Your name (please print):

Your position or job title:

Your signature:

Now give this record to the DSL or deputy if they are unavailable

Date and time received by the DSL:

Appendix 2 Responding to a concern about a child or young person Responding to a Concern about a Child

Where a young person alleges or appears to be the victim of abuse or neglect

Listen to the child. Take their concerns seriously
Reassure the child that you will take actions to keep them safe
Do not promise to keep secrets

Make a written record of what the child tells you
Explain to the child what you are going to do next
Do not question the child further or attempt to question the alleged abuser



Discuss the concerns with the Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL/DDSL)

The DSL is Luke Baker
If the matter involves the DSL it should be brought to the attention of the LADO
A written record of the concern will be kept in the CP section of the child's file.

The record should include the rationale for any decisions made.
A member of staff should only contact Family Connect in exceptional circumstances and should advise the DSL/DDSL that they have done so



If the child is judged to be in real and immediate danger

Dial 999 and ask for police assistance

If there is not a safeguarding concern

The DSL will carefully consider if the child / family has any further needs which ought to be addressed
The DSL will consult with family and relevant agencies and undertake an Early Help assessment if required
The member of staff who made the referral will be informed of the outcome

If there is a safeguarding concern

The matter should be referred to Children's Social Care
Contact details for the relevant agencies can be found in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 4)
Or call non-emergency police on 101

Children's Social Care will acknowledge receipt of the referral
Decide (within 24 hours) on the next steps
Inform the referrer of the course of action that has been decided

Appendix 3 Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding contacts

- Family Connect on 01952 385385 from 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday
- Contacting the Emergency Duty Team on 01952 676500 after 5pm, Monday to Friday, and 24 hours during weekends and Bank Holidays.
- Family Connect referral form - [Family Connect Child Exploitation Referral Form - Online form - Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

National contacts

- Police emergency: 999
- Police non-emergency: 101
- Prevent helpline: 020 7340 7264
- Childline: 0800 1111
- NSPCC helpline: 0800 800 5000
- NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline 0800 028 0285 line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday. Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- National Domestic Violence helpline (for women): 0808 2000 247
- National Men's Advice line: 0808 801 0327
- Galop (for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and trans people): 020 7704 2040
- Operation Encompass helpline: 0204 513 9990 (Monday to Friday 8:00am – 1:00pm)
- Stop It Now: 0808 1000 900