



NORTHGATE
High School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

Review period: Annual

Review by: Mr J Tunaley

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Safeguarding policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children.
- 1.2 Our students' welfare is our paramount concern. The governing body will ensure that our school safeguards and promotes the welfare of students and works together with other agencies to ensure that Northgate has adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, harm.
- 1.3 Our school is a community and all those directly connected – staff members, governors, parents, families and students – have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure.

2. Our ethos

- 2.1 We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of each individual.
- 2.2 We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help our young people feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children and young people to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to.
- 2.3 We recognise that the staff in our school form part of the wider safeguarding system for children.
- 2.4 We will work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children and young people, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

3. Scope

- 3.1 In line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all members of staff at Northgate, including all permanent, temporary and support staff; governors; volunteers; contractors and external service, or activity providers.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 The school's lead person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mr J Tunaley

We have four deputy designated safeguarding leads and a non teaching safeguarding manager to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times

The Deputy DSLs are: Mr A Bluck, Mr R Grainger, Mrs A Hope, Miss A Armstrong, Miss S Holme and Mr J Alexander. The Safeguarding Manager is: Mrs L Harvey and The Safeguarding Practitioner is Mrs R Wright.

The DSL is on our school leadership team and their role of DSL is explicit in their job description. The DSL, and Deputies, are the professionals in the school with the most complete safeguarding picture regarding our students.

- 4.2 The school has a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice, to liaise with the head teacher and to provide information and reports to the governing body.

The Named Safeguarding Governors are: Jim Hunt and Codrutza Marsh.

- 4.3 The case manager for dealing with allegations of abuse made against school staff members is the head teacher. The case manager for dealing with allegations against the head teacher is the chair of governors.

The Chair of Governors is: Mrs J Ferguson.

The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in Appendix B.

- 4.4 The head teacher will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.
- 4.5 The governing body is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day-to-day practice.
- 4.6 All staff members, governors, volunteers and external agencies know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to students who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child.

5 Supporting young people

- 5.1** We recognise that children and young people who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and experience some sense of blame. Our school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.
- 5.2** We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn. We recognise that all children may benefit from early help and that we need to be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for children who:
- Are disabled and have specific additional needs;
 - Have special educational needs;
 - Are a young carer;
 - Are showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour (including gang-related groups);
 - Are frequently missing from care or from home;
 - Are misusing drugs and alcohol;
 - Are at risk of slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
 - Are in a family presenting challenges around substance abuse, adult mental health concerns or domestic abuse;
 - Have returned to their family from care;
 - Are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
 - Are at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
 - Are a privately fostered child.
- 5.3** At Northgate we support all students by:
- ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning and an inherent awareness of British values;
 - ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to online safety, enabling young people and parents to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly;
 - ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to;
 - providing students with a number of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties;
 - supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
 - encouraging development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying;
 - ensuring hate incidents, e.g. racist, homophobic or gender – or disability-based bullying, are dealt with following the appropriate procedures;
 - identifying those students who may benefit from early help, that is, providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life;
 - liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children; and
 - monitoring those children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns and providing appropriate support.

6 Safer workforce and managing allegations against staff and volunteers

- 6.1** We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our school by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our school have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2024.
- 6.2** We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our school.
- 6.3** Every job description and person specification will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder.
- 6.4** We will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.
- 6.5** We have a procedure in place to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2024. This procedure is detailed in Appendix B.

7 Staff induction, training and development

- 7.1** All new members of staff, and volunteers, will be given induction that explains Northgate's safeguarding systems in addition to outlining the safeguarding and child protection policy; staff professional behaviour guidelines; the behaviour policy; our response to children who go missing from education; the role of the designated safeguarding lead and other locality specific issues in keeping with requirements outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2024.

- 7.1.1** All staff will be required to sign to say they have read and understood KCSIE 2024, Part 1 unless they have been deemed appropriate to only read Appendix A due to no direct working with children.
- 7.2** The DSL, and deputies, will undergo updated child protection training every two years. They will also attend annual DSL update courses organised by Schools Choice.
- 7.3** All staff members of the school will receive whole school safeguarding training at least every three years, in addition to an annual update. All governors must undergo governor specific training on a regular cycle and new governors will be incorporated within our whole school training programme.
- 7.4** At Northgate we will continue to offer a rolling programme of whole school training to ensure all staff members are appropriately trained in a timely manner. Staff members who miss organised whole school safeguarding training will be required to undertake other relevant training to make up for it, e.g. by accessing online training.
- 7.5** The nominated governor for safeguarding and child protection will undergo live Governor Services training prior to or soon after appointment to the role; this training will be updated every two years.
- 7.6** We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers and contractors, have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school.
- 7.7** The school will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

8 Confidentiality, consent and information sharing

- 8.1** We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- 8.2** The head teacher or the DSL will disclose any information about a student to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.
- 8.3** All staff members will be aware that they cannot promise a young person that they will be able to keep secrets which might compromise the young person's safety or well-being.
- 8.4** All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information both within our school and with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

9 Multi agency working

- 9.1** We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children, the police and Children's Social Care.
- 9.2** We will ensure that relevant staff members participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children.
- 9.3** Where we have concerns around the well-being of the students in our care and need to seek further advice, we will make use of the Suffolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub's (MASH) Professional Consultation Line (**0345 606 1499**).

10 Contractors, service and activity providers and work placement providers

- 10.1** We will ensure that contractors and providers are aware of our school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
- 10.2** We will seek assurance that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations and working with our children have been subjected to the appropriate level of safeguarding check in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2024. If assurance is not obtained, permission to work with our children or use our school premises may be refused.

11 Whistle-blowing and complaints

- 11.1** We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so. Advice and support can be accessed via the 'Whistleblowing for employees' link found at <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing> and via the NSPCC website at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>
- 11.2** We will ensure that all staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they will speak with the head teacher, the chair of the governing body or with the Local Authority Designated Officer.
- 11.3** We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice.

12 Foreign exchanges

- 12.1** We recognise that exchange visits provide valuable and often unique experiences for young people to experience other cultures, develop new friendships and thus broaden their horizons and knowledge. Staying with a host family gives young people a first-hand opportunity to use their language skills in a real context. By following national best practice we believe it is possible to establish, manage and maintain safe and productive exchange visits. Included in our initial letters for exchange trips it is made clear that we expect Northgate host families to complete a DBS check as they will be in regulated activity.
- 12.2** We recognise that exchange visits differ from other visits in that young people are not directly supervised by school staff whilst they are with host families; we will therefore undertake thorough and carefully planned risk management. Part of the mitigation of risk is requesting written confirmation from the host school that all of the host families have been approved by the school as suitable to host. This means the families are well known to the school and that there is an absence of safeguarding issues around that family.
- 12.3** We will establish expectations for all parties involved (young people, teachers, host families and schools/ establishments); these will be fair and reciprocal as far as is reasonably practicable. We will undertake careful matching of exchange partners. Specific guidance will be provided for young people covering personal safety

13 Site security

- 13.1** All staff members have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.
- 13.2** We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors are expected to sign in and out in the visitors' log in Reception and to display a visitor's badge while on the school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance.
- 13.3** The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent or anyone else, that threatens school security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site.
- 13.4** Students and staff receive training on understanding the different lanyards and how to respond if not sure someone should not be on site. The addition of fencing and a security gate at the front of school that requires visitors to use an intercom to communicate with the office has not diminished the importance for staff and students to have awareness of the different lanyards and challenging those not wearing them.

14 Quality assurance

- 14.1** We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures. This will include periodic audits of child protection files and records by the DSL.
- 14.2** We will complete an annual audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements as required by Suffolk County Council, using the self-review audit tool provided by them for this purpose.
- 14.3** The school's senior management and the governing body will ensure that action is taken to remedy without delay any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.
- 14.4** The named safeguarding governors carry out quality assurance checks through student interviews and learning walks during the school day.

15 Policy review

- 15.1** This policy and the procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle.
- 15.2** The DSL will ensure that staff members are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures

16 Linked policies and procedures

- 16.1** This policy has been drawn up within the framework laid down by our Equality and Diversity Policy and will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on students, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school.

APPENDIX A – The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

1 Managing Referrals

- 1.1 Refer all cases of suspected abuse to Suffolk Children’s Social Care and to the Police if a crime may have been committed.
- 1.2 Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern.
- 1.3 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding.
- 1.4 Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required.
- 1.5 Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
- 1.6 Liaise with agencies providing early help services and coordinate referrals from the school to targeted early help services for children in need of support.

2 Record keeping

- 2.1 Keep written records of child protection and welfare concerns in line with Suffolk Safeguarding Children’s Board guidance.
- 2.2 Ensure a stand-alone file is created as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns.
- 2.3 Maintain a chronology of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns.
- 2.4 Ensure such records are kept confidentially, securely and separate from the child’s educational record.
- 2.5 When a child leaves Northgate, 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 in an appropriately agreed manner and within 5 days of the student leaving. 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. 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 appropriate Local Authority officer.

3 Working with others

- 3.1 Liaise with the headteacher to inform her of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- 3.2 As required, liaise with the case manager and the designated officers at the local authority for child protection concerns in cases which concern a member of staff. Attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.
- 3.3 Liaise with staff (pastoral staff, school nurses, IT technicians and the SENCO) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- 3.4 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff

4 Training

- 4.1 Undertake annual refreshment, in addition to appropriate training updated every two years, in order to:
 - have the requisite knowledge and skills to undertake the role;
 - understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention;
 - have a working knowledge of how the local authority conducts initial and review child protection case conferences and contribute effectively to these; and
 - be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- 4.2 Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school’s safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new staff members.
- 4.3 Organise whole school safeguarding training for all staff members at least every three years, in addition to annual updates. Ensure staff members who miss the training receive it by other means, e.g. by accessing online training.
- 4.4 Ensure the school allocates time and resources every year for relevant staff members to attend training.
- 4.5 Encourage a culture of listening to children and young people and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the school takes to protect them.
- 4.6 Maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

5 Awareness raising

- 5.1** Review the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures annually and liaise with the school's governing body to update and implement them.
- 5.2** Make the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures available publicly and raise awareness of parents that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in any investigations that ensue.
- 5.3** Ensure the school's child protection and safeguarding policies are known, understood and used appropriately.
- 5.4** Link with Suffolk Safeguarding Partners to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding arrangements.

6 Availability

- 6.1** Ensure that the designated safeguarding lead, or one of the deputies, is always available to staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- 6.2** Ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place for any out of hours or out of term activities.

7 Quality assurance

- 7.1** Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of child protection and safeguarding files (at a minimum once a year).
- 7.2** Complete an annual self-review audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements as specified by Suffolk County Council.
- 7.3** Provide regular reports to the governing body detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff members and the number of children with child protection plans and other relevant data.
- 7.4** Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

8 Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring

- 8.1** At Northgate the DSL understands that students face similar levels of risk online as they do at home, in the community and at school. The DSL is responsible for working with key staff in the school to ensure Northgate has a robust plan for preventative online safety work as well as effective filtering and monitoring.
- 8.2** The Northgate DSL makes up part of the Online Safety Group.
- 8.3** The Northgate Online safety Lead is John Tunaley.

APPENDIX B – Child Protection

1 Definitions

- 1.1** 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.
- 1.2** Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by others. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.
- 1.3** Children are any people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday; a 16-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger.
- 1.4** Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 1.5** Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years, with due consideration to those groups listed in 5.2 of the main policy.
- 1.6** Harm is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- 1.7** Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children (December 2023) as:
- protecting children from maltreatment;
 - preventing impairment of children's health or development;
 - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

2 Categories of abuse

- 2.1** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:
- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, or inadequate
 - not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
 - inappropriate age or developmental expectations
 - overprotection and limitation of exploration, learning and social interaction
 - seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, e.g. domestic abuse
 - serious bullying (including cyber bullying)
 - exploitation or corruption
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- 2.2** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent failing to:
- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment
 - protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
 - ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care givers
 - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
 - failing to ensure a student is attending education
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- 2.3** Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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.

2.4 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. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetration of any part of the body, or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, including on the internet, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can children.

3 Dealing with a disclosure made by a child – advice for all members of staff

3.1 If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff or volunteer should follow the guidance outlined in their induction training and report the disclosure to the DSL, or deputy, immediately.

3.2 Further, the staff member or volunteer must:

- Not promise confidentiality.
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Only ask questions when necessary to clarify.
- Allow the young person to talk freely, not attempting to put words into their mouth.
- Reassure the young person that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Inform the DSL, or deputy, without delay, and follow the reporting procedure.

3.3 Dealing with a disclosure from a child and safeguarding issues can be stressful. Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the DSL, or deputy.

4 Referring concerns to children’s social care

4.1 All staff are aware that when there exists an immediate safeguarding concern, Customer First can be contacted on **0800 800 4005** (24 hours). Where appropriate and timely, a conversation with the DSL, or deputy, is the first course of action. If a child is in immediate danger, 999 is called.

4.2 Any telephone referral to Customer First will be followed up with a Multi-Agency Referral Form within 24 hours.

4.3 Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board guidance – threshold matrix – will be used to determine the level of need around individual cases. All guidance around referrals can be found at: <https://suffolksp.org.uk/concerned/>

4.4 Where we have concerns around the well-being of the students in our care and need to seek further advice, we will make use of the Suffolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub’s (MASH) Professional Consultation Line (**03456061499**).

4.5 Northgate has two staff who have received Senior Mental Health Training.

5 Professional challenge and disagreements

5.1 Working with young people and their families, and in particular child protection work, is stressful and complex, as well as involving uncertainty and strong feelings. To ensure that the best decisions are made for children and young people, we need to be able to challenge one another’s practice.

5.2 We promote a culture within our school that enables all staff members to raise, without fear of repercussions, any concerns they may have about the management of child protection in the school. This may include raising concerns about decisions, action and inaction by colleagues about individual children. If necessary, staff members will speak with the DSL, the head teacher, the chair of governors or with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

5.3 Cooperation across agencies is crucial; professionals need to work together, using their skills and experience, to make a robust contribution to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare within the framework of discussions, meetings, conferences and case management.

5.4 If there are any professional disagreements with practitioners from other agencies, the DSL or the head teacher will raise concerns with the relevant agency’s safeguarding lead in line with Suffolk’s ‘Escalation’ guidance.

APPENDIX C – Specific Safeguarding Issues

1 Specific safeguarding issues

1.1 School staff members need to be aware of specific safeguarding issues and be alert to any risks.

1.2 The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership, <http://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/safeguarding-topics/>, has guidance and protocols on a variety of safeguarding issues. The following is not a comprehensive list and staff members should be aware that the NSPCC provides detailed, relevant and comprehensive information, available online, at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>.

- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- child trafficking
- child criminal exploitation: county lines
- children in need
- domestic abuse and violence
- online safety
- emotional health and wellbeing
- fabricated illness
- female genital mutilation (FGM) and breast ironing
- forced marriage
- gangs
- honour based violence
- missing children
- modern slavery
- neglect
- sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, including upskirting
- private fostering
- Prevent and vulnerable to radicalisation
- self-harm
- substance misuse

1.3 Staff will be reminded on a termly basis about the need to pass even minor concerns to the DSL, or deputies, as soon as they arise.

1.4 Child Sexual Exploitation

1.4.1 Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

1.4.2 What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops.

1.4.3 School staff are more likely to see victims on a regular basis than almost any other professional. They will notice recurrent or prolonged absences and significant changes in behaviour. These may include unexplained gifts or possessions; associations with older peers; children suffering from STIs or pregnancy; drug or alcohol misuse; and changes in emotional well-being. Sharing concerns early, when changes are first noticed, with the DSL are vital for identifying children at risk and raising concerns at an early stage, to potentially halt the grooming process before sexual exploitation has begun.

1.4.4 Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Child Sexual Exploitation procedures are found at: <https://www.suffolksp.org.uk/child-sexual-exploitation>

1.5 Child criminal exploitation: county lines

1.5.1 Criminal exploitation of children is geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity, whereby drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, and market and seaside towns.

1.5.2 Potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, and county lines exploitation can affect any child or young person (male or female) and is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

1.6 Female Genital Mutilation

1.6.1 Northgate staff are aware that a mandatory reporting duty exists around known cases of FGM.

1.6.2 The legislation requires that teachers make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

1.6.3 Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership has a number of documents about FGM at <https://www.suffolksp.org.uk/types-of-abuse>

1.7 Online Safety

1.7.1 We recognise that the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues including child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, cyberbullying, sexual predation and youth produced sexual imagery. Technology often provides the platform to facilitate harm. Northgate has an Online Safety Group who work to ensure the school has a robust approach to online safety, filtering and monitoring. This group is formed by relevant senior and support staff.

1.7.2 At Northgate, the four major risk areas for our students are:

- Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood or causes of harm
- Commercialism/Cyberscam – being subject to internet fraud

1.7.3 To reduce our students' exposure to risk, Northgate will:

- Ensure that appropriate filters are in place, without over-blocking
- Monitor the appropriate use of IT (and identify inappropriate use)
- Provide education to students about online safety
- Quickly and effectively respond to all reports of online issues and liaise with external agencies when we are unable to resolve the issue due to its online nature.

1.7.4 To ensure students receive an effective online safety education we focus on the five main objectives from Teaching Online Safety in Schools published by the DfE in 2021. These objectives are:

- Teaching students to evaluate what they see online
- How to recognise persuasive techniques
- Online behaviour
- Identifying risks
- How to access help

1.7.5 Northgate recognises that students have unrestricted access to devices that are internet enabled. The school operates a on site, out of sight policy which reduces the amount of mobile phone use during the school day. This in turn reduces the opportunities for online safety issues to arise. Staff are allowed to give students permission to use phones for specific learning activities in lessons and our expectations around the use of the school WIFI and their devices is clearly set out in our acceptable use policy.

1.8 Preventing Radicalisation

1.8.1 Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation, which is recognised in our safeguarding approach. Northgate staff are aware of the school's duty to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The link to the Revised Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales can be found at – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

1.8.2 Prevent aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It is considered to be "the only long term solution" to the threat from terrorism.

1.8.3 Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

1.8.4 Extremism, as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of the law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

1.8.5 At Northgate we will:

- Ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is in place to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- Establish a single point of contact for Prevent – the DSL.
- Assess the risk of students being drawn into terrorism.
- Prohibit extremist speakers and events.
- Manage access to extremist material on-line through the use of appropriate filtering systems.
- Train staff to recognise radicalisation and extremism.
- Refer vulnerable people, via the VTR referral form, to Channel.

- 1.8.6** If staff notice anything of concern in our students they will take the situation seriously and recognise the potential risk of harm to the young person, and they will act as quickly as possible to prevent the situation escalating by referring their concern to the DSL (or Deputy) immediately.
- 1.8.7** The DSL, or Deputy, will follow the Suffolk Referral Process using the Vulnerable to Radicalisation VTR referral form on the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website <https://www.suffolksp.org.uk/prevent> and email it to the MASH: MASH@suffolk.pnn.police.uk
- 1.8.8** Imminent safeguarding concerns will be phoned through to Customer First **0808 800 4005**.
- 1.9 Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges**
- 1.9.1** We recognise that sexual violence and/or harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, and that it can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or harassing an individual child or group of children.
- 1.9.2** Any kind of sexual violence or harassment can have an adverse effect on a young person's educational attainment.
- 1.9.3** Sexual violence and harassment exist on a continuum, can occur online and offline, can be physical and verbal, and is never acceptable.
- 1.9.4** Staff at Northgate High School recognise that sexual violence and harassment could happen at Northgate and is:
- Never acceptable
 - Not tolerable, nor an inevitable part of growing up
 - Never dismissible as 'banter, 'having a laugh' or 'boys being boys'
- 1.9.5** Behaviours such as grabbing bottoms, breast and genitalia, or flicking bras will be challenged.
- 1.9.6** Any victim of sexual assault or sexual harassment will be taken seriously and supported appropriately. How well we respond to allegations will impact on how future victims respond to harmful sexual behaviour.
- 1.9.7** In accordance with the Voyeurism Act 2019 we recognise that up skirting is illegal, unacceptable and defined as 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.
- 1.9.8** Training has been updated to ensure staff are clear on how to report concerns around upskirting and that we have processes in place to deal with incidents.
- 1.9.9** In the event of unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious reports of harmful sexual behaviour the DSL will consider appropriate support for all those involved. If a report shown to be deliberately invented or malicious the headteacher will consider any disciplinary action in line with the behaviour policy

2 Mental Health

- 2.1** All staff at Northgate are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- 2.2** Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, Northgate staff are well placed to observe children day to day and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- 2.3** Northgate staff understand that children who have and are suffering mental health concerns may well have their learning and behaviour impacted upon.
- 2.4** If a member of staff at Northgate has a mental health concern about a student they will follow safeguarding procedures and report these concerns to the DSL or deputy. The DSL team will follow safeguarding policy to ensure appropriate interventions are put in place.
- 2.5** For more information around mental health, please read the school's Mental Health and Wellbeing policy.

3 Record keeping

- 3.1** Good record keeping is an important part of our accountability to children and their families and will help us in meeting our key responsibility to respond appropriately to welfare concerns about children.
- 3.2** Records will be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They will support monitoring, risk assessment and planning for young people and enable informed and timely decisions about appropriate action to take place.
- 3.3** The DSL will ensure that records are maintained appropriately for children with safeguarding concerns and that stand-alone files are created and appropriately maintained.

4 Safer recruitment

- 4.1 Northgate has robust recruitment and vetting procedures to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people.
- 4.2 Our job advertisements and application packs make explicit reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding children, including compliance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process and clear statements in the job description and person specification about the staff member's safeguarding responsibilities.
- 4.3 All staff members who have contact with children, young people and families will have appropriate pre-employment checks in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2024.
- 4.4 At least one member on every short listing and interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training. The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that safer recruitment training is kept up to date.
- 4.5 The head teacher and the nominated governor for child protection are responsible for ensuring that our single central record is accurate and up to date.

5 Managing allegations of abuse made against school staff members and volunteers

- 5.1 We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers who are working with our students. Allegations can be made by young people or other concerned adults and are made for a variety of reasons.
- 5.2 If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust, whether they are members of staff or volunteers, this should be brought to the immediate attention of the Head teacher who will liaise with the DSL.
- 5.3 In the case of the allegation being made against the Head teacher this will be brought to the immediate attention of the Chair of Governors.
- 5.4 The Head teacher/Chair of Governors must discuss with the Designated Officer (DO) the nature of the allegation in order for the appropriate action to be taken. This will constitute an initial evaluation meeting or strategy discussion involving the Designated Officer. In Suffolk, arrangements for managing allegations against those in a position of trust can be found at: <https://suffolksp.org.uk/working-with-children-and-adults/children/local-authority-designated-officers-lado/>

6 Low Level Concerns

- 6.1 Northgate has an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
- 6.2 A low level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct but doesn't meet the harm threshold. Examples include, but are not limited to;
 - being overly friendly with children
 - having favourites
 - taking photos of children on personal mobiles
 - humiliating children
- 6.3 Any staff member with a concern must report this directly to the headteacher.
- 6.4 All concerns will be recorded in writing and a decision about appropriate action will be decided by the headteacher. These actions can include talking to witnesses and the person who is subject to the low level concern.
- 6.5 Low level concerns will be kept until the adult leaves the school.

7 Children Missing Education and Children Absent from Education

- 7.1 Northgate recognise that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient education that is suitable to their age, ability and educational needs.
- 7.2 Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school or other suitable education provider. They are at significant risk underachieving, being victims of harm and exploitation.
- 7.3 Northgate will notify the local authority when we are about to remove a student's name from the schools admission register other than at the standard transition points.
- 7.4 Children Absent from Education are students who are absent from education for prolonged periods or absent on repeat occasions. At Northgate we monitor attendance closely and staff are aware that being absent from education makes students more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Staff are encouraged to spot the signs of early absence and use our early help offer to support the students attendance improvement.