

# **RMET**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

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## Key School Contacts

School	Designated Safeguarding Lead ( <i>DSL</i> )	Deputy DSL	Safeguarding AC Member
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## Trust Contacts

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## Local Safeguarding Partners

Partner	Medway
<b>First Response &amp; SPA</b> For urgent child protection concerns	Portal – 01634 334466 (Mon - Fri 9am to 5pm)
<b>First Response/ Family Solutions</b> To request non-urgent support	<a href="#">Portal</a>
<b>Out of Hours – Emergency Duty Team</b> For urgent child protection concerns	03000 419 191
<b>Kent Police</b> for Emergency situations	999 for urgent matters
<b>Local Authority Designated Officer</b> Allegations against adults in school	01634 331065 <a href="#">LADO referral</a>
<b>Education Safeguarding Service</b> Advice/Training/ Reviews	01634 331464 or 01634 331017 <a href="mailto:educsafeguarding@medway.gov.uk">educsafeguarding@medway.gov.uk</a>
<b>Safeguarding Children Partnership</b> Links to key safeguarding documents, training and processes	<b>Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP)</b> 01634 336 329 <a href="mailto:mscp@medway.gov.uk">mscp@medway.gov.uk</a>
<b>Prevent Education Officer</b> Prevent advice & training	<a href="mailto:Sally.Green2@kent.gov.uk">Sally.Green2@kent.gov.uk</a>

## National Safeguarding Partners

### NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

Free advice and support to professionals about how CP issues are being handled in their own or other organisation.

- 0800 028 0285
- [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### Support for staff

- Education Support Partnership: [www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk](http://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk)
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: [www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline)

### Support for Pupils/Students

- NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- ChildLine: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- Papyrus: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)
- Young Minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- The Mix: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)
- Shout: [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)
- Fearless: [www.fearless.org](http://www.fearless.org)
- Kidscape: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

### Support for adults

- Family Lives: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)
- Crime Stoppers: [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)
- Victim Support: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)
- Kidscape: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- The Samaritans: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)
- Mind: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): [napac.org.uk](http://napac.org.uk)
- MOSAC: [www.mosac.org.uk](http://www.mosac.org.uk)
- Action Fraud: [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)
- Shout: [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)

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## 1. What to do if you have a welfare concern about a child

### Why are you concerned?

For example:

- Allegation/ child shares a concern or worry
- Changes in behaviour
- Child's clothing or appearance; may include frequent or unexplained injuries/ marks/ bruises
- Witnessed concerning, harmful or inappropriate behaviour



### Immediately record your concerns

- Log the incident on CPOMS
  - Reassure the child
  - Clarify concerns if necessary:  
**TED: Tell, Explain, Describe**
  - Use child's own words/ use facts
  - Seek support for yourself if required.



### Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



### Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Consider whether the child has suffered, or is at immediate risk of, harm e.g. unsafe to go home.
- **Medway**  
MSCP [Threshold Guidance](#) for further guidance.
- If the child is at **imminent risk of harm** make telephone contact:
- **Medway**  
Portal – 01634 334466  
Out of hours – 03000 419 191
- If your concern is high, but the child is **NOT** at imminent risk, then a referral will be made via:
- **Medway**  
[Medway Social Care & Education Portal](#)
- Record decision making and action taken in the pupil/student's Child Protection on CPOMS



### Monitor – Be clear about:

- What **ACTION** you have taken at the time of reporting the concerns and **WHY**.
- What you are monitoring e.g. behaviour trends, appearance etc.
- How long you will monitor
- Where, how and to whom you will feedback and how you will record



### If you are unhappy with the response

- Staff follow the [Whistleblowing policy](#) or:  
[MSCP Escalation procedures](#)
- Pupils & parents follow the [Complaints policy](#) found on the Trust & School website



- At all stages the child's circumstances will be kept under review
- The DSL/Staff will request further support if required to ensure the child's safety is paramount

## 2. Introduction and Ethos

- 1.1. Procedures in this policy apply to all staff, including temporary or agency staff, students on placement, Members, Trustees, Academy Committee Members and volunteers and are consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.
- 1.2. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognise our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is

**everybody's** responsibility and everyone has a role to play. All members of our community (staff, volunteers, Members, Trustees, Academy Committee Members, leaders, parents/carers, wider family networks, and pupils/students) have an important role in safeguarding children and all have an essential role to play in making our community safe and secure.

- 1.3. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within school that will help children to be safe and feel safe. In our schools' children are respected and encouraged to talk openly. All children (defined as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and all children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- 1.4. Staff working with children at Rainham Mark Education Trust will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act and act immediately.
- 1.5. Staff challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour. They are vigilant to sexualised/aggressive touching/grabbing. We recognise that groups at particular risk include girls, pupils/students who are, or are perceived to be as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans or gender questioning and pupils/students with SEND. We recognise that these children can be targeted by other children and acknowledge the importance of a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. Pupils/students are protected from upskirting, bullying (+ cyber), homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents. Staff have familiarity with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Human Rights Act 1998 and recent reforms to the Act and how they apply to safeguarding.
- 1.6. This policy applies where there are any child protection concerns regarding children who attend the school but may also apply to other children connected to the school, for example, siblings, younger members of staff (under 18) or children on student/work placements.
- 1.7. The Trust and academies acknowledge the need to treat everyone with equity, with fairness, dignity and respect. We recognise that unconscious bias may impact upon our perceptions and expectations of children, particularly those from minority groups and that this may influence the safeguarding actions we take. We seek to educate and challenge all members of the school community to address equality of access and opportunity for all children, by highlighting inequalities and increasing awareness.
- 1.8. Through their day-to-day contact with pupils and students and their direct work with families, all staff and volunteers in school have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse, neglect and/or exploitation at an early stage. Our school may be the only secure, stable, and predictable element in their lives.
- 1.9. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises the need for a trauma-informed approach to safeguarding, considering the root causes and possible underlying trauma behind children's behaviour.
- 1.10. Rainham Mark Education Trust will endeavour to support the welfare and safety of all pupils and students through:
  - Ensuring that the child's welfare is of paramount importance
  - Training all staff to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and to know the school's procedures and lines of communication
  - Ensuring that children's mental and physical health or development is not impaired



- Providing children, a balanced curriculum including PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education); RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) to help pupils and students stay safe, recognise when they don't feel safe and identify who they might/can talk to
  - Training all staff to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and to know the school's procedures and lines of communication
  - Working with parents/carers to ensure they understand the school's legal responsibility to safeguard and ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations
  - Keeping confidential records that are stored securely, and shared appropriately with other professionals
  - Ensuring the voice of the child is evident in individual case files and informs the school's policy developments
  - Ensuring that the school practices safer recruitment processes in checking the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors
  - Informing parents/carers about expected behaviour
- 1.8. Rainham Mark Education Trust expects that if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they will act immediately.
- 1.9. This policy is implemented in accordance with our compliance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 (KCSIE) which requires individual schools and colleges to have an effective Child Protection Policy.
- 1.10. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including Members, Trustees, Academy Committee Members, temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers and are consistent with those outlined within KCSIE 2025.

### 3. Policy Context

- 3.1. This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes:
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (KCSIE)
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTSC)
  - Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework 2019
  - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000)
  - Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures (Online)
  - Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework 2021 (EYFS)
  - The Education Act 2002
  - The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
  - The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015
- 3.2. [Sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002](#) require school governing bodies, proprietors, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children who are pupils or students at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age. Such arrangements will have to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

### 4. Definition of Safeguarding

- 4.1. Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 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
  - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

- Children includes everyone under the age of 18
- 4.2. **Child Protection** – is a part of safeguarding and is defined as activity undertaken to protect specific children from significant harm. this includes harm inside or outside the home or online.
- 4.3. Rainham Mark Education Trust acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including (but not limited to):
  - Abuse and neglect
  - Bullying, including cyberbullying
  - Children with family members in prison
  - Children Missing Education (CME) or absent from education
  - Child missing from home or care
  - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
  - Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
  - Contextual safeguarding (risks outside the family home)
  - County lines and gangs
  - Domestic abuse
  - Drugs and alcohol misuse
  - Fabricated or induced illness
  - Faith abuse
  - Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls
  - Hate
  - Homelessness
  - Human trafficking and modern slavery
  - Mental health
  - Nude or semi-nude image sharing, aka youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “Sexting”
  - Online safety
  - Child-on-child abuse
  - Preventing radicalisation and extremism
  - Private fostering
  - Relationship abuse
  - Serious Violence
  - Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
  - So-Called honour-based abuse including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
  - Upskirting
- 4.4. Also see Annex B within ‘Keeping children Safe in Education’ 2025

## 5. Policy Compliance, Monitoring and Review

- 5.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust will review this policy at least annually. The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any significant national events, local child protection concerns and/or any changes to our procedures.
- 5.2. The Board of Trustees has strategic leadership responsibility for Rainham Mark Education Trust safeguarding arrangements and **must** ensure that schools complies with their duties under legislation. The Academy Committee must ensure policies, procedures and training in their schools are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- 5.3. The Designated Safeguarding Leads /Headteachers will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems in school to the Academy Committees. The Academy Committee will not receive details of individual student situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight.
- 5.4. This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our school and through our school newsletter.

## 6. Key Responsibilities

### Governance & Leadership

- 6.1. The Board of Trustees and leadership team have a strategic responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and comply with their duties under legislation.

- 6.2. The Board of Trustees and leadership team ensure that policies and procedures are in place so that appropriate action is taken, in a timely manner, to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- 6.3. The Board of Trustees have regard to the guidance in KCSIE and will ensure our policies, procedures and training is effective and always complies with the law.
- 6.4. The Trustees **ensure that all** Members, Trustees and Academy Committee Members receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training, appropriate to their role at induction. This training is regularly updated and equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge; to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.
- 6.5. **Jonathan Shields** is the nominated Trustee for safeguarding, who takes the lead role in ensuring that: the Trust has an effective policy which interlinks with related policies; that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed; and that the policies are reviewed at least annually and when required.
- 6.6. The Trustees and Leadership Team facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. They ensure safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development; so that all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.
- 6.7. The Board of Trustees and leadership team regularly review the effectiveness of school filtering and monitoring systems. They/I ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff are:
- aware of and understand the systems in place
  - manage them effectively
  - know how to escalate concerns when identified
- 6.8. The Board of Trustees and CEO/Headteachers ensure that the DSL is suitably supported in their role; has the appropriate status, authority, funding, resources, and training. They assure themselves that the DSL understands they have the responsibility in leading safeguarding and child protection across the school.

## Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- 6.9. Each school has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) they are a member of the senior leadership team. The DSL has the overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems in school.
- 6.10. Each school has appointed Deputy DSLs who will have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSLs absence.
- 6.11. Rainham Mark Education Trust has appointed Owen McColgan (*Interim Chief Executive*) as Trust DSL to offer support to DSLs within each school.
- 6.12. Whilst the activities of the DSL may be delegated to the deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and this responsibility will not be delegated.
- 6.13. The DSL carries out their role as identified in Appendix C of Keeping Children Safe in Education, (P170) 2025, these duties are set out in their job description.
- 6.14. The Designated Safeguarding Lead undergoes appropriate training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. DDSs are trained to the same standard as the DSL. Accredited DSL training, specific to the role, is renewed every two years. Knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals, **at least annually**, according to the needs of the school.
- 6.15. The Headteacher will be kept informed of any significant issues by the DSL.

- 6.16. The DSL and any deputy DSL's training will be updated formally every **two years**, but their knowledge and skills will be updated through a variety of methods (e-bulletins, conferences, local meetings, other training etc.) at regular intervals and **at least annually**, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.
- 6.17. Availability - during term time the DSL (or a DDSL) is always available (during school hours) for school staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Adequate and appropriate cover arrangements are made for school trips and any out of hours/out of term activities
- 6.18. During school holidays, the DSL will provide appropriate emergency contact details to the MASH Education Lead on the understanding that these will only be used if absolutely necessary and will not be shared elsewhere.
- 6.19. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for fulfilling the duties outlined in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
- Act as main contact point for all school staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
  - Manage and maintain the confidential paper/electronic case management systems to record concerns about pupils/students to ensure the quality of information is accurate, proportionate, and timely, also assessment/referrals are made appropriately
  - Coordinate safeguarding action for individual children. In the case of Children in Care, the DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority who looks after the child (with the DSL liaising closely with the designated teacher)
  - Liaise with the Headteacher or Headteacher to inform them of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#)
  - To liaise with safeguarding partners, other agencies, and staff in line with KCSIE 2025 and WTSC 2023
  - Ensure that Medway referral procedures are followed as necessary (see referral process page 2)
  - Support educational outcomes by effectively sharing information about welfare, safeguarding, and child protection concerns—including those affecting children with a social worker—with teachers and school leadership team
  - As required, represent and liaise appropriately with other professionals and ensure the school is represented at multi-agency safeguarding meetings (including child protection conferences)
  - Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff during term time for staff in the school to be able to discuss any safeguarding concerns
  - Understand the importance of information sharing both within the school and with other schools and agencies
  - To encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff this will assist with any measures the school may put in place to protect them
  - Ensure all staff access appropriate safeguarding training and relevant updates in line with the recommendations within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

## Members of Staff

- 6.20. The welfare and safety of children is the responsibility of all staff in school. ANY concern for a pupil's/student's welfare MUST be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 6.21. All members of staff have a responsibility to:
- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn and promote the child's welfare

- Maintain an attitude of **‘it could happen here’** where safeguarding is concerned and to always act in the best interests of the child
- Be alert to any issues of concern in a child’s life at home or elsewhere including the online world
- Understand the early help process and their role in it
- Be aware of the indicators of abuse , neglect and exploitation, so they can identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection
- Understand that children may not feel ready to, or know how to, tell someone they are being abused, exploited, or neglected and/or that they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. They may feel embarrassed, humiliated or be being threatened. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns any about a child
- Consider wider environmental factors in a child’s life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare
- Be aware of the process of making referrals to children’s social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989
- Build trusting relationships which facilitate communication with children and young people
- Know what to do if a child tells them that he or she is being abused, neglected or exploited and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality
- Understand and comply with this policy and understand other safeguarding policies and systems
- Staff help improve and enhance the Safeguarding Policy through their contributions and development
- Staff help improve and enhance the Safeguarding Policy through their contributions and development
- To undertake regular and appropriate training, that is regularly updated
- Be aware of, and take appropriate action to raise concerns, about poor or unsafe practice, or potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. (This may include accessing the school Whistleblowing Policy)
- Act in line with our Staff Code of Conduct/Behaviour Policy
- Act in line with the Teachers’ Standards which state that teachers (including headteachers) should safeguard children’s wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties

## Children and Young People

- 6.22. Children and young people (pupils/students) have a right to:
- Contribute to the development of school safeguarding policies
  - Report abuse confidently knowing concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be listened to and effective action will be taken
  - Seek help from a trusted adult and feel listened to
  - Learn how to keep themselves safe by recognising when they are themselves at risk and how to get help when they need it, including online

## Parents and Carers

- 6.23. Parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- Work in partnership with the school to safeguard and promote the welfare of child/ren and understand Rainham Mark Education Trust statutory responsibilities in this area
- Read and adhere to the relevant school/policies and procedures
- Talk to their children about safeguarding issues with their children & support the school in their safeguarding approaches
- Identify behaviours which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm including online
- Follow the procedure for lodging complaints to address issues and guarantee a prompt response from the school
- Follow the procedure for lodging complaints to address issues and guarantee Rainham Mark Education Trust prompt response
- Seek help and support from the school, or other appropriate agencies

6.24. We are committed to working with parents/carers positively, openly, and honestly. We ensure that all parents/carers are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents and carers rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so to protect a child/children.

## 7. Recognising Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

7.1. As a Trust we are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely individual events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another for further guidance: [Responding to Abuse and Neglect](#) . This is outlined locally with the following guidance:

**Medway**  
MSCP [Threshold Guidance](#) for further guidance.

7.2. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy).

7.3. All staff in school should be aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect. There are four categories of abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development
- **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
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development

7.4. The most up to date definitions and possible indicators and signs of abuse are found in Appendix 1 of this document. Staff should also refer to [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2018](#).

7.5. All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. Indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation do not automatically mean a child is being abused, however all concerns should be taken seriously, reported and explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.

- 7.6. The warning signs and symptoms of child abuse, neglect and exploitation will vary from child to child. Children also develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for a younger child, might be normal for an older child.
- 7.7. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that some children have additional or complex needs and may require access to intensive or specialist services to support them.
- 7.8. All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. **Extra-familial harms** take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.
- 7.9. Parental behaviours may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff should also be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents/carers who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.
- 7.10. Children may report abuse happening to themselves, their peers or their family members. All reports made by children to staff will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with this policy.
- 7.11. By understanding the warning signs, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family. It is important to recognise that a warning sign doesn't automatically mean a child is being abused.

## 8. Specific Safeguarding Issues

- 8.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust is aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context.
- 8.2. Rainham Mark Education Trust staff are mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (such as a child in need or a child with a protection plan).
- 8.3. 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, unexplainable absences from education, and sharing nudes or semi-nude images (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger. The categories/issues that follow are by no means an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the current themes in safeguarding and protecting children.

## Child-on-Child Abuse

- 8.4. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers. This is referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms.
- 8.5. Rainham Mark Education Trust believes and understands the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Staff understand that abuse is abuse, and it will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.
- 8.6. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:
- bullying, including cyberbullying
  - physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
  - sexual violence and sexual harassment



- ‘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
  - nude or semi-nude image sharing (also known as ‘sexting’ or youth produced/involved sexual imagery)
  - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- 8.7. Staff and leadership recognise that that some peer-on-peer abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved, (i.e. for gender-based abuse, girls are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators) however, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and all reports will be taken seriously.
- 8.8. In order to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, each school will:
- implement a robust Anti-Bullying Policy
  - providing an age/ability appropriate PSHE and RSE curriculum
  - providing a range of reporting mechanisms e.g. worry boxes, exit cards
- 8.9. Rainham Mark Education Trust will not tolerate, dismiss or minimize any harmful behaviours in school and will take swift action to intervene when this occurs. All allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated school policies, including child protection, anti-bullying and behaviour.
- 8.10. Alleged victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer-on-peer abuse may be supported by:
- All staff taking reports seriously, listening carefully, avoiding victim blaming,
  - providing appropriate pastoral support
  - working with parents/carers
  - reviewing educational approaches
  - and, in cases of sexual assault, informing the police and/or First Response
- 8.11. The school will take steps to ensure that appropriate curriculum time is dedicated to enable children to develop an awareness and understanding of abusive behaviour and minimise the risk of all forms of peer-on-peer abuse. We will also ensure that children recognise warning signs and supports of support both within the school and externally (such as Kent Police, ChildLine etc.).

## Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

- 8.12. Rainham Mark Education Trust will follow the guidance outlined in part five of KCSIE 2025. When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment. If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service. Rainham Mark Education Trust has clear policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment which can be found in the RMET policies.
- 8.13. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises sexual violence, and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children and can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable.
- 8.14. Staff must be vigilant and recognise that information may come from overheard conversations or observed behaviour changes. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school will not be dismissed or downplayed and will be treated as seriously and in line with relevant policies/procedures, for example anti bullying, behaviour, child protection, online safety. (Amend as appropriate)
- 8.15. It is essential that all victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never



- be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment or be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- 8.16. 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).
- 8.17. When there has been a report of sexual violence or harassment, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other children, adult students (if appropriate) and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.
- 8.18. Where possible KCSIE 2025 recommends that two members of staff manage reports of sexual violence and harassment.
- 8.19. Reports will initially be managed internally by the school and where necessary will be referred to Integrated Children's Services and/or the Police.
- 8.20. The decision making and required action taken will vary on a case by case basis, but will be informed by the wishes of the victim; the nature of the alleged incident (including whether a crime may have been committed); the ages and developmental stages of the children involved; any power imbalance between the children; if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; if there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or Rainham Mark Education Trust staff; and, any other related issues or wider context.
- 8.21. We will reassure and teach our pupils/students to understand that the law is in place to protect children and young people, rather than criminalise them.
- 8.22. Rainham Mark Education Trust will regularly review decisions and actions to update and improve policies and practice.
- 8.23. The school will consider the physical and mental health implications for both the victim and perpetrator. It is identified that both individuals will need additional support and provision of further information about harmful sexual behaviours and may need signposting to further sources of support.

## Nude and/or Semi-Nude Image Sharing by Children

- 8.24. DSLs will respond to concerns as set out in the non-statutory UKCIS guidance: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) (Updated March 2025)
- 8.25. The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' is used to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams of/by young people under the age of 18. Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal which makes responding to incidents complex.
- 8.26. When made aware of concerns involving nude or semi-nude image taking/sharing involving children, staff are advised to:
- Report any concerns involving nude or semi-nude image sharing involving children to the DSL immediately
  - Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it – this may be illegal. If staff have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g., if a child has shown it to them), this will be immediately reported to the DSL
  - Not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it
  - Not say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved
  - Explain to child(ren) involved that they will report the issue to the DSL and reassure them that they will receive appropriate support and help

- Not ask the child or children involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery and not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the child(ren) involved or their, or other, parents and/or carers. This is the responsibility of the DSL
- 8.27. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that nude and semi-nude image sharing (also known as youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “sexting”) is a safeguarding issue; this also includes AI produced sexual imagery. All concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL (or deputy).
- 8.28. The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff and will speak with the children involved if appropriate.
- 8.29. Parents and carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process to best support children, unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put a child at risk of harm.
- 8.30. A referral will be made to ICS and/or the police immediately if:
  - the incident involves an adult (over 18)
  - there is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, age of SEND)
  - the image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of 13, depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child’s developmental stage, or are violent
  - a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes
- 8.31. All decisions will be recorded in line with our child protection procedures and will be based on the consideration of the best interests of any child involved. The DSL may choose to involve other agencies at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed at a later date.
- 8.32. If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

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

- 8.33. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity.
- 8.34. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that children can become trapped in CCE as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.
- 8.35. The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can also be very different to that of boys. We also recognise that boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- 8.36. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child’s immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities and includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.
- 8.37. CSE can be difficult to spot and sometimes mistaken for "normal" teenage behaviour. Knowing the signs can help protect children and help them when they've no one else to turn to. To support in identifying the signs of child sexual exploitation please refer to the Kent

and Medway [Exploitation Identification Tool](#) and the MSCP Risk [Assessment tool for sexually active young people](#).

- 8.38. If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of CSE or CCE, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

## Serious Violence

- 8.39. All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.
- 8.40. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that certain factors may increase a child's vulnerability to involvement in serious violence. These include being male, frequent absence or permanent exclusion from school, experiences of child maltreatment, and involvement in criminal activity such as theft or robbery. Additionally, the risk of serious violence may be heightened during times when pupils/students are travelling to and from school, particularly just before or after the school day.
- 8.41. Further advice for schools is provided in the [Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and its [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance](#). [County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#) - The Children's Society in partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council.
- 8.42. Rainham Mark Education Trust will make referrals to Children's Services and the police if we have reason to believe a student has become involved in these types of activity.
- 8.43. In addition, where an exploitation concern has been identified, the form linked below will also be completed, to provide intelligence to the police on local exploitation concerns and issues. The portal allows for the reporting of suspected perpetrators of child exploitation and Places and Spaces where Child Exploitation is suspected of taking place and vehicles believed to be connected to be exploiting children. [Report an Exploitation Concern Online](#).
- 8.44. This is for Child Exploitation specifically. General vulnerability concerns still need to be reported directly to the police (101 or 999).
- 8.45. Please note, this portal is not suitable for reporting crime, as is not constantly monitored.

## Mental Health

- 8.46. Rainham Mark Education Trust will ensure that all staff have an awareness of mental health problems and be aware that in some cases they can be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff are aware of how children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.
- 8.47. Where children have suffered abuse, neglect and exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACES), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is important that staff are aware of how these experiences can impact on children's mental health, behaviour, and education.
- 8.48. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are '**well placed**' to identify behaviour suggestive of a mental health problem or being at risk of developing one.

- 8.49. 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.

## Domestic Abuse

- 8.50. Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it in their own intimate relationships, can have a serious, long-lasting, impact upon children and is a form of child abuse.
- 8.51. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that domestic abuse can encompass but is not limited to psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional abuse.
- 8.52. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.
- 8.53. Rainham Mark Education Trust schools are Operation Encompass Schools. This is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership, to support children who witness and experience Domestic Abuse.
- 8.54. Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our school/nursery/setting about all police attended Domestic Abuse incidents involving any of our children, where possible, PRIOR to the start of the next school day.
- 8.55. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures and where appropriate, a referral to the First Response will be made if there are any concerns about a child's welfare.
- 8.56. Where the school is unsure of how to respond to a notification, advice may be sought from the First Response, or the Operation Encompass helpline which is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990.

## Modern Slavery

- 8.57. Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Statutory Guidance: [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims](#).
- 8.58. If there are concerns that any member of the community is a victim or involved with modern slavery, concerns should be shared with a DSL or deputy and will be responded to in line with this policy.

## So-called 'honour-based' abuse

- 8.59. So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed in the belief that they protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.
- 8.60. All staff need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.
- 8.61. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and

local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a **mandatory reporting duty** placed on **teachers** that requires a different approach (see following section).

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- 8.62. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
- 8.63. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a **statutory duty** upon **teachers**, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining pupils or students.
- 8.64. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e., where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence). In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty [FGM Fact Sheet](#).
- 8.65. Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and involve children's social care as appropriate.

## Forced Marriage

- 8.66. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognise that since February 2023 it has been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if **no** violence, threats or another form of coercion are used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages. (see page 155 of KCSIE 23) ([Legal age increases to 18](#)).
- 8.67. Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can found at [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage](#) . Guidance for schools can be found in Section 8. School staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email [fm@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fcdo.gov.uk).
- 8.68. Staff at Rainham Mark Education Trust will use the school's concern reporting system if they have any reason to believe that a child may be at risk of being taken out of the country for the purposes of a forced marriage.

## Breast Ironing

- 8.69. Breast flattening is a form of child abuse. See the CPS legal guidance on [Child Abuse](#).
- 8.70. Breast Ironing is the process whereby young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down using hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education.
- 8.71. There are potentially significant physical and psychological consequences and risks related to this practice. Breast flattening is a form of child abuse. Therefore, professionals must follow their Local Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures.

## Preventing radicalisation

- 8.72. DSLs and leaders need to refer to and understand the DfE “Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation” - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) advice and utilise it to tailor this section to suit the individual circumstances of the school.
- 8.73. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a duty on specified authorities, which includes schools, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the PREVENT duty). The school’s work in promoting life in modern Britain and promoting Fundamental British Values (democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith) through the curriculum and pastoral programs underpins this strategy.
- 8.74. Staff should be aware that there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child’s vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).
- 8.75. The department has published advice for schools on the [Prevent duty](#). The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.
- 8.76. Every member of staff at Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that children exposed to radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability and should be approached in the same way as protecting children from other risks.
- 8.77. Staff will report any concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who is aware of the [local procedures](#) to follow for making a Prevent referral. If there is an immediate threat, the police will be contacted via 999.
- 8.78. All staff , Members, Trustees and Academy Committee Members should complete the [Prevent online Awareness training](#) package developed by the Home Office which includes guidance on how to identify people who may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism, and how to refer them into the Channel process.
- 8.79. Staff will be supported to use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and will act proportionately; staff will report concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who, where appropriate, will follow the local procedures in regard to making a Prevent referral.
- 8.80. If there is an immediate threat to safety, the police will be contacted via 999.
- 8.81. Where a child is receiving support regarding concerns relating to preventing radicalisation, for example, through the ‘Channel’ programme, the DSL will consider if it would be appropriate to share any information if/when a child leaves to attend any new schools, so support can be put in place for when the child arrives. Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and Channel training from the Home Office.

## 9. Supporting Pupils Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

### Children who are absent from education

- 9.1. All staff should be aware that children who are **absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods and/or for unexplainable reasons**, can be a vital of a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation such as county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.



- 9.2. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.
- 9.3. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that, when a child is not in school, they may be susceptible to, or exposed to, other risks, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible.
- 9.4. Where there are concerns that a child has unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, the school will respond in line with its statutory duties (DfE [Children Missing Education](#)) and local support available from the appropriate attendance and children missing education teams.

#### Medway

Attendance Team: [aassa@medway.gov.uk](mailto:aassa@medway.gov.uk)

Children Missing Education: [cme@medway.gov.uk](mailto:cme@medway.gov.uk)

- 9.5. Staff are aware of the school's Unauthorised Absence and Children Missing from Education Procedures. The RMET policy can be found on the RMET and school websites.
- 9.6. Where possible, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil/student, so we have additional options to contact a responsible adult if a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. There is an expectation that emergency contact information will be held for both parents/carers, unless doing so would put a child at risk of harm. It is good practice for schools to have additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. It is recommended local practice for schools to request and capture emergency contact information for both parents/carers, unless it places a child at risk of harm to do so, for example a court or other legal order preventing access is in place. If this is the case, it should be recorded on the child's safeguarding file. Schools should be proactive in being inclusive of fathers; effective father engagement should be the expectation from the outset, and it is important to help schools understand the child's significant relationships and lived experiences.

## Pupils attending alternative provision

- 9.7. When Rainham Mark Education Trust places a pupil/student with an alternative provision provider, it retains overall responsibility for the safeguarding and well-being of that child. This includes:
- 9.8. Maintaining accurate records of the provider's address, any subcontracted provision, and satellite sites the child may attend.
- 9.9. The school will regularly review placements—at least half-termly—to ensure the child is attending, the provision remains safe, and it continues to meet their needs.
- 9.10. Prior to placement, appropriate checks will be carried out to confirm the provider can meet the pupil's/student's needs, including written confirmation that all necessary safeguarding checks have been completed for staff working at the provision.
- 9.11. If safeguarding concerns arise, the placement will be reviewed immediately and, if necessary, suspended or terminated until those concerns are resolved.

## Elective Home Education (EHE)

- 9.12. Where a parent/carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will respond in line with [national Elective Home Education guidance](#) and local:

#### Medway

[Medway EHE policy](#)  
[homeeducation](#)  
[@medway.gov.uk](#)

- 9.13. We will work together with parents/carers and other key professionals and organisations to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of the child.

## Looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers

- 9.14. Rainham Mark Education Trust acknowledges and understand the common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation, and a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable.
- 9.15. Each school has appointed a 'designated teacher' who works with local authorities, including the appropriate Virtual School (including the virtual school head), to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils/students who are looked after or who have been previously looked after, including those in kinship care.

**Medway**  
[Medway's Virtual School | Education of looked-after children | Medway Council](#)

- 9.16. The designated teacher will work with the DSL to ensure appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.
- 9.17. Rainham Mark Education Trust understands their responsibility to inform the Local Authority via First Response of Private fostering arrangements when they believe that a child is being cared for as part of a private fostering arrangement. (When a child under 16, or 8 if they are disabled) is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a relative for 28 days or more.

## Children who are privately fostered

- 9.18. [Private fostering](#) occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 for children with a disability) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of our staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.
- 9.19. Where private fostering arrangements come to the attention of the school, we must notify:

**Medway**  
[Medway's Virtual School | Education of looked-after children | Medway Council](#)  
Through the email [private.fostering@medway.gov.uk](mailto:private.fostering@medway.gov.uk) or visit the website [Private fostering arrangements | Medway Council](#)



## Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans (LGBT)

- 9.20. A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, other children can sometimes target them. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises children who are LGBTQ+ or are thought to be LGBTQ+ by other children, can be singled out by their peers or other individuals in the community.
- 9.21. When supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Schools should refer to the DoFE guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children when deciding how to proceed.
- 9.22. Children may face greater risks where they do not have reliable adults around them that they feel they can trust and be open with.
- 9.23. LGBT education is part of our curriculum for Relationships Education/Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education, and our staff will work to eliminate extra obstacles and create a safe environment that encourages children to voice their concerns.

## 10. Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- 10.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities face additional safeguarding challenges. These children may have an impaired capacity to understand, resist or avoid abuse. The DSL will work closely with the SENDco to plan learning opportunities and support, as required.
- 10.2. All staff will ensure that children with SEN and disabilities are able to overcome the barriers that exist for this group of children, and specifically ensure that those with communication difficulties are supported to be able to express their voice and that it is listened to and acted upon.
- 10.3. It is important that all staff are aware that children with SEN and disabilities may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse and that some children can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying and exploitation without explicitly showing signs.
- 10.4. All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour/mood change or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability. To address these additional challenges, our school will always consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.
- 10.5. Rainham Mark Education Trust has clear policies on intimate and personal care that promote children's health, safety, independence, and dignity. Procedures are transparent and well-documented, with robust record-keeping in place. For more details, see our Intimate Care Policy.

## 11. Online Safety

- 11.1. It is recognised by Rainham Mark Education Trust that the use of technology presents challenges and risks to children and adults both inside and outside of Rainham Mark Education Trust schools.
- 11.2. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

- 11.3. Rainham Mark Education Trust will empower, protect and educate the community in their use of technology and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.
- 11.4. The DSL has overall responsibility for online safeguarding within the school but will liaise as necessary with other members of staff.
- 11.5. The DSL and leadership team and Academy Committees have read, understood and acted upon all guidance regarding Online Safety within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.
- 11.6. Rainham Mark Education Trust identifies the breadth of issues within online safety can be considerable, but they can be broadly categorised into four areas of risk:
- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
  - **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
  - **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (including consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying
  - **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams
- 11.7. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile phones, wearable technology and cameras and in accordance with KCSIE 2025 and has appropriate policies in place that are shared and understood by all members of the school community. Further information reading the specific approaches relating to this can be found in the school's Online Safety Policy, [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and Image Use Policy which can be found on the RMET Intranet.
- 11.8. Schools within Rainham Mark Education Trust use a wide range of technology. This includes computers, laptops, tablets and other digital devices, the internet, our learning platform, intranet and email systems.
- 11.9. All School owned devices and systems will be used in accordance with our acceptable use policies and with appropriate safety and security measures in place.
- 11.10. All members of staff have access to appropriate, regular and up-to-date online safety information as part of their safeguarding training.
- 11.11. Rainham Mark Education Trust will ensure that when pupils/students and staff access the school systems and internet provision appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place.
- 11.12. Rainham Mark Education Trust ensures that all staff receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities, in relation to our filtering and monitoring systems and processes.
- 11.13. Rainham Mark Education Trust ensures that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on school equipment and systems used by pupils/students and staff, including school devices used by pupils/students at home. This link can assist you in understanding your broader responsibilities: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>.
- 11.14. Filtering and monitoring are an important part of school's online safety responsibilities, but they are only one part of our approach to online safety. Pupils/students and parents/carers

- may have access to systems external to the school control, such as mobile phones and other internet enabled devices and technology. Where concerns are identified, appropriate action will be taken.
- 11.15. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that many pupils/students and parents/carers will have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phones and other enabled devices, this is external to the school's control. Where concerns are identified appropriate action will be taken.
- 11.16. Filtering and monitoring are an important part of school's online safety responsibilities, it is only one part of our approach to online safety. Pupils/students and adults may have access to systems external to the school control such as mobile phones and other internet enabled devices and technology and where concerns are identified appropriate action will be taken.
- 11.17. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that many pupils/students and parents/carers will have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phones and other enabled devices, this is external to the school's control. Where concerns are identified appropriate action will be taken.
- 11.18. Rainham Mark Education Trust will ensure a comprehensive whole school curriculum is developed and in place to enable and equip all pupils/students with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world and manage the risks effectively.
- 11.19. DSLs and SLT may find it helpful to access UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) '[Education for a Connected World Framework](#)' and DfE '[Teaching online safety in school](#)' guidance.
- 11.20. Rainham Mark Education Trust will also support parents/carers and the wider school community (including all members of staff) to be aware and alert to the need to keep children safe online. We will share information with parents/carers about:
- what systems are in place to filter and monitor online use
  - what children do online as a part of their learning, including the sites they may asked to access
  - who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online, as a part of remote learning
- 11.21. The DSL will respond to online safety concerns in line with the child protection and other associated policies such as anti-bullying and behaviour.
- Internal sanctions and/or support will be implemented as appropriate
  - Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with local policies and procedures
- 11.22. Where children are asked to learn online at home in response to a full or partial closure:
- Rainham Mark Education Trust will ensure any remote sharing of information communication and use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements
  - All communication with learners and parents/carers will take place using Rainham Mark Education Trust provided or approved communication channels; for example, Rainham Mark Education Trust provided email accounts and phone numbers and/or agreed systems e.g., SIMS/ Google Classroom, Microsoft 365 or equivalent
  - Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the DSL
  - Staff and learners will engage with remote teaching and learning in line with existing behaviour principles as set out in our Rainham Mark Education Trust Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policies
  - Staff and learners will be encouraged to report issues experienced at home and concerns will be responded to in line with our child protection and other relevant policies

- When delivering remote learning, staff will follow our Remote Learning Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
  - Parents/carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access. Rainham Mark Education Trust will continue to be clear who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online
  - Parents/carers will be encouraged to ensure children are appropriately supervised online and that appropriate parent controls are implemented at home
- 11.23. Additional guidance for DSLs and SLT regarding remote learning is available at DfE: [Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

### Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- 11.24. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) offers exciting opportunities in education, supporting children's learning and helping staff reduce workload. However, its use also presents safeguarding risks to both children and staff, as well as potential threats to system security and data integrity.
- 11.25. Leaders should consider developing a standalone AI policy or referencing AI use within relevant curriculum or IT policies. This should cover both on-site and off-site use, ensuring compliance with school/college policies and national legislation, including data protection requirements.
- 11.26. Further guidance and policy templates can be found here:
- [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Using AI in education settings: support materials - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Generative AI in education: user research and technical report - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Generative AI in education: educator and expert views - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Data protection in schools - Artificial intelligence \(AI\) and data protection in schools - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
  - [Artificial Intelligence and Online Safety | SWGfL](#)
  - [Using artificial intelligence \(AI\) safely | Internet Matters](#)
  - [Integrating AI in Schools: New Policy Template Available | SWGfL](#)
  - [Ofsted's approach to artificial intelligence \(AI\) - GOV.UK](#)
  - [National AI Strategy - GOV.UK](#)
- 11.27. RMET recognises the potential benefits of generative AI tools in supporting teaching, learning, and reducing staff workload—when used safely, responsibly, and with appropriate infrastructure. However, we also acknowledge the safeguarding, ethical, legal, and educational risks associated with AI, including exposure to harmful content, data breaches, academic dishonesty, and misinformation.
- 11.28. To manage these risks, only AI tools approved by the senior leadership team—following appropriate risk and data protection assessments—may be used for educational or work purposes. A list of approved tools will be maintained and reviewed regularly.
- 11.29. Staff, pupils and students will be informed of the benefits, risks, and expectations around AI use through training, policies (such as acceptable use and AI-specific policies), and curriculum content where appropriate through specific lessons, the RMET AI Policy, Acceptable Use Policies, staff training etc.
- 11.30. Any misuse of AI will be addressed in line with existing policies, including behaviour, safeguarding, data protection, and complaints procedures. Serious concerns, such as AI-generated child sexual abuse material or deepfake abuse, will be handled in accordance with local safeguarding procedures and national guidance, including from the IWF, NCA-CEOP, and UKCIS.

## 12. Child Protection Procedures

- 12.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust adheres to the MSCP Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures.

### Medway

The full MSCP procedures and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the MSCP website: <https://www.medwayscp.org.uk/mscb/>

- 12.2. If staff have **any concerns** about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. See page 8 for a flow chart setting out the process for staff when they have concerns about a child.

- 12.3. If a child is at risk of imminent danger or harm concerns will need to:

### Medway

be referred by telephone to **First Response 01634 334466** and/or the police.

- 12.4. If it is an emergency the police need to be called on 999.

- 12.5. If there are child protection concerns the role of the school is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.

- 12.6. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be referred to Children's social care **Services and Family Solutions** via:

### Medway

[Medway Social Care & Education Portal](#)

- 12.7. Once staff have reported their concerns, the DSL will make a decision about what action to take, these include:

- continuing to closely
- continuing to closely monitor the situation
- managing any support for the child internally, via the school's own pastoral support processes
- a referral to Family Solutions or for an Early Help Assessment
- a referral to Children's Services for statutory intervention

- 12.8. All information and actions taken including the reasons for any decision/actions made, will be fully documented on a child's record.

- 12.9. All staff are aware of the process for making request for support referrals for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

- 12.10. Wherever possible the school will share safeguarding concerns, or the intention to refer a child to Children's social care, with parents or carers. **However, staff will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation.** On occasions it may be necessary to consult with First Response and/ or the police for advice on when to share information with parents/carers.

- 12.11. If the DSL is not available to discuss an immediate and urgent concern, staff can seek advice from the Deputy DSL. They may also seek advice from the consultation from:

### Medway

The **'No Name' consultation line** in First Response (9:30-12:30) on 01634 33 1662.

- 12.12. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral to external services, then they will inform the DSL and Headteacher as soon as possible.
- 12.13. Staff may pass information about a child to the DSL but remain anxious about action subsequently taken. Staff should feel able to check the progress of a case with the DSL so that they can reassure themselves the child is safe and their welfare is being considered. If following this process, the staff member remains concerned it is the responsibility of that staff member to follow the school's escalation process.
- 12.14. If a child's situation does not appear to be improving, then the DSL (or the person that made the request for support) will consider a re-referral.
- 12.15. If, after a request for support or any other planned external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will consider following:

**Medway**  
[MSCP escalation procedures](#)

- to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves. DSLs may request support with this via the Education Safeguarding Service.
- 12.16. All members of staff are made aware of the internal and local Early Help/Family Solutions support services. Where a child is being offered or receiving Family Solutions support, staff will be supported to understand their role in any Early Help assessment or intervention. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with other professionals, and in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.
- 12.17. The DSL will keep all Early Help cases under constant review and consideration will be given to a request for support to the First Response if the situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.
- 12.18. RMET schools are an Operation Encompass School. This means we work in partnership with Kent Police to provide support to children experiencing domestic abuse. All staff know what Operation Encompass is and there is a clear process for managing notifications in school by the DSL (including cover if a named individual is absent).

## The child's wishes

- 12.19. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the **best** interests of the child at their heart. **However, this should not prevent safeguarding action being taken, for the child or children involved.**

## 13. Children who may benefit from Early Help

- 13.1. Any child may benefit from early help at some point, but all staff should be alert to the potential need for early help for those who:
- Have a disability, a specific additional need or particular health condition
  - Has an SEN, whether or not they have an EHCP
  - Has a mental health need
  - Is a young carer
  - Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour
  - Is frequently missing from education, home, or care
  - Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from education – including those who attend a Pupil Referral Unit or Alternative Provision
  - Is at risk of radicalisation

- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
  - Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
  - Has challenging family circumstances, such as parental substance misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
  - Is at risk of so-called 'honour-based abuse, such as FGM or Forced Marriage
  - Is a privately fostered child
- 13.2. Where it is identified that a child may need early help support, staff and the DSL will respond in line with Section 8 of this policy.

## 14. Record Keeping

- 14.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust use an electronic concern system called CPOMS.
- 14.2. Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies.
- 14.3. Our child protection records will contain a clear and detailed summary of any concerns raised, including how they were followed up and resolved. Records will also note any actions taken (*or not taken*), the rationale behind decisions made, and the outcomes.

## Reporting a concern

- 14.4. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing on the schools safeguarding system CPOMS. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).
- 14.5. Safeguarding records will usually record facts and not personal opinions. If a staff member records an opinion, such as this should be made explicit in the recording.
- 14.6. A body map will be completed if injuries or marks are observed, with an accompanying detailed and objective written description.
- 14.7. Staff should NOT take photographs of injuries; staff should use body maps and written descriptions to detail concerns. Taking photos of injuries can be traumatic and distressing for children and staff. Staff should not examine a child and should only record what they can see.
- 14.8. If, in exceptional circumstances, photos of injuries are required for evidence purposes, this should be carried out by specialist police officers. If for some reason, you are **directed** to take photos of an injury by a social worker or police officer, only do so on receipt of an email confirming the name of the person requesting, their role, the date, time, and the rationale behind this decision. Staff can challenge this request if they do not feel comfortable and wait for a social worker/ Police officer to attend.
- 14.9. Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the child's words, and will be signed and dated by the member of staff making the report. If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL.
- 14.10. Safeguarding records are kept for individual children and are maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in the school. Safeguarding records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL. Safeguarding records are shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis only.
- 14.11. All safeguarding records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the child's subsequent school/setting, under confidential and separate cover. These will be given to the new DSL and a receipt of delivery will be obtained.



## 15. Transferring Child protection files

- 15.1. Where children leave the school (including in year transfers) the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil/student file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.
- 15.2. Receiving schools should ensure key staff such as Designated Safeguarding Leads and SENCOs, are aware as required.
- 15.3. 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 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.
- 15.4. If a child is subject to a child protection plan or there are other ongoing concerns at the time of transfer, then it is strongly recommended that the transferring DSL arrange to meet with the receiving DSL in person to ensure there is effective transition and handover of information.
- 15.5. Child protection files should always be kept by the current education setting which the child attends. Transferring settings do not need to keep copies of child protection files, but if there is reason to, they do they must be kept in accordance with data retention (see section 17). In cases where there may be ongoing involvement from transferring settings, for example if any siblings still attend your setting, DSLs may wish to take copies of chronologies etc.

## 16. Multi-agency Working

- 16.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust identifies that they have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2025.
- 16.2. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises and is committed to its responsibility to work within the MSCP. The leadership team and DSL will work to establish strong and co-operative local relationships with professionals in other agencies in line with statutory guidance. Examples of multi-agency partnerships may include professionals such as social workers, early help practitioners, health professionals (including paediatricians, health visitors, mental health services, and speech and language therapists), specialist teachers, educational psychologists, staff from other schools or settings attended by the child, and the police.
- 16.3. Rainham Mark Education Trust schools will endeavour to identify those children and families who may benefit from the intervention and support of external professionals and will seek to enable referrals (in discussion with parents/carers) as appropriate.
- 16.4. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises the importance of multi-agency working and will provide requested reports support attendance at relevant safeguarding meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings or other early help multi-agency meetings.
- 16.5. The Headteacher and DSL are aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult ([PACE Code C 2019](#)) where there is a need for detention, treatment and questioning by police officers and will respond to concerns in line with our school 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' Policy and/or Behaviour Policy, which is informed by the DfE '[Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)' guidance. Headteachers and DSLs should access the DfE '[Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)' guidance.



## 17. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 17.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust expect all staff to treat information they receive about a children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than a **‘need to know basis’**.
- 17.2. All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep information confidential, they also have a professional responsibility to be proactive and share information as early as possible, to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about safety and welfare. This will only involve those who need to be involved, such as the DSL and Medway Children’s Services.
- 17.3. KCSIE, the [Information Commissioner’s Office](#) (ICO), DfE [Data Protection in schools guidance](#) and DfE [‘Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners’](#) guidance provides further details regarding information sharing principles and expectations.
- 17.4. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises our duty to share relevant information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity as per statutory guidance outlined within KCSIE 2025.
- 17.5. The Data Protection Act 2018 places a duty on organisations and individuals with regards to processing personal information fairly and lawfully. As a school we adhere to data protection, yet we do not allow this to stand in our way in the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of our children in our care. DfE [‘Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners’](#) (2018) provides further detail.
- 17.6. Rainham Mark Education Trust has an appropriately trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure that our school is complaint with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing requirements. The Trust DPO can be contacted by emailing [dbeard@rmet.org](mailto:dbeard@rmet.org)
- 17.7. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child’s safety or wellbeing. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and may require further referral and subsequent investigation by the appropriate authorities.

## 18. Complaints

- 18.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust has a complaints procedure this can also be found on each school/Trust website. As a Trust we encourage children and families to raise with us complaints, concerns or comments and have a robust internal investigation process.
- 18.2. Whilst we encourage members of our community to report concerns and complaints directly to us, we recognise this may not always be possible. Children, young people, and adults who have experienced abuse at school can contact the NSPCC ‘Report Abuse in Education’ helpline on [0800 136 663](tel:0800136663) or via email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- 18.3. Safeguarding concerns should be raised with school immediately. If a concern or a child is at immediate risk, then the individual needs to contact First Response 01634 334466 or the police on 101. All visitors are given a safeguarding leaflet that outlines how to share concerns and code of conduct expected by visitors/contractors.
- 18.4. All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with in line with section 19 of this policy.

## 19. Staff Induction, Awareness and Training

- 19.1. All members of staff have been provided with a copy of Part One of “*Keeping Children Safe in Education*” (2025) which covers Safeguarding information for all staff.
- 19.2. Annex A KCSIE 2025 is a condensed version of Part one which can be provided instead of Part one to those staff who do not directly work with children, if the governing body or proprietor think it will provide a better basis for those staff to promote the welfare and safeguard children. If schools opt to use Annex A with some staff due to their role, leaders may wish to document this decision within the policy e.g. *‘all members of staff who do not work directly with children will read Annex A.* If the school requires all staff to read part one, remove the reference to ‘annex A’.
- 19.3. All Members of staff have signed to confirm that they have read and understood Part One and Annex B. A record will be kept by each academy.
- 19.4. School leaders including the DSL will read the entire document. School leaders and all members of staff who work directly with children will access Annex B within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.
- 19.5. All school staff will complete the Safeguarding Refresher Training delivered at the INSET day at the start of the academic year.
- 19.6. The DSL will ensure that all new staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) receive child protection training and information to ensure they are aware of the schools internal safeguarding processes as part of their induction. All staff will be provided with a copy of KCSIE and will complete online Safeguarding Training.
- 19.7. All staff should undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training should be regularly updated. Induction and training should be in line with advice from the local three safeguarding partners. This training will include online safety and will take place at least annually.
- 19.8. In addition to child protection training all members of staff should 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.
- 19.9. All staff members (including temporary/supply staff) will be made aware of the school’s expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the staff Behaviour Policy (or Code of Conduct) and Acceptable Use Policy.
- 19.10. The Board of Trustees recognise the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. Opportunity should therefore be provided for staff to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and Child Protection Policy.
- 19.11. The DSL and Headteacher will provide an annual report to the Academy Committee detailing safeguarding training undertaken by all staff and will maintain an up-to-date register of who has been trained.
- 19.12. Each school has a nominated Safeguarding lead for the Academy Committee and all members of the Academy Committee will access appropriate safeguarding training which covers their specific strategic responsibilities at induction and on a regular basis. Training will provide them with the knowledge to ensure their school’s safeguarding policies and procedures are effective. This includes Trustees strategic responsibility for online safety.

## 20. Safe Working Practice

- 20.1. All members of staff are required to work within clear guidelines on Safe Working Practice and the school’s Code of Conduct. The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers have read the Child Protection Policy and Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct and understand that their behaviour and practice must be in line with it.

- 20.2. Staff are to be aware of the school's Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention Policies, and any physical interventions must be in line with agreed policy and procedures and national guidance.
- 20.3. A list of staff that have accessed physical intervention training will be kept by the Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead and updated in-line with [use of reasonable force](#) DfE guidance. All incidents will be recorded in-line with guidance.
- 20.4. There may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force in order to safeguard children from harm. Further information regarding our approach and expectations can be found in the school's Behaviour Policy.
- 20.5. If staff, visitors, volunteers or parent helpers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in school, who they are with, for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open.
- 20.6. Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. This advice can be found in [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings May 2019](#) (Safer Recruitment consortium). 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.
- 20.7. Staff should be particularly aware of the professional risks associated with the use of electronic communication (e-mail; mobile phones; texting; social network sites) and should familiarise themselves with advice and professional expectations outlined in the school's Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

## 21. Staff Supervision and Support

- 21.1. Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.
- 21.2. The induction process will include familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if members of staff have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare. The school will provide appropriate supervision and support for all members of staff to ensure that:
- All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
  - All staff will be supported by the DSL in their safeguarding role
  - All members of staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time
- 21.3. The DSL will also put staff in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish. Staff can also approach organisations such as their Union, the Education Support Partnership or other similar organisations directly.

## 22. Safer Recruitment

- 22.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust values the importance of developing a safe culture and is committed to ensure that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our pupils/students and staff.
- 22.2. Rainham Mark Education Trust will use the recruitment and selection process to deter, identify and reject unsuitable candidates. We will ensure that detailed checks are carried out and evidence is provided e.g. criminal record checks (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks, together with references and interview

information this will aid the school in deciding about the suitability of the prospective employee.

- 22.3. The school will carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any issues that are publicly available online which may be relevant to their suitability to work with children and/or may have an impact on the school's reputation.
- 22.4. The Trust HR Team will ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts the interview has completed safer recruitment training. At all times the Chief Executive/Headteacher will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*, DfE (2025).
- 22.5. Safer recruitment procedures will include the requirement for appropriate checks in line with national guidance (see: [Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment](#)).
- 22.6. The school maintains an accurate Single Central Record (SCR) in line with statutory guidance.
- 22.7. We are also committed to supporting the statutory guidance from the Department for Education on the application of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006 in schools.
- 22.8. We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions, court orders, cautions, reprimands and warnings.
- 22.9. Where the school places a learner with an alternative provision provider, the school will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that child. The school will undertake appropriate checks to ensure the provider meets the needs of the pupil/student, including written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.

## **23. Allegations Against Members of Staff, including Supply Staff, Contractors and Volunteers**

- 23.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises that allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.
- 23.2. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
- 23.3. Rainham Mark Education Trust understands the duty to refer to the LADO where it is alleged that anyone working in the school has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
  - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- 23.4. In depth information regarding staff allegations can be found within our Procedures for Managing Allegations against Staff Policy. This can be found in the RMET Intranet. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the schools safeguarding regime. The leadership team at Rainham Mark Education Trust will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.
- 23.5. If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers/supply staff/visitors) posing a risk of harm to children, then:
- Allegations should be referred immediately to the Headteacher or deputy in their absence who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member.

Please refer to the Medway [LADO Leaflet](#) if you need further information.

- In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher then staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the CEO who will contact the LADO in the first instance
  - Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headteacher (if concerning the Headteacher) or should contact the CEO or the LADO directly on the information above
  - The Headteachers will seek advice from their Line Manager. They will then then contact the LADO within 24 hours of the alleged incident. No member of staff or the Trust HR Team will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO
- 23.6. Where Headteachers are unsure how to respond, for example if the school is unsure if a concern meets the harm 'thresholds', advice will be sought via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Enquiry Line and/or the Education Safeguarding Service.
- 23.7. Rainham Mark Education Trust 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. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.
- 23.8. 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 LADO and/or HR.

## 24. Concerns that do not meet the 'harms threshold'

- 24.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust has policies and processes in place to deal with low-level concerns and allegations that don't meet the 'harm threshold'. We have a clear reporting procedures for children, parents/carers and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice. We also acknowledge that low-level concerns can arise in several ways from various sources, e.g. suspicion, complaint or a disclosure. Procedures in place for confidentially sharing, recording and handling of low-level concerns.
- 24.2. 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 a member of staff has acted in a way that:
- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
  - does not meet the allegations threshold or is not considered serious enough to refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO)
- 24.3. Low-level concerns can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent and thoughtless, through to behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.
- 24.4. Where low-level concerns are reported, the Headteacher should share with their Line Manager and will then liaise with the LADO enquiries officer via phone/email.
- 24.5. The local LADO policy states that all allegations, including low level are considered with the LADO, please communicate and engage with the LADO in relation to all low-level concerns.
- 24.6. Rainham Mark Education Trust staff code of conduct explains what a low-level concern is and the importance of sharing concerns.

## 25. Whistleblowing Procedure

- 25.1. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the leadership team. All members of staff are made aware of the schools Whistleblowing procedure. It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.
- 25.2. Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## 26. Curriculum and Staying Safe

- 26.1. Schools play a pivotal and crucial role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour; “what is ‘safe’”; to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned.
- 26.2. Our curriculum provides opportunities for increasing self-esteem, self-awareness, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making; this ensures that our pupils/students have a range of strategies to ensure their protection and that they can also protect others.
- 26.3. Online safety is integrated into the curriculum.
- 26.4. We recognise the crucial role that school plays in preventative education. We have a whole school approach that creates a culture of zero tolerance for racism, ableism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia and sexual violence/harassment.
- 26.5. The school ensures that those delivering the PSHE curriculum have been trained and equipped to deliver high quality PSHE education in a safe way. For further information and training on Medway PSHE programs please follow the link: [School PSHE programmes](#).
- 26.6. Other systems and interventions that exist outside of day-to-day teaching opportunities, classroom interaction and support include: *Anti-Bullying Policy/ ambassadors, questionnaires, worry boxes, inclusion hub, wellbeing TAs*.
- 26.7. Rainham Mark Education Trust recognises the value of external organisations and/or speakers visiting to provide useful information or to help enrich children’s education. However, the school will always assess the suitability of external organisations or speakers before granting them access to pupils/students; this may include an assessment of the educational value, the age/ability appropriateness of content and whether relevant safeguarding checks will be required.

## 27. Use of ‘reasonable force’

- 27.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust acknowledges that in certain situations, staff may need to use reasonable force to safeguard children from harm. This refers to actions involving physical contact to control or restrain a child, ranging from guiding them to safety to intervening in more serious incidents such as fights or preventing injury. ‘Reasonable’ means using no more force than necessary.
- 27.2. Further details on our approach can be found in our Behaviour Policy and in line with the DfE guidance ‘*Use of Reasonable Force in Schools*.’ Additional advice is available in Part Two of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*.

## 28. The Use of School Premises by Other Organisations

- 28.1. Services or activities provided separately by another organisation from time to time may seek to use the school premises. The school will seek written assurance that the



organisations concerned have suitable policies and procedures in place with regard to safeguarding children and that relevant safeguarding checks have been made for all staff and volunteers.

28.2. The governing body or proprietor will therefore seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

28.3. Without this assurance then an application to use the premises will be refused.

28.4. If Rainham Mark Education Trust receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was on school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). Rainham Mark Education Trust will follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO as they would with any safeguarding allegation.

## 29. Security

29.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust has a responsibility to provide a secure site that is controlled by clear management directives, but the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore, all staff and people on the site have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light.

29.2. Visitors and volunteers must only enter through the main entrance and after signing in at the office will be issued with a school lanyard or visitor's pass. School has a clear system of ensuring visitors are to be accompanied/supervised by [regulated staff member](#).

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

29.4. Any individual on site who is not known or identifiable by a visitor's pass may be challenged by any staff member for clarification and reassurance.

## 30. Monitoring and Review

30.1. All school staff (including temporary/supply staff and volunteers) will have access to a copy of this policy. The policy will also be available to parents/guardians.

30.2. This policy has been written in (August 2025) to reflect the new guidance and legislation issued in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

30.3. All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents. The DSL will review the policy following any child protection concerns (including following learning identified from serious case reviews) or allegations against staff to ensure that it reflects appropriate, accurate and up-to-date safeguarding practice.

30.4. The policy is included in our school development plan and will be evaluated each year by the **Board of Trustees**, who are responsible for overseeing safeguarding and child protection systems.

## APPENDIX 1: Definitions of Forms of Abuse/Specific Safeguarding Issues

### Definitions of Forms of Abuse

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.

- **Abuse:** 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 may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children
- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which 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. Please click on the hyperlink for further information, advice and guidance: [NSPCC Physical Abuse](#)
- **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. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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. Please click on the hyperlink for further information, advice and guidance: [NSPCC Emotional Abuse](#)
- **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. Please click on the hyperlink for further information, advice and guidance: [NSPCC Sexual Abuse](#)
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter



(including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Please click on the hyperlink for further information, advice and guidance: [NSPCC Neglect](#)

## APPENDIX 2: Support Links

Other links can also be found in KCSIE Annex B.

### Support for staff

- Education Support Partnership: [www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk](http://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk)
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: [www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline)

### Support for Pupils/Students

- NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- ChildLine: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- Papyrus: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)
- Young Minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- The Mix: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)
- Shout: [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)
- Fearless: [www.fearless.org](http://www.fearless.org)
- Kidscape: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

### Support for adults

- Family Lives: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)
- Crime Stoppers: [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)
- Victim Support: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)
- Kidscape: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- The Samaritans: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)
- Mind: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): [napac.org.uk](http://napac.org.uk)
- MOSAC: [www.mosac.org.uk](http://www.mosac.org.uk)
- Action Fraud: [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)
- Shout: [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)

### Specific Safeguarding Issues

Please see below links to information and guidance about specific safeguarding issues. You will find further information in Annex B: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

#### Mental Health

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

In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. Its resources

include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See Rise Above for links to all materials and lesson plans.

- Mind: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- Moodspark: <https://moodspark.org.uk>
- Young Minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- We are with you (formerly Addaction): [www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/)
- Every mind matters <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/>

The department is providing funding to support costs of a significant training programme for senior mental health leads and the national rollout of the Link Programme. Training for senior mental health leads, will be available to all state-funded schools and colleges by 2025, to help introduce or develop their whole school or college approach to mental health.

### **Support for Learning Disabilities**

- Respond: [www.respond.org.uk](http://www.respond.org.uk)
- Mencap: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

### **Domestic Abuse**

- Refuge: [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)
- Domestic abuse services: [www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk](http://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk)
- Women's Aid: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)
- Men's Advice Line: [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)
- Mankind: [www.mankindcounselling.org.uk](http://www.mankindcounselling.org.uk)
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)
- Respect Phonenumber: <https://respectphonenumber.org.uk>

### **Honour based Violence (FGM and Breast Ironing)**

- Forced Marriage Unit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>
- Information and resources <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/female-genital-mutilation>
- FGM Factsheet:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/496415/6\\_1639\\_HO\\_SP\\_FGM\\_mandatory\\_reporting\\_Fact\\_sheet\\_Web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496415/6_1639_HO_SP_FGM_mandatory_reporting_Fact_sheet_Web.pdf)
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information)
- National FGM Centre <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/fgm/>

### **Contextual Safeguarding, Child-on-Child abuse, Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation:**

- Contextual Safeguarding Network: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk>
- National Crime Agency: [www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are)
- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: [www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk](http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk)
- Brook: [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

- Victim Support: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- Disrespect Nobody: [www.disrespectnobody.co.uk](http://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk)
- Upskirting – know your rights: [www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights)
- Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse - CSA Centre

## **Substance Misuse**

- Drugs advice for Schools: [Gov.uk](http://Gov.uk) [Drugs advice for schools](http://Gov.uk)
- Talk to Frank <https://www.talktofrank.com/>
- We are with you (formerly Addaction): [www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/)

## **Online Safety**

- CEOP: [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)
- Think U Know: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- Childnet: [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- UK Safer Internet Centre: [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- Report Harmful Content: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
- Parents Info: [www.parentinfo.org](http://www.parentinfo.org)
- Marie Collins Foundation: [www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk](http://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk)
- Internet Matters: [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)
- NSPCC/ Net Aware: [www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety) and [www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk)
- Get safe Online: [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)
- Stop it Now! [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)
- Parents Protect: [www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk)
- Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes - this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support
- LGFL 'Undressed' provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders

## **Radicalisation and hate**

- Educate against Hate: [www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com)
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: [www.gov.uk/report-terrorism](http://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism)
- True Vision: [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)

## APPENDIX 3: Related Safeguarding Policies

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read in conjunction with the policies as listed below: (to be read and followed alongside this document).

- Acceptable Use of Technology Policies (AUP)
- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour including use of physical intervention
- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Data protection and Information sharing
- Emergency Procedures (Incl. evacuation & lock-down)
- First aid and accidents – including safer eating/allergies/infection/asthma
- Health and safety
- Managing allegations against staff
- Online Safety; Social media and Mobile technology
- Personal and intimate care
- Relationship Health and Sex Education (RHSE)
- Risk assessments (e.g. school trips, use of technology, school re-opening)
- Safer recruitment
- Searching, screening and confiscation
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- Staff Code of Conduct/Behaviour Policy
- Whistleblowing

The school may wish to hyperlink documents to ensure staff have easy access to the additional policies that should be read alongside this document.

## **APPENDIX 4: Procedure for dealing with disclosures (the 6 R's – what to do if)**

### **1. Receive:**

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief you display denial to a child or show shock or disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down
- Accept what is being said without judgement
- Take it seriously

### **2. Reassure:**

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable. Don't make promises that you can't be sure to keep, e.g. "everything will be all right now"
- Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets. You have a duty to report your concerns
- Tell the child that you will need to tell some people, but only those whose job it is to protect children
- Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk and reassure them they have done the right thing

### **3. React:**

- React to the student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- **Do not** ask leading questions; "Did he/she....?" Such questions can invalidate evidence.
- Do ask open "TED" questions; Tell explain describe
- Do not criticise the perpetrator; the student may have affection for him/her
- Do not ask the student to repeat it all for another member of staff
- Explain what you have to do next and who you must talk to

### **4. Record:**

- Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes
- Record the date, time, place, words used by the child and how the child appeared to you – be specific. Record the actual words used by the child
- Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions – keep it factual

### **5. Remember:**

- Contact the designated member of staff
- The designated teacher may be required to make appropriate records available to other agencies

### **6. Relax**

- Get some support for yourself

## APPENDIX 5: Specific Safeguarding Issues

- Rainham Mark Education Trust acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including (but not limited to):
  - Abuse and neglect
  - Bullying, including cyberbullying
  - Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
  - Child missing from home or care
  - Child-on-child abuse
  - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
  
  - Children with family members in prison
  - Children Missing Education (CME)
  - Contextual safeguarding (risks outside the family home)
  - County lines and gangs
  - Domestic abuse
  - Drugs and alcohol misuse
  - Fabricated or induced illness
  - Faith abuse
  - Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls
  - Hate
  - Homelessness
  - Human trafficking and modern slavery
  - Mental health
  - Nude or semi-nude image sharing, aka youth produced sexual imagery or “Sexting”
  - Online safety
  - Preventing radicalisation and extremism
  - Private fostering
  - Relationship abuse
  - Serious Violence
  - Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
  - So-Called honour-based abuse including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
  - Up-skirting

(Also see Part One and Annex B within ‘Keeping children Safe in Education’ 2025)



## Appendix 6: RMET Searching and Confiscation Procedures

### Introduction

Under The Education Act 1996, the Headteacher and authorised staff members (SLT/DSL/Pastoral leaders) can search children, including their bags, phones/devices and their lockers, **with their consent** for any item. The ability to give consent may be influenced by the child's age. In a secondary school setting, it is assumed that all children will be able to give consent. In this context, permission does not need to be sought from parents or carers. **In primary settings, consent must be sought from parents** before a search is conducted.

**Consent is not required** if a the Headteacher/senior staff believe a child to be in possession of any of the following:

- Knives or weapons, laser pens, alcohol, illegal drugs and other substances, for example 'legal highs', tobacco and cigarette papers, e-cigarettes, fireworks and pornographic images;
- Any article that the school reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury, or damage to property;
- Any item banned by the school rules which has been identified as an item which may be searched for;
- Any item which the school believes to have been stolen.

Trust staff are at liberty to confiscate any prohibited item found as a result of a search and to retain such items that are confiscated for the duration of any subsequent investigation. They are also at liberty to seize any item, however found, that they believe to be harmful or detrimental to school discipline. The school will always pass on to police the following items if found during a search:

- Stolen items;
- Controlled drugs;
- Extreme or child pornography;
- Any weapons or items which are evidence of an offence.

In searching children, **staff must pay heed to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights**; children have a right to respect for their private lives and in the context of these particular powers, this means that children have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy. This right under Article 8 is not absolute, it can be interfered with, but any interference with this right by the school must be justified and proportionate.

### Before searching

A search without consent can only be undertaken if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child may have in their possession a prohibited item. In each particular case, it must be decided what constitutes reasonable ground for suspicion, for example other children may be talking about the item, or the odd behaviour of a child, or the suspected child may be exhibiting suspicious behaviour. Staff may also view CCTV footage if available to decide whether to conduct a search. A member of SLT/DSL must be present during all searches and no search should take place without the express authorisation of the Headteacher (or DHT when deputising at the point authorisation is required).

***Please note that searches without consent can only take place on the school premises or if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the children, for example on a school trip.***

The member of staff carrying out the search must also be the same sex as the child being searched and there must be a witness who, if at all possible, should ideally be the same sex. There is however an ***exception to this rule***: a search may be carried out on a child of the opposite sex and without a witness present, but only if there is a reasonable belief that there is a serious risk of harm if the search is not carried out immediately, and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon a second member of staff.

Due regard must also be given to the child's right to a reasonable level of personal privacy, so it should be ensured that the child is taken to an office or classroom away from other children. In the case of a whole class having to be searched, for example if a knife has gone missing during a practical lesson, having informed the whole class that they will be searched, ask if there is anyone who is not comfortable for this to take place in a group setting and ensure they are searched somewhere more private.

It is good practice to remain calm and courteous when searching a child, clearly explaining why you are searching them and thanking them for their cooperation in helping to ensure that the school community remains safe. With such an approach, it is far more likely that the child will cooperate.

#### During the search

Having explained to the child that you need to search them, give them the opportunity to give up the item voluntarily, for example by saying ***"Do you have anything in your possession today that you know you should not have and if so, would you like to give it to me?"***. Often a child may give up whatever it is they have to avoid the situation escalating. If the child refuses to cooperate with the search, the school can apply an appropriate disciplinary sanction. If the child refuses and you believe them to have in their possession something which could cause harm, isolate them and inform them that you are calling the police to search them.

It is worth noting that staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances when conducting a search for knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco, fireworks, pornographic images or articles that have been, or could be used to commit an offence or cause harm; however, we would discourage this in all but the most extreme cases, when an imminent threat is posed to the school community. ***In such extreme circumstances where reasonable force is deemed necessary this should pay due attention to the RMET Positive Handling Policy.***

The member of staff ***may not ask the child to remove anything other than outer clothing***. 'Outer clothing' means any clothing that is not worn next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear; ergo, the child can be asked to remove gloves, scarves, shoes, coats and jumpers. Possessions means any goods over which the child has or appears to have control, which includes lockers and bags. Possessions must only be searched in the presence of the child and another member of staff, except where there is a serious risk that extreme harm could arise if the search is not conducted immediately. All Trust staff are required to familiarise themselves with the [case study for child Q](#). With this in mind, it must always be weighed up what immediate risk there

is to necessitate a search in the absence of 2 members of school staff. Any member of staff conducting a search is advised to wear surgical gloves when doing so, for their own protection.

Please conduct the search as follows:

- Remove coat and/or blazer and search all pockets (after removal);
- Run hands over the inside of the garment when it is laid flat on a table to check that nothing has been concealed in the lining. Pay particular attention to holes in the lining;
- Ask the child to remove jumper and ask them to pull out the breast pocket of shirt to demonstrate there is nothing concealed;
- If trousers are being worn, ask the child to turn out all pockets completely (do not pat down) to check nothing is concealed;
- If you suspect items have been hidden in underwear, summon police to search ensuring a suitable adult is present (this should be a parent/carer where possible). ***Searching underwear, under these parameters, would only be required where there is measured likelihood that an item being concealed there would pose a significant threat to the child or school community. School staff have a duty of care and should under no circumstances enable a search to take place on school premises in the absence of a responsible adult (parent/carer/suitably qualified member of the Safeguarding Team);***
- Ask the child to pull their waistband out to demonstrate nothing concealed;
- Ask the child to remove shoes and feel inside the shoes;
- Ask for trouser legs to be raised and socks pulled down to check nothing concealed;
- Empty bag out and check all pockets and the lining. Be particularly aware if there are holes in the lining;
- Check inside pencil cases and anything else that could be used to conceal an item;

At the end of the search thank the child for their cooperation and explain you will be writing to their parent/carer to explain.

#### Searching a whole class

There may be some situations where a whole class has to be searched, for example, if a sharp implement e.g. knife/scalpel/tweezers has gone missing during a Food Technology/DT/Science or Art lesson. All departments where knives or similar such implements are used must have a strict policy of counting out and counting in at the end of the lesson. If such an implement appears to be missing, the following procedure should be followed:

- Call for a member of SLT/Safeguarding Team;
- Ask all children to stop what they are doing and be seated;
- Conduct a search of the waste bins in case the knife has accidentally been thrown away;
- Check in all cupboards, drawers and anywhere else the item could have been concealed;
- When the member of SLT/ST arrives, explain that because a knife has gone missing, the whole class will be searched;
- Ask the children if anyone has accidentally concealed it and would like to give it in;
- Every member of the class must then be searched as above;

- When all members of the class have been searched or the missing item has been found, the class may be dismissed.

#### After the search

The member of staff conducting the search can seize anything they have reasonable grounds for suspecting is a prohibited item or is evidence in relation to an offence. Alcohol and tobacco should be disposed of and **not returned** to a child or their parent/carer. Where controlled drugs are found, these must be delivered to the police as soon as possible, as must stolen goods and any weapons or items which are evidence of an offence. If a pornographic image or extremist material is found, the member of staff may dispose of the image unless its possession constitutes a specified offence (extreme or child pornography or extremist material) in which case, it must be passed to the police. Images found on a mobile phone or other electronic device can be deleted by a member of staff, unless it is necessary to pass to the police for the reasons stated above. Where a member of staff finds an item which is banned under the school rules, but that does not pose an imminent threat to the safety of the school community, they should use their professional judgment to decide whether to return it, retain it or dispose of it. Finally, please ensure that for each child who is searched, a search checklist is completed (Appendix F1) and a search letter (Appendix F2) sent to the parents/carers of the child who has been searched. In the case of a whole class being searched, one search checklist for the class will suffice.

## Appendix F1

Searching a Child – RMET Guidance and check list for Staff.

If you are called upon to search a child , please ensure you are fully familiar with the ‘RMET Searching and Confiscation Procedures’ and adhere to the following checklist/guidance:

	√	Comment if needed
<b>NEVER</b> search alone, <b>ALWAYS with a member of SLT/DSL</b> . Search all pockets in blazers and outdoor coats		
Tell the child that you are going to search them and why.		
Explain to them that you understand it is not nice for them, but that we have to put the safety of the school community first and we hope they will cooperate.		
The search must take place away from other children/staff <b>with a member of SLT /DSL present</b> .		
Wear rubber gloves for hygiene purposes.		
We can only search outer clothing, so children cannot be asked to remove shirts, trousers or skirts.		
If you suspect a child has concealed something in their underwear, <b>the police must be called to deal with it</b> .		
Ask child to turn all trouser pockets inside out		
Ask child to take off shoes and pull down tops of socks		
Check all compartments in school bags		
When you have finished the search, thank the child for their cooperation and explain that a letter will be sent home informing parents of the search.		
<p>A) If nothing found, child can return to lesson.</p> <p>B) If prohibited items found, child to write an account immediately.</p> <p>C) Pass any prohibited items to DSL.</p> <p>D) Bag any weapons to avoid touching (envelope, plastic bag, disposable glove).</p> <p>E) If a child is in possession of an offensive weapon, <b>detain them and contact DSL/Headteacher</b> who will make the decision as to whether police should be called to arrest.</p> <p>F) If abusive or unsuitable material is found on mobile phones or electronic devices please delete it. (<b>*EXCEPTIONS – see below</b>) G) <b>*In the case of extreme or child pornography and extremist view, please pass to DSL who will contact the police.</b></p>		

Request search letter to be sent to parents/carers. (Appendix F2)		
<b>STAFF DETAILS (Staff Member 1)</b>		
<b>Staff Member Name</b>		
<b>Signature</b>		
<b>Date &amp; Time</b>		
<b>STAFF DETAILS (Staff Member 2)</b>		
<b>Staff Member Name</b>		
<b>Signature</b>		
<b>Date &amp; Time</b>		

## Appendix F2

Standard letter for when a child has been searched

I am writing to inform you that xxxx was searched in xxxx School on [add the DATE]. In accordance with our Behaviour Policy, xxxx School has the right to search children and their lockers with consent for any item. If we suspect a child to be in possession of prohibited items however, then we have the authority to search children *without* consent.

xxxx was searched as we had information that led us to believe that he/she may have been in possession of a prohibited item. Under Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act, the school has the statutory powers to carry out such a search, without written consent or parental permission.

I am pleased to report that on this occasion, nothing was found.

OR

During this search, a prohibited item was found in xxxx's possession. We will be writing to you separately with regards to any sanctions that may be subsequently imposed.

In accordance with both our Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance, THIS/THESE ITEMS will be passed to the police, along with your child's details. (If drugs/weapons/stolen property/extreme or child pornography/item likely to be used to commit a criminal act.)

Please refer to our Behaviour Policy, which can be found on the school website, to familiarise yourself with our school rules on items that are prohibited in school. It is always unfortunate to have to carry out searches in school, but we are sure you understand that one of our key responsibilities is to ensure the safety and well-being of our children at all times; we thank you for your support in enabling us to do this.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher, XXXXX School