Stone Lodge School

Safeguarding Policy

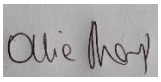
Policy Consultation & Review

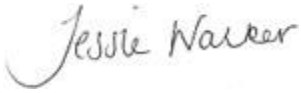
This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our school and through our school newsletter.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated safeguarding arrangements.

The policy is provided to all staff at induction alongside our Staff Code of Conduct, behaviour policy and the safeguarding response to those pupils who are absent from education. In addition, all staff are provided with Part One of the statutory guidance *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*, DfE (2026).

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Board on an annual basis.

Signature  Principal Date: 1st Sept 2026



Signature Chair of Governors Date: 1st Sept 2026

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1. PURPOSE & AIMS

1.1 The purpose of Stone Lodge Therapeutic School's safeguarding policy is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at our school is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:

- Provide help and support to meet the needs of children and young people as soon as problems emerge;
- Protect children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Prevent impairment of our children's and young people's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensure that children and young people at our school grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Undertake that role so as to enable children and young people at our school to have the best outcomes.

1.2 This policy will give clear directions to all staff, including supply staff, volunteers, visitors and parents about expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at our school.

1.3 Our school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children from harm and support and promote the welfare of all children who are registered pupils at our school. The elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support.

1.4 We recognise that our safeguarding responsibilities are clearly linked to our responsibilities for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding responses are in place for children who are absent from school or who go missing from education, particularly for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions. The Engagement Lead will regularly liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to discuss all persistently absent pupils and those who go missing to identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to ensure that appropriate safeguarding responses have been put in place to reduce the risk of future harm.

1.5 This policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents, governors, volunteers and visitors.

2. OUR ETHOS

2.1 The child's welfare is of paramount importance. Our school will establish and maintain an ethos where pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children at our school will be able to talk freely to any member of staff at our school if they are worried or concerned about something. They can also identify a member of the safeguarding team as they wear purple lanyards. They also have access to a QR code through posters around school where they can anonymously report any safeguarding concerns. All staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Victims will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

2.2 pupils are not permitted to access or use mobile phones or other smart devices with similar communication, messaging, recording or internet-enabled functions at any point during the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes. This approach is intended to safeguard pupils, reduce opportunities for online bullying, harassment, inappropriate image-sharing

and other online harms, and promote a safe, calm and focused learning environment. Any exceptions will be considered on an individual basis where there is a specific medical, safeguarding or additional need, including where a reasonable adjustment is required

2.2 All staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Victims will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

2.3 Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. We recognise that staff at our school play a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. **All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of *'it could happen here'* where safeguarding is concerned.** Concerning the welfare of a child, staff members must always act in the **best interests** of the child.

2.4 At Stone Lodge we ensure that safeguarding and child protection is at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. We operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

2.5 Where there is a safeguarding concern, the child's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. The systems we have in place are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.

2.6 All staff and regular visitors will, through training and induction, know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose. All staff will be trained to recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

2.7 Throughout our PSHE Jigsaw curriculum, we will provide activities and opportunities for children to develop the knowledge, values and skills they need to identify risks, including knowing when and how to ask for help for themselves and others to stay safe (this includes online). The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum) will cover relevant topics in an age and stage appropriate way, enabling pupils to learn about their rights and responsibilities to behave and stay safe in a variety of contexts on and offline. This will provide further reinforcement to help children identify risks, know when to seek support and develop the skills to ask for help from trustworthy, reliable sources.

Further information can be found in the DfE guidance 'Teaching online safety in school' and 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education' This education is underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system.

2.8 At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

2.9 As part of our responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, we recognise that any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention is required. We will identify emerging needs at the earliest opportunity and provide or facilitate an appropriate, co-ordinated response through universal services and community-based early help, or through targeted early help delivered via Family Help, where appropriate.

All staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs, whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- Has a mental health need;
- Is a young carer;
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves;
- Has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours;
- Is at risk of, or experiencing, abuse, neglect, exploitation or modern slavery;
- Is privately fostered.

Staff should also be alert to wider indicators of vulnerability and safeguarding concerns, including where a child:

- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement, association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- Is frequently absent from education or goes missing from education, care or home;
- Has experienced repeated suspensions, is at risk of permanent exclusion, or is receiving education through alternative provision
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol;
- Is at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, trafficking or other forms of exploitation, including financial exploitation;
- Is living in a family environment affected by substance misuse, adult mental health difficulties or domestic abuse;
- Is at risk of radicalisation or extremist influence;
- Is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage;
- Is affected by parental offending or has a family member in custody;
- Is experiencing abuse or harmful behaviour within their own relationships, including teenage relationship abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, stalking or violence;
- Is experiencing prejudice-based harm, discrimination, racism or other forms of harassment.

We recognise that safeguarding concerns are rarely isolated events and that children may experience several overlapping vulnerabilities. Staff must remain professionally curious and consider the child's individual circumstances, including risks within the family, peer groups, the wider community and online.

Where additional needs are identified, we will consider the most appropriate response in partnership with the child, their parents or carers where appropriate. This may include support through universal services, community-based early help or targeted early help through Family Help. We will work with relevant agencies to ensure that support is appropriately co-ordinated, proportionate and responsive to the changing needs of the child and family. Early help is a voluntary approach and should involve the child and family in understanding their needs and agreeing appropriate support. Information will be shared with relevant professionals where

necessary and proportionate to safeguard and promote the child's welfare, in accordance with our information-sharing procedures.

Early help does not replace statutory child protection intervention. Where there is reason to believe that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, staff must report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay so that an immediate referral can be made to the relevant local authority children's social care service in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

2.10 At Stone Lodge School we understand the importance of working in a way that adheres to the following legislation:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty

This means we do not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)	Kerry Williams and Stacey Weller	Kerry.williams@stonelodgeschool.org 01536904277 Stacey.whitehead@stonelodgeschool.org 01536 904277
Operational DSL	Lesley Colquhoun	Lesley.colquhoun@stonelodgeschool.org 07848 079416
Director of School and Deputy DSL	Ollie Sharp	ollie.sharp@stonelodgeschool.org 07904099757 01536 904277
Deputy DSL	Hayley Johnson Amy Loake Carole Hargrave Caron Rogers	Hayley.Johnson@stonelodgeschool.org 01536904277 Amy.Loake@stonelodgeschool.org 01536 904277 Carole.Hargrave@stonelodgeschool.org 01536 904277 Caron.rogers@stonelodgeschool.org
Mental Health Lead	Stacey Whitehead	Stacey.whitehead@stonelodgeschool.org 01536 904277
Named Safeguarding Governor	Jessie Walker	head@maplefields.northants-ecl.gov.uk 01536 424090

Chair of Governors	Jessie Walker	head@maplefields.northants-ecl.gov.uk 01536 424090
Note: All members of SLT are trained as DSLs – including Hayley Johnson, Carole Hargrave and Amy Loake.		

3.1 It is the responsibility of *every* member of staff, volunteer and regular visitor to our school to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of all of the pupils at this school. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

The Governing Body

3.2 The Governing Body of Stone Lodge is accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and our compliance with it. Although our Governing Board takes collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils.

3.3 The Governing Boby will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policy is in place, is reviewed annually, is available publicly via our school website and has been written in line with Local Authority guidance and the requirements of our Local Authorities Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures. We work with the following Local Authorities - North and West Northamptonshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Warwickshire

- The school contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers (updated 2024).

- A senior member of staff from leadership team is designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that there is at least one deputy DSL(s) who is appropriately trained member to deal with any issues in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). There will always be cover for this role. The role will be evidenced explicitly in the role holder's job description. Due to the split site nature of the school all SLT will be trained as DSLs and staff will have the numbers for the DSL displayed prominently.

- All staff receive a safeguarding induction and are provided with a copy of this policy, the staff code of conduct, the behaviour policy and the school's safeguarding response for those pupils who are absent from education as detailed in section 6 of this policy.

- All staff undertake appropriate child protection training that is updated annually and online safety training;

- In terms of filtering and monitoring there is consideration to the number of and age range of children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with statutory guidance;

- Safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* DfE (2026);

- They remedy without delay any weakness in regard to our safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.

3.4 The Governing Body will receive a safeguarding report at each meeting that will record the training that has taken place, the number of staff attending and any outstanding training requirements for the school. It will also record all safeguarding activity that has taken place, for example, meetings attended, reports written, training or induction given. It will not identify individual pupils.

The Principal

3.5 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School the Principal is responsible for:

- Identifying a senior member of staff from leadership team to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- Identifying alternate members of staff to act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in his/her absence to ensure there is always cover for the role.
- Ensuring that the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Board, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff;
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns are addressed sensitively in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing procedures;
- Liaise with the Designated Officer/ LADO in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

3.6 The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a senior member of staff, from the leadership team who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within our school. The DSL will carry out their role in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in Annex C of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*. At Stone Lodge the DSL's are Kerry Williams and Stacey Weller.

3.7 During term time the Operational DSL, designated safeguarding lead and or a deputy will always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. If in *exceptional* circumstances, a DSL is not available on the school site in person, we will ensure that they are available via telephone and/or any other relevant media. All members of SLT are DSL trained.

The Operational DSL at Stone Lodge Therapeutic School will represent our school at child protection conferences and core group meetings. Through appropriate training, knowledge and experience they will liaise with Children's Services and other agencies where necessary, and make referrals of suspected abuse to Children's Services, take part in strategy discussions and other interagency meetings and contribute to the assessment of children.

3.8 The Operational DSL will maintain records and child protection files ensuring that they are kept confidential and stored securely (see section 7 for more information.)

3.9 The DSL is responsible for ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of our policy and the procedure they need to follow. They will ensure that all staff, volunteers and regular visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction and have been trained to a high standard in how to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.

3.10 The DSL will obtain details of the Local Authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support a child who is a care leaver.

3.11 The DSL(s) will work with the senior leaders, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement.

3.12 This will include understanding their academic progress and attainment and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort and supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential.

3.13 We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health. The DSL will use the information that they hold about children with a social worker to make decisions in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and help promote educational outcomes. The DSL will ensure that staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

3.14 We recognises our responsibility to provide a safe online environment for all pupils and to protect them from exposure to illegal, inappropriate and harmful online content. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 and the Department for Education's Filtering and Monitoring: Core Standard, we have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to safeguard pupils when using the school's IT systems, devices and internet access. The school uses Smoothwall filtering and monitoring, provided by our IT support, Swiftcomm, The DSL and SLT received and review alerts and reports provided by the smoothwall technology. The school's filtering and monitoring arrangements will be reviewed at least annually.

4. TRAINING & INDUCTION

4.1 When new staff (including volunteers) who join our school will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our school's safeguarding policy along with the staff code of conduct, Part one in full of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' and told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs are. They will also receive a copy of the behaviour policy and the school's response to children who are absent from education – this information is included in section 6 of this policy. All staff are expected to read these key documents. They will also be provided with information about how to record and report safeguarding concerns.

4.2 Every new member of staff or volunteer will receive safeguarding training during their induction period within 24 hours of joining the school. This programme will include information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child (including reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe), how to record, the processes for referral to Children's Services and the statutory assessments under Section 17 and Section 47 as well as the remit of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The training will also include information about whistleblowing in respect of concerns about another adult's behaviour and suitability to work with children. Staff

will also receive online safety training, including understanding the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring as this is part of the overarching safeguarding approach of our school.

4.3 In addition to the safeguarding induction, we will ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in Part one of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'*. In order to achieve this, we will ensure that:

- all members of staff will undertake appropriate safeguarding training on an annual basis, and we will evaluate the impact of this training;
- all staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively;

4.4 All regular visitors, temporary staff and volunteers to our school will be given a set of our safeguarding procedures; they will be informed of who our DSL and alternate staff members are and what the recording and reporting system is. This will be in paper format and also on the electronic signing in process.

4.5 The DSL, the alternate designated member(s) of staff and any other senior member of staff who may be in a position of making referrals or attending child protection conferences or core groups will attend one of the multi-agency training courses organised by Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership at least once every three years. The DSL and alternate(s) will attend Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training provided by the Local Authority every two years. In addition to formal training, DSLs will ensure that they update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

4.6 Our Governing Body will also undertake appropriate training to equip 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. This training takes place at induction and is updated regularly.
All three governors are DSL trained.

4.7 We actively encourage all of our staff to keep up to date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance. Local guidance can be accessed via Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

5. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CONCERNS

5.1 Stone Lodge Therapeutic School adheres to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. Where we identify children and families in need of support, we will carry out our responsibilities in accordance with legislation.

5.2 Every member of staff, including volunteers working with children at our school are advised to maintain an attitude of '***it could happen here'*** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and have a responsibility to take action as outline in this policy.

5.3 All staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or

disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period of time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy immediately to allow the DSL to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

5.4 It is *not* the responsibility of school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and pass the information on in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

5.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our school. Any member of staff or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child is at risk of harm must report it immediately to the DSL or, if unavailable, to the alternate designated person. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.

5.6 All concerns about a child or young person should be reported without delay and recorded in writing using the agreed system in the setting (see Appendix 1 for suggested template). Records should include:
• a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
• details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
• a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

5.7 Following receipt of any information that raises concern, the DSL will consider what action to take and seek advice from the MASH team as required. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.

5.8 All referrals will be made in line with Local Authority Children's Services procedures.

5.9 If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to MASH / the police immediately. Anybody can make a referral in these circumstances. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration by raising concerns again with the DSL and/or the Heads of School. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

5.10 Staff should always follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with the police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated senior person, their alternate and the Heads of School are all unavailable;

- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety.

5.11 Any member of staff who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Principal or the Chair of Governors. If any member of staff does not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point should contact MASH directly with their concerns.

6. SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Contextual safeguarding

6.1 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School, we recognise that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school environment and/or can occur between children outside of the school. This is known as contextual safeguarding. It is key that all school staff understand the definition of contextual safeguarding and consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Through training we will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that 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. When reporting concerns, staff should include as much information and background detail as possible so the DSL can make a referral with a holistic view of the child. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

6.2 We recognise that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges and these are discussed in staff training. These additional barriers can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

6.3 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School, we recognise that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): County Lines and serious violence

6.4 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we train staff to recognise that both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both 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. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

6.5 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we recognise that Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse and this imbalance of power coerces, manipulates or deceives a child or young person into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator. Child sexual exploitation does not always include physical contact, it can also occur through the use of

technology. We understand that some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

6.6 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we understand that criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. Drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs.

6.7 We understand that children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. We will treat these children as victims understanding that they have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. We recognise the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys and that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

6.8 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School staff are aware of the indicators and risk factors which may signal a child is vulnerable to or involved with serious violent crime. We make reference to the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance for more information.

6.9 If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a referral to the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) will be made alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

So-called 'honour-based violence (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

6.10 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we recognise that our staff are well placed to identify concerns and take action to prevent children from becoming victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other forms of so-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) and provide guidance on these issues through our safeguarding training. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV, they should inform the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care.

6.11 Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers. 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 in England and Wales, 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. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. We will provide guidance and support to our teachers on this requirement and further information on when and how to make a report can be found in the following Home Office guidance: Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation- procedural information Home Office (January 2020)

6.12 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we recognise that forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. The Forced Marriage Unit has statutory guidance and Multi-agency guidelines and can be contacted for advice or more information: Contact 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fco.gov.uk

Preventing radicalisation and extremism

6.13 We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability in today's society. At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School, we will ensure that:

- Through training, staff, volunteers and governors have an understanding of what radicalisation and extremism is, why we need to be vigilant in school and how to respond when concerns arise.
- There are systems in place for keeping pupils safe from extremist material when accessing the internet in our school by using effective filtering and usage policies.

- The DSL has received Prevent training and will act as the point of contact within our school for any concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism.
- The DSL will make referrals in accordance with Northamptonshire safeguarding procedures.
- Through our curriculum, we will promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

6.14 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School, all staff receive safeguarding training so that they understand that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves through child-on-child abuse. We recognise that children can abuse other children, and that this behaviour can occur both inside and outside school, face-to-face and online. Child-on-child abuse must never be dismissed as "banter", "just having a laugh", part of growing up or an inevitable part of children interacting with one another.

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms and may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, including physical, verbal, emotional and psychological bullying, cyberbullying and discriminatory bullying;
- Physical abuse, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Sexual violence, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- Sexual harassment, including unwanted sexual comments, sexual jokes or remarks, sexual taunting, online sexual harassment and unwanted physical behaviour of a sexual nature;
- Upskirting and other forms of image-based abuse;
- The consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos, including images created, manipulated or digitally altered using artificial intelligence (AI), commonly referred to as deepfakes or deep nudes;
- Coercing, pressuring or threatening another child to create, share or view sexual images or engage in sexual activity;
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships between children, including teenage relationship abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, intimidation, stalking and physical or sexual violence;
- Initiation, hazing or ritualistic violence, including behaviour intended to humiliate, intimidate, degrade or cause physical or emotional harm;
- Prejudice-based abuse, including abuse relating to race, disability, sex, sexual orientation or other protected or personal characteristics;
- Misogynistic and misandrist behaviour, including language, attitudes or actions that demean, threaten, intimidate or target children because of their sex or gender.

We recognise that children can be vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional abuse by their peers or siblings.

Abuse perpetrated by children can be just as harmful as abuse perpetrated by adults. We will therefore take all concerns seriously and respond promptly, recognising the impact on the child who has experienced the abuse, while also ensuring that appropriate support, assessment and intervention are provided to the child displaying harmful behaviour.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse may be an indication of wider safeguarding concerns and that children who display harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced abuse, trauma, exploitation or other adverse experiences. This does not excuse the behaviour or reduce the need to protect other children. Our response will be child-centred, proportionate and informed by the individual circumstances, ages, developmental stages and needs of the

children involved.

We understand that abuse can occur within intimate personal relationships between children and that harmful sexual behaviour exists on a continuum. Staff must be alert to behaviour that may appear to be consensual but involves pressure, coercion, intimidation, manipulation or an imbalance of power. We will not make assumptions based solely on age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or the relationship between the children involved.

We recognise that the sharing of nude and semi-nude images or videos between children, whether consensual or non-consensual, is a safeguarding concern and may constitute child-on-child abuse. This includes images that have been digitally altered, manipulated or generated using AI. All such concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with our child protection and online safety procedures. Staff must not view, copy, download, print, store or forward sexual images of children.

All staff must remain alert to signs of child-on-child abuse, including changes in behaviour, emotional distress, unexplained injuries, withdrawal, anxiety, reluctance to attend school, or concerns arising from online activity. We recognise that abuse may be repeated, may involve groups of children and may take place outside the school environment or through digital platforms. Staff must report any concerns to the DSL without delay, even where they are uncertain whether the behaviour meets the threshold for abuse.

Stone Lodge Therapeutic School will take a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. We will ensure that concerns are investigated and responded to in a timely, sensitive and proportionate manner, with the safety and welfare of all children as our priority. We will consider the wishes and feelings of the child who has experienced the abuse, take steps to prevent further harm, and provide appropriate support to all children involved. We will follow local safeguarding procedures and refer to children's social care or the police where required.

All staff must understand that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children of any age and sex. Such behaviour is never acceptable and must never be passed off as harmless, inevitable or part of growing up. Staff must challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, including misogynistic comments and attitudes, and report concerns in accordance with this policy.

6.15 We understand that even if there are no reports in our setting it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. We recognise that pupils may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse and can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report, and this may come from a friend or a conversation that is overheard. Such abuse will always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and the same safeguarding children procedures will apply in respect of any child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Staff must never tolerate or dismiss concerns relating to child-on-child abuse and they will always challenge this. It must never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’, ‘just having a laugh’ or ‘part of growing up’. Doing this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

6.16 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we regularly review decisions and actions, and relevant policies are updated to reflect any lessons learnt. We look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, we decide upon an appropriate course of action.

6.17 All staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Victims will never be given the impression that they are creating problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. We will also offer appropriate support to the perpetrator and any other children involved.

6.18 All staff will understand that they should follow our safeguarding procedures for reporting a concern if they are worried about child-on-child abuse. The DSL will respond to any concerns related to child-on-child abuse in line with guidance outlined in Part five of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*.' We will ensure that all concerns, discussions and decisions reached are clearly recorded and any identified actions are followed up.

6.19 We will work with other agencies including the police and Children's Social Care, as required to respond to concerns about sexual violence and harassment. We will seek consultations where there are concerns or worries about developmentally inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour from the Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) Team as required so that we ensure we are offering the right support to the child(ren).

6.20 Support will depend on the circumstances of each case and the needs of the child, it may include completion of risk assessments to support children to remain in school whilst safeguarding other children and the victim, delivery of early intervention in respect of HSB and/or referral to more specialist services. Where a pupil discloses a rape, an attempted rape or a serious sexual assault whether this has happened recently or in the past the DSL will always contact the police in cases of rape and serious sexual assault as per the guidance When to call the Police: a guide for schools and colleges, National Police Chiefs Council.

Modern Slavery

6.21 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we understand that 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. We refer to the DfE guidance Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims for concerns of this nature. for concerns of this nature.

Safeguarding responses to children who are absent from education

6.22 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we adhere to the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (2026) guidance which is statuary under KCSIE 2026. All staff should be aware of the safeguarding responsibilities for children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, or for prolonged periods, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

6.23 We adhere to the following procedures and processes to ensure there is an appropriate safeguarding response to children who are absent from education:

- An attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session;
- We make every effort to contact parents and carers and follow up with the emergency contacts held;
- We hold at least two emergency contact numbers for each of the pupils on our roll wherever possible.
- Staff will alert DSLs to any concerns raised regarding children who are absent from school;

- The DSLs will meet regularly with the Engagement (attendance) Lead, SENCo and other members of the pastoral team to ensure that each response is thorough and takes into account all the relevant information about individual children;
- We will follow the procedures outlined in our attendance policy including undertaking first day calling and monitoring data to ensure we intervene early in cases of poor attendance and/or unexplained absences.
- We understand we remain responsible for the safeguarding of all pupils who are placed in an alternative provision.
- When removing a child from roll at the standard and non-standard transition points, we will inform the Local Authority in accordance with statutory requirements and pass on all safeguarding files.

The response to absence will vary case by case, depending on the reasons, case history and risk profile. This will be discussed and safeguarding will be a priority.

Stone Lodge Therapeutic School recognised that the majority of pupils in its care have missed substantial amounts of school, often due to Emotionally Based School Avoidance and that a careful and supportive approach is often the best way, long term, to resolve such issues.

Mental Health

6.24 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic all staff are made aware, through training, that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Our staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

6.25 We understand that where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Therefore, through training, staff are aware of how children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. All staff are aware that if they have a mental health concern about a child that this can also be a safeguarding concern and they should take immediate action by passing the information on to a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

6.26 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we have a named Mental Health Lead. There are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems and work with other agencies as required to respond to these concerns. Designated Safeguarding Leads make reference to the 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' DfE guidance for further support.

Online Safety

6.27 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School all staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. We understand that in many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. We know that children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography.

As part of the changes in Keeping Children Safe in Education in 2026 we recognize the dangers of disinformation and conspiracy theories and their impact – especially in regards to radicalization.

6.28 As part of the requirement for staff to undergo regular updated safeguarding training, online safety training is also delivered. We will ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme throughout the curriculum and is reflected in relevant policies, teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead and any parental engagement.

6.29 The school uses a nationally known system – Smoothwall - which filters and send real time alerts to the DSL and DSOs. This is overseen by our IT provider Swiftcomm. Any unsafe searches immediately create an alert to the DSLs for their investigation. More details can be found in our policies on Online Safety and Mobile and Smart Technology which consider the 4Cs, content, contact, conduct and commerce and reflect the fact that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G).

6.30 We recognise that technology, and risks and harms related to the internet evolve and change rapidly. Therefore, we carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by a risk assessment (on at least an annual basis) that considers and reflects the risks that children face in our setting. We also communicate with parents and carers to reinforce the importance of children being safe online.

6.31 We recognize the challenge posed by Generative Ai and will closely monitor and control its use – it will not be used without staff direct supervision.

Cybercrime

6.32 We understand that cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). We are aware of the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges.GOV.UK.

6.33 If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead will consider a referral to the Cyber Choices programme which aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Domestic Abuse

6.34 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School all staff are aware that domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. We understand that children can be victims of domestic abuse. Where they see, hear or experience the effects this can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. We are aware of the Northants Domestic Abuse Service (https://www.ndas.co/) and signpost victims to the service.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities or physical health issues

6.35 As a SEN school we recognise that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges such as

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration;
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

6.36 We work to address these additional challenges and consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

6.37 We also recognise that pupils who attend Alternative Provision will often have complex needs and due to this we are aware of the additional risk of harm these children may be vulnerable to. We promote strong links, share safeguarding policies and contacts with AP providers and rigorously quality assure alternative provision.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their gender

6.38 The fact that a child or a young person may be lesbian, gay, bisexual in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, we recognise that these children and in some cases children who are perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay or bisexual can be just as vulnerable as children who are. Therefore, we work to reduce any additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for these children to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. Through our curriculum, we counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

6.39 In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, any request relating to social transition, including a change of name, pronouns, uniform or other aspects of presentation, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the child's individual circumstances, age, developmental stage, emotional wellbeing and any potential safeguarding implications. Parents or carers should be involved in discussions and decision-making wherever possible, unless doing so may place the child at risk of harm. Where appropriate, the school will seek relevant clinical advice to inform its consideration. Any decisions will be carefully considered, recorded and reviewed, taking account of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

7. RECORDS AND INFORMATION SHARING

7.1 If staff are concerned about the welfare or safety of any child at our school, they will report immediately to Lesley Colquhoun, Operational DSL in person, or mobile phone. If she is not available they will speak to another DSL or deputy. The concern will then be recorded through My Concern – our MIS.

7.2 Any information recorded will only be assessed by the DSLs/deputy DSL'S. These files will be the responsibility of the DSL. Child protection information will only be shared within school on the basis of 'need to know in the child's interests' and on the understanding that it remains strictly confidential.

7.3 Child protection information will be kept up to date. Each concern logged will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

We will keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as the Children's Advice and Duty Service or the Prevent programme. Invitations to child protection conferences, core groups and all other multi-agency meetings and minutes taken at these will be stored on the child's file whether an electronic or paper system is used. All our safeguarding records will include; a chronology, contents front cover and will record significant events in the child's life.

7.4 When a child leaves our school, (including in year transfers) the DSL will make contact with the DSL at the new school and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded to the receiving school. This will be within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. We recognise that not providing information as per the timescales can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

7.5 We will retain evidence to demonstrate how the file has been transferred; this may be in the form of a written confirmation of receipt from the receiving school and/or evidence of recorded delivery.

7.6 Prior to a child leaving we will consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child.

7.7 Where a parent elects to remove their child from the school roll to home educate, the school will make arrangements to pass any safeguarding concerns to the EOTAS team at the relevant LA.

8. WORKING WITH PARENTS & CARERS

8.1 Stone Lodge School is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

8.2 When new pupils join our school, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the school website. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to contact MASH or LA services.

8.3 We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is

necessary to do so in order to safeguard a child from harm.

8.4 We will seek to share with parents any concerns we may have about their child *unless* to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm. A lack of parental engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the school has about a child will not prevent the DSL making a referral in those circumstances where it is appropriate to do so.

8.5 In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, the school requires parents to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives.
- Full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Emergency contact details (if different from above).
- Full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from school (if different from the above).

The School will retain this information on the pupil file. The school will only share information about pupils with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil or where a parent has given permission, and the school has been supplied with the adult's full details in writing

8.6 At Stone Lodge we are working in partnership with Police and Children's Services to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced domestic violence in their household; this scheme is called Operation Encompass. In order to achieve this, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will share police information of all domestic incidents where one of our pupils has been present with the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s). On receipt of any information, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide on the appropriate support the child requires, this could be silent or overt. We will record this information and store this information in accordance with the record keeping procedures outlined in this policy.

9. CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

9.1 Children's Services will convene a Child Protection conference once a child protection enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been undertaken and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm. A review conference will take place once a child has been made the subject of a Child Protection Plan in order to monitor the safety of the child and the required reduction in risk.

9.2 Staff members may be asked to attend a child protection conference or core group meetings on behalf of the school in respect of individual children. Usually, the person representing the school at these meetings will be the Principal or DSL. In any event, the person attending will need to have as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible; any member of staff may be required to contribute to this process.

9.3 All reports for child protection conferences will be prepared in advance. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents before the conference as appropriate and will include information relating to the child's physical, emotional, and intellectual development and the child's presentation at school. In order to complete such reports, all relevant information will be sought from staff working with the child in school.

9.4 Clearly child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we are likely to have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open and honest way with any parent whose child has been referred to Children's Services

or whose child is subject to a child protection plan. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents.

10. SAFER RECRUITMENT

10.1 We will ensure that the Heads of School, Director of School, a member of the SLT and at least one member of the Governing Board have completed appropriate safer recruitment training. At all times the Director of School and Governing Board will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*, DfE (2026). At least one person involved in conducting an interview will have received safer recruitment training.

10.2 We will use the recruitment and selection process to deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities.

10.3 We require details of a candidate's present (or last) employment and reason for leaving; full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment and evidence of original academic certificates. We do not accept testimonials and insist on taking up references prior to interview. We will question the contents of application forms if we are unclear about them, and shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

10.4 We use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post. Structured questions are agreed by the interview panel and any potential areas of concern are explored to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. These "Warner" style questions are included in the interview process.

10.5 We will undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks and other pre-employment checks as outlined in *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* to ensure we are recruiting and selecting the most suitable people to work with our children.

10.6 We will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) of all safer recruitment checks carried out in line with statutory requirements. A senior member of staff will check the SCR regularly to ensure that it meets statutory requirements.

10.7 The school will assess any volunteer roles carefully and ensure that the appropriate enhanced DBS check, including children's barred list information where required, is completed before the individual undertakes regulated activity. We will also ensure that arrangements for work experience, contractors, agency and supply staff, trainees and visitors are subject to appropriate safeguarding checks and supervision as required.

10.8 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we recognise that safer recruitment is not just about carrying out the right DBS checks and is not limited to recruitment procedures. Therefore, we understand the importance of continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour. Further information about all of these processes can be found in our Recruitment and Selection policy.

11. SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

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

11.2 All staff will be provided with a copy of our school's code of conduct at induction. They will be expected to know our school's Code of Conduct and policy for positive handling and carry out their duties in accordance with this advice. There will be occasion when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example if a child has an accident or is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others around them. However, at all times the agreed policy for safe restraint must be adhered to.

11.3 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 and for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open.

11.4 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 Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (February 2022). 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.

12. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

12.1 Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children at our school. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

12.2 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. We work to the thresholds for harm as set out in *'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (*2023) and *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*, DfE (2026) below. An allegation may relate to a person who works / volunteers with children who has:

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

The 4th bullet point above recognises circumstances where a member of staff (including supply teachers) or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school/college which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children; this is known as transferrable risk.

12.3 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we recognise our responsibility to report / refer allegations or behaviours of concern and / or harm to children by adults in positions of trust, even if they appear minor. This includes concerns about employees, supply staff, contractors, agency workers, trainees and volunteers, whether the alleged behaviour takes place within or outside the school and who are not employed by the School to the LADO /

Designated Officer service directly. These are adults such as, taxi drivers, escorts, and fosters carers.

Andy Smith is the current Designated Officer in North Northamptonshire - 07850 854309

Referrals and enquires can also be made through - *ladoConsultations*@nctrust.co.uk.

12.4 We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our school are safe to work with children. When concerns arise, we will always ensure that the procedures outlined in the local protocol Allegations Against Persons who Work with Children and Part 4 of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*, DfE (2026) are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice.

12.5 If an allegation is made or information is received about *any* adult who works/ volunteer in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work / volunteer with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Principal immediately. This includes concerns relating to agency and supply staff and volunteers. Should an allegation be made against the Principal, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors. In the event that neither the Principal nor Chair of Governors is not contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Principal or the Vice Chair of Governors.

The Chair is Jessie Walker – Headteacher at Maplefields Academy and trained DSL. She has no other connection to the school or Rockingham Education and is independent.

She can be contacted on: head@maplefields.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Tel - 01536 424090
Mobile - 07715 655975

12.6 The Principal or Chair of Governors will seek advice from the LADO within one working day. No member of staff or the Governing Board will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

12.7 When using a supply agency, we inform the agency of our process for managing allegations against staff and keep them up to date with any policy developments. Where concerns are raised about an individual and the school is not their employer, we recognise that we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In order to achieve this, we will liaise with relevant parties including the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Whilst the supply agency should be fully involved and co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's services, we recognise that the School will usually take the lead in conducting an investigation as we have direct access to any affected children and other school staff to collect the facts.

12.8 Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Principal or Chair of Governors should contact the LADO directly.

12.9 The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – the line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday or via e-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk.

12.10 The School has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. 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. The School must also consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State (via the Teaching Regulation Agency) if a teacher is dismissed or the setting ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first.

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

12.11 The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the thresholds as stated above. At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we recognise a low-level concern to be something which is

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

12.12 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Through training, staff are made aware of what low level concerns are and understand the importance of reporting and these types of concerns in writing.

12.13 At Stone Lodge Therapeutic School staff report all low level concerns to the DSL. If reported to the DSO or a DSL that is not the Principal, then they will inform the Principal of the concern in a timely fashion. The Principal will always be the ultimate decision maker in respect

of all low-level concerns.

12.14 Through training and induction, we ensure that all staff understand the importance of self-referring, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

12.15 We understand the importance of recording low-level concerns and the actions taken in light of these being reported. The records are kept confidential and stored securely. We will review the records we hold to identify potential patterns and take action. This could be through a disciplinary process but also by referring to the Designated Officer. Please note, where a child, parent/carer or staff member makes an allegation of harm, this will not be considered as a 'low level' concern without consultation with the LADO service directly.

12.16 We recognise that low level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.

13. USE OF PREMISES BY EXTERNAL GROUPS AND SCHOOL USE OF ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS

13.1 Where we hire or rent out our facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) we ensure that appropriate arrangements as per the DfE guidance After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers are in place to keep children safe.

13.2 We will seek assurances that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed). Safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

13.3 If an allegation is made relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using school premises for non-school/college activities, we will follow the safeguarding policies and procedures, included in section 12 above.

13.4 The school may occasionally use alternative providers. These will be risk assessed and checked for appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. These checks include recruitment, health and safety and attendance procedures. Only once we are satisfied that they are robust will a child be placed.

14 RELEVANT POLICIES

14.1 To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school are appropriately safeguarded the following policies are also included under our safeguarding umbrella:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour which includes measures to prevent bullying (including cyberbullying,

prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)

- Recruitment & Selection which adheres to Part 3 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education'*.
- Whistleblowing
- Attendance
- Online Safety

- Health and Safety including site security
- Harassment and discrimination including racial abuse
- Meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions
- Intimate Care
- First aid
- Educational visits including overnight stays
- RSHE

16. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

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

- Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE (Sept 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE (2026)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE (2026)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (Feb 2022)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused DfE (March 2015)
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services DfE (May 2024)
- The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers DfE (September 2023)
- The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation (September 2023)
- Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation- procedural information Home Office (January 2020)
- Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm
- Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners DFE (February 2017)
- Teaching online safety in school DfE (January 2023)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools DfE (November 2018)
- Data protection: toolkit for schools DfE (2025)
- Promoting the education of children with a social worker (March 2024)
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement
- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance (Home Office April 2023)