



Watford Grammar School for Girls

Safeguarding Policy

Addition August 2022: Section 4.25 – visiting teams/school groups and spectators signing in from 8:00-4:30 and being escorted around the school site.

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Committee Responsible	Curriculum

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Purpose of the Policy

Safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'. This policy sets out Watford Grammar School for Girls responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

The Safeguarding Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school.

In particular this policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Complaints procedure
- Data Protection
- Educational Visits
- Emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures
- E Safety
- Health and Safety
- Medicines and medical policy, including first aid
- Safer Recruitment
- SEND
- Staff code of conduct
- Whistle-blowing

This policy is available on the school website and is included in the staff handbook.

1.2. Terminology

Safeguarding is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023, p7-8) as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development,
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network⁴ through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking actions to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, p8)

2. Principles and Aims

Our Principles:

- The welfare of children, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carrying out school activities
- All children will have equal rights to support and protection irrespective of their race, age, academic achievement, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and culture
- All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of children and report any concerns immediately

- We aim:
- To provide all staff and Governors (employed, contracted and visiting) with the necessary information / training to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children
- To provide parents carers and children with information about the schools arrangements to keep children safe
- To ensure safe and consistent best practice across the school
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding children

3. Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. Includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry, whether or not the forced marriage takes place).
- Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Interagency Procedures Manual
http://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_manage_alleg.html
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006. Statutory guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, independent schools, academies and free schools, DfE (February 2015) www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006
- Education Act 2002
Section 157 and the Education Regulations 2003 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) EU Regulation from 25th May 2018. Legislation which will determine how people's personal data is processed and kept safe, and the legal rights individuals have in relation to their own data
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, Safer Recruitment Consortium (February 2022)
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children. Young people, parents and carers, DfE (July 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2023)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Sexual Offences Act, HM Government (2003)
- Section 26, The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (PREVENT duty)
- Teachers' Standards 2021, DfE (2021.) These standards set the minimum requirements for teachers' practice and conduct. Teachers, including Headteachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, DfE (March 2015.) Non statutory advice which helps everyone who works with children to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74 ,Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Serious Violence Strategy 2018

4. Safeguarding Themes

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Annexss A and B, includes further information on the following safeguarding themes:

- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Child-on-child abuse
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- County lines
- Children and the court system
- Children missing from education
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- Mental health
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Preventing radicalisation
- The Prevent duty
- Channel

- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school and colleges
- Serious violence
- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023) is statutory guidance and as such Watford Grammar School for Girls follows this guidance. All staff who work directly with children are required to read Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education annually, and sign to say they have done so.

In addition to the above safeguarding themes, additional information is provided in this section on school and Hertfordshire specific approaches to safeguarding themes

4.1 Abuse of Position of Trust

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to behave in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the behavior is consensual.

4.2 Access to buildings

The school will take all reasonable efforts to control access to the buildings and grounds of the school to prevent unauthorised access to children and ensure the personal safety of staff. The access control procedures for the buildings are: Pin code access to all external gates and doors.

Visitors on site are required to sign in and be escorted by a member of school staff throughout their time on site between 8:00 and 16:30. This includes for school sports fixtures and performances and where parents attend as spectators.

4.3 Anti-Bullying

Watford Grammar School for Girls recognises the right of our children and young people to develop with confidence in an environment that is safe and free from the emotional and physical distress that can be experienced as a result of bullying. It is the responsibility of Watford Grammar School for Girls to ensure that procedures are in place that will monitor and address bullying issues. The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.

4.4 Anti-Radicalisation and Extremism

The school works to provide an environment promoting tolerance and respect for others' views and beliefs and the values of democracy. The Prevent duty is implemented and staff are aware of the threats and risks linked to radicalisation. Behaviour or language suggesting extremism is challenged and addressed. Any concerns will be referred through the appropriate channels in accordance with the Child Protection policy.

The named member of staff with responsibility for Prevent is: Bal Randhawa, Director of Key Stage 5 and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.5 Attendance

In accordance with the School's Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. The school, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, takes action to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME) and off-rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

In the very rare cases that a part-time timetable is required for a student, we follow Hertfordshire County Council procedures for implementing part-time timetables. This includes a risk assessment considering the additional risks that can occur as a result of not being in school fulltime and a checklist overseen by the Headteacher. Part-time timetables are uploaded to the Hertfordshire County Council Part-Time Timetable portal.

For further details please refer to the Attendance Policy.

4.6 Child Protection

There is a detailed Child Protection Policy operating within the school. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the school website. It is the Governing Body's duty to ensure the policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies within the policy addressed immediately.

All Child Protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual. A copy of these procedures can be found on the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Children's Services telephone number **0300 1234043** (including out of hours)

4.7 Child Sexual Exploitation

Senior leadership and governors in the school are committed to dealing with the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation, and will co-operate fully with outside agencies including the police and health and social care to enable potential situations of Child Sexual Exploitation to be identified rapidly. Effective partnership working will also enable a swift response to follow, in line with Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, so that clearly defined interventions can be put in place without delay. Interventions will include a robust multi-agency approach, based on an infrastructure of support around the young person and family. Support will be offered to the young person's peer group and their families, where appropriate.

The lead governor for CSE is: **Camilla Woods**

The lead CSE teacher is: **Chris Wilshaw** the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The school, together with Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) is working to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation and help prevent it happening to young people in Hertfordshire. Concerns will be reported to: Children's Services (including out of hours) on 0300 123 4043, Herts Constabulary non-emergency Tel:101

Procedures for what to do is a young person is identified as at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation are found in Appendix 1.

If there is a fear a child is in immediate danger, call 999

4.8 Complaints

The school has a Complaints Policy available to parents, pupils and staff who wish to report concerns. This can be found on the school website. All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation or low level concern against a member of staff, supply teacher, contractor or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific procedures for Managing Allegations and Low Level Concerns Against Staff within the Child Protection Policy

4.9 Confidentiality

All staff will understand that safeguarding issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. The DSL will normally obtain consent from the child/parent to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so (e.g. to help to protect a child), the DSL may share information without consent and will record the reason for this. Safeguarding records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the GDPR, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. The School will retain this information on the pupil file and transfer to the next school/archive the information in line with The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, The Information and Records Management Society and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023.). The school will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil. Please see Hertfordshire's Pupil Safeguarding Records Guidance at http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas for further information.

4.10 Curriculum

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through PACE and Forum lessons and through all aspects of school life.

The school is committed to ensuring that children are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All children are taught that we have senior

members of staff with responsibility for child protection and they are made aware of whom these persons are. We inform children of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Subjects such as Personal, Social and Health Education discuss relevant safeguarding issues with the children. Please see the Online Safety section of this policy for further details on this topic.

4.11 Digital images

The use of digital images in schools is a complex area. The school has a clear and sufficiently detailed policy which covers the taking and use of digital images and video of children and takes steps to ensure that it is understood and enforced.

Staff and children sign ICT Acceptable Use Agreements. For staff this includes a section on the use of digital images and clarification about the position regarding the use of personal mobile phones/cameras for taking pictures. Where volunteers are supporting school staff, they should abide by the same rules as school staff as far as is reasonable.

4.12 Health and Safety

The Health & Safety Policy and Educational Visits Policy demonstrate the consideration we give to minimising any risk to children when on the school premises and when undertaking activities out of school under the supervision of our staff. At all times there must be appropriate staffing levels and when off-site, appropriate and agreed pupil/adult ratios are maintained. The lead adult always assesses visits/trips as to the level of risk and all trips are finally authorised by the Educational Visits Coordinator or Headteacher.

Our school has lone working risk assessments in place and procedures for staff where there is a security risk due to the need to work alone; staff at high risk will receive appropriate training.

A copy of the Health and Safety Policy and Educational Visits Policy are available on the school website.

4.13 Inclusion and Diversity

Some children may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

Our school ethos promotes and accepts the differences between all children and adults. In practice this is about ensuring inclusion of individuals and treating them fairly and equally, no matter the diversity of their race, sex, gender reassignment, age, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity or sexual orientation.

Promoting equality and diversity in education is essential for both teachers and children. The aim is to create a school environment where all children can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique and not 'different' in a negative way.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023), to ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will also give special consideration to additionally vulnerable groups (as outlined in our Child Protection Policy), for example children with disabilities or special educational needs. Special consideration is also given in the provision of safeguarding information and resources in accessible formats for children and adults with communication needs.

4.14 Managing Low Levels Concerns and Allegations made against and Concerns raised in relation to Staff, Supply Teachers, Contractors and Volunteers

In line with Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, allegations and concerns are categorised as either:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
2. Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold, also known as 'low level concerns'

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold are those where it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold, also known as "low level concerns" A 'low level' concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis or behind a closed door; or
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

If any member of staff has a concern about staff, volunteer, supply teacher or contractor behaviour, either that may meet the allegations threshold or a low level concern, this must be reported to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will ensure that concerns are recorded and dealt with appropriately in line with KCSIE Part 4 (2023.) If the allegation or concern relates to the Headteacher, this must be reported to the Chair of Governors or Deputy Chair of Governors.

The full procedure for dealing with allegations against staff are covered in the Child Protection Policy.

4.15 Online Safety

We have an E-safety policy which can be found on the school website.

Our policy includes how we teach children to stay safe when using the internet in and out of school- including the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying. Cyber-bullying by children, via texts, emails and social media, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

The School will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring standards are in place in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) to ensure that children are safe from all types of inappropriate and unacceptable materials, including terrorist and extremist material.

The School has in place appropriate monitoring software that identifies potentially harmful content from the key-strokes on devices on the school network or accessed through the school wi-fi. This includes alerts to the school where content is above a threshold level as identified by the providing company. When alerted to issues of concern, the DSL Team will take such action to investigate and ensure the safety of pupils as is proportionate to the concern raised. This will take place on the day when the concern is raised wherever possible.

4.16 Partnership with Other Services

Our school recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies that are partners of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

4.17 Partnership with Parents

Watford Grammar School for Girls is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. The School will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. We encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with *Chris Wilshaw (Designated Safeguarding Lead; DSL) Jo Shrimpton, Katie Holes, Bal Randhawa (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads; DSLs) or Jacqui Paddick (Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.)*

4.20 Safer Recruitment and Selection

Our recruitment process selects, screens, trains and supervises staff and volunteers so that unsuitable people can be deterred and rejected from working with children. A copy of the School's Safer Recruitment Policy is available on the school website.

The School has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or HR.

Our school also adheres to the guidance issued by The Department for Education in 2015 regarding persons who are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006.

4.21 Safer Working Practice

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

The Teachers' Standards (DfE,2021) are augmented by standards of personal and professional conduct e.g. ethics and behaviour, in and out of school. Teachers are expected to 'uphold public trust in the profession by showing tolerance and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values and ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability'.

All staff will be provided with a copy of our school's Staff Code of Conduct and handbook at induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

The link below will direct you to the current government approved guidance on safer working practice which we share with staff:
https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/files/ugd/f576a8_0d079cbe69ea458e9e99fe462e447084.pdf

4.22 Site Security

The security measures put into place at Watford Girls balance the need to remain a welcoming environment whilst ensuring the safety of all our children and staff. A security risk assessment will be completed and reviewed annually (or earlier if deemed necessary).

4.23 Visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel

The control of visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel is a fundamental part of our site security policy for the safeguarding of both people and property.

Where the Governing Body transfers control or otherwise allows the use of school premises to external bodies (such as sports clubs) or service providers during or out of school hours, we will ensure that these bodies or providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023) and in After-school clubs, community activities – safeguarding guidance for providers (DfE, 2023):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6509558022a783000d43e81f/After-school_clubs__community_activities_and_tuition_safeguarding_guidance_for_providers.pdf, and that there are arrangements in place to co-ordinate with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies or providers.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office InvEntry system and to display a visitors lanyard whilst on school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance and if they do not have a visitors lanyard must be returned immediately to Reception. The department who arrange for a visitor to attend must collect them from reception and return them to reception at the end of their visit. The visitor must be accompanied throughout their visit.

Visiting teams and groups from other schools, along with any spectators (e.g. sports teams, drama groups etc) will be required to sign in during the times when students are normally on site: 8:00am-4:30pm. They should then be collected from reception by the department who have arranged the visit or fixture and returned to reception once the visit has concluded.

The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens school security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the school site.

4.24 Whistle blowing

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures are in place to enable concerns to be raised with the school's senior leadership team.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer/through the whistleblowing procedure or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- Children's Services 0300 123 4043
- NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Appendix 1: What To Do If A Young Person Is Identified As At-Risk Of Child Sexual Exploitation

Where a risk or concern is identified of Child Sexual Exploitation, the DSL Team will follow the guidance in 'Child Sexual Exploitation' (DfE, 2017):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f8e3640f0b62305b87dbc/CSE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf

Appendix 2: Steps to take in the Event of a disclosure of Forced Marriage

Where a risk or concern of Forced Marriage is identified, the DSL Team will follow the guidance in Section 5.3.1 (Forced Marriage) of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Manual

https://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_forced_marriage.html

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