



# The Oaks Specialist College

Skills for Independence & Employability

Vulnerable Young people Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

September 2021

**The Oaks Specialist College: Vulnerable Young people Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

<b>Designated Safeguarding Leads: (DSL)</b>
Lead DSL: Ros Leach, Head of College
Deputy DSL: Gordon Tillman, Chief Executive Officer
Deputy DSL: Jill Beacock
Deputy DSL: Lynsey Ritchie
Safeguarding Administrator: Nikki Twiner
Designated Safeguarding Trustee: Julie Stones

**This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff. It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood the policy.**

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Member of staff has seen or heard something that causes concern.

Can you enter your concerns on Databridge?

Ye

No

All DSLs will receive a notification from Databridge that a concern has been logged.

Complete the Safeguarding Notification form. These can be found in the photocopying room or in the **Safeguarding folder in Staff Teams.**

The DSL will make the decision as to whether this requires an immediate Social Care referral or if the learner is to be monitored.

Pass to the Lead DSL or Deputy DSL **as soon as possible (same day).**

If a referral to Social Care is made, you may or may not be kept informed of the outcome. It is likely that any safeguarding concerns are kept confidential between the DSL Team.

**Remember:** Safeguarding and the protection of our learners is everyone's responsibility. You must not wait to report or log concerns. If unsure, speak to a DSL only.

## 1. Introduction and Commitment

The Oaks Specialist College is a community and all those directly connected (staff, trustees, parents, carers, families and learners) have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. The Oaks recognises our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all vulnerable young people both internally and outside of the College setting.

The Oaks recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within College that will help vulnerable learners to be safe and feel safe. We will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' In our College vulnerable learners are respected and encouraged to talk openly.

Our College core safeguarding principles are:

- We are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for vulnerable learners.
- It is our whole College responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable learners.
- All vulnerable learners regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All vulnerable learners have the right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account.
- All vulnerable adults are protected from risk of abuse or risk of radicalisation and extremism.

All our staff understand safe professional practice and adhere to our safeguarding policies and act immediately should an incident occurs that causes concern.

The Oaks community will report all allegations of abuse to the young person's Social Worker or seek advice from the LADO/Digital Front Door when appropriate. We will ensure our learners' wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what safeguarding action to take and what services to provide.

Where there is an allegation or concern regarding suspected radicalisation and extremism a referral to the CHANNEL services may be made.

If the report involves an allegation of a criminal act, a report will also be made to the Police and the college will fully co-operate with any investigations they carry out. The College will act on all reports of alleged abuse regardless of whether they are recent, are reported to have taken place in the past, have taken place on college premises or within the community.

## 2. Definition and Safeguarding

- In line with Keeping Children\* Safe in Education (KCSIE 2021) safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up.  
(\*for the purposes of this policy we interpret this definition to include our vulnerable young adults)
- The core elements to our vulnerable young people protection policy are:
  - **Prevention** (e.g. positive, supportive, safe College culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for vulnerable learners, safer recruitment procedures)
  - **Protection** (by following the agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns)
  - **Support** (for all learners, parents and staff, and where appropriate specific intervention for those who may be at risk of harm)

- **Working with parents and other agencies** (to ensure appropriate communications and actions are undertaken).
- The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) and board members and are consistent with those of outlined within KCSIE 2021.

### 3. Context

This policy is implemented in accordance with KCSIE 2021 which requires individual colleges to have an effective safeguarding policy in place. It has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children/Vulnerable young people Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes but is not limited to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Vulnerable young people 2018 (WTSC)
- Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework (2021)
- Framework for the Assessment of Vulnerable young people in Need and their Families (2000)
- Kent and Medway Safeguarding Vulnerable young people Procedures (Online)
- Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework 2021 (EYFS)
- The Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires College governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all vulnerable young people who are learners at a College. Such arrangements will have to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- The Oaks is currently operating in response to coronavirus (Covid-19), however, our safeguarding principles, remain the same. We will continue to follow government guidance and will amend this policy and our approaches, as necessary.
  - As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic some members of our community may have been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks, including potentially increased online activity. We will work with local services, such as health and the local authority, to ensure necessary support is in place.

The College acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including (but not limited to):

- Abuse and neglect
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Children with family members in prison
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Child missing from home or care
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Contextual safeguarding (risks outside the family home)
- County lines and gangs
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls

- Hate
- Homelessness
- Human trafficking and modern slavery
- Mental health
- Nude or semi-nude image sharing, aka youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “Sexting”
- Online safety
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Preventing radicalisation and extremism
- Private fostering
- Relationship abuse
- Serious violence
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
- Upskirting

#### 4. Related Safeguarding Policies

This policy is one of a series in the College’s integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read in conjunction with the policies and statements as listed below:

- Behaviour Policy including searching, and confiscation
- Online Safety and Social Media
- Anti-Bullying
- Data Protection and Information Sharing
- Health and Safety
- Attendance
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing

#### 5. Key Responsibilities

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually by the College. The College has a nominated Trustee for safeguarding. The nominated Trustee will take the lead role in ensuring that the College has an effective policy which interlinks with other related policies; and that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed.

All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, and members of the Board of Trustees, will be provided with a copy of this Policy and will have read and will follow KCSIE 2021, part 1. All policies can be access on our website [www.theoaks.ac.uk/policies](http://www.theoaks.ac.uk/policies).

#### 5.1 Governance and Leadership

- The Board of Trustees and Leadership Team have a strategic responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and will comply with their duties under legislation.
- The Board of Trustees and Leadership Team have regard to the KCSIE 2021 guidance and will ensure our policies, procedures and training is effective and complies with the law at all times
- The Oaks has a nominated trustee for safeguarding. The nominated trustee will support the DSL and have oversight in ensuring that the College has an effective policy which interlinks with other related policies, that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed, and that the policies are reviewed at least annually and when required.
- The Board of Trustees, CEO and Leadership Team will ensure that the DSL is properly supported in their role.

- The Head of College will ensure that our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Trustees, are understood, and followed by all staff.

## 5.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead, including for Prevent and Online Safety, at The Oaks is Ros Leach, Head of College.

The deputies are:

- Gordon Tillman – Chief Executive Officer
- Jill Beacock – Teacher
- Lynsey Richie – Teacher
- John Spavins – Business Manager

The Safeguarding Administrator is Nikki Twiner, Development Manager.

There will be a DSL on College premises at all times throughout the College day.

The Lead DSL has the overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and vulnerable young people protection systems in College. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems in College to the Board of Trustees. The Trustees will not receive details of individual pupil situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight responsibility.

Each DSL will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. The DSL and any deputy DSL training will be updated formally every two years, but their knowledge and skills will be updated through a variety of methods at regular intervals and at least annually.

Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard as the Lead DSL. Whilst the activities of the Lead DSL may be delegated to the deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and vulnerable young people protection remains with the Lead DSL and this responsibility will not be delegated.

It is the role of the DSL to:

- Act as the central contact point for all staff to discuss any safeguarding including radicalisation concerns
- Maintain a confidential recording system for safeguarding and vulnerable learner protection concerns
- Co-ordinate safeguarding action for individual vulnerable learners
  - In the case of vulnerable young people (e.g. Looked After) the DSL should have the details of the vulnerable learner's social worker in the authority that looks after the vulnerable young people
- Liaise with other agencies and professionals in line with KCSIE 2021 and WTSC 2018
- Ensure that locally established referral procedures are followed as necessary.
- Represent, or ensure the College is appropriately represented at multi-agency safeguarding meetings (including Vulnerable young people Protection conferences, CHANNEL Panels), when required.
- Manage and monitor the College's role in any multi-agency plan for a vulnerable learner.
- Be available during term time (during College hours) for staff in the College to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- Ensure all staff access appropriate safeguarding training and relevant updates in line with the recommendations within KCSIE 2021 and Prevent duties placed on educational settings.

## 5.3 Members of Staff

**All members of staff have a responsibility to:**

- Provide a safe environment and culture in which vulnerable learners can safely learn.

- Be prepared to identify vulnerable learners who may benefit from early help.
- Understand the early help process and their role in it.
- Understand your College's safeguarding policies and systems.
- Undertake regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.
- Be aware of local process of making referrals to vulnerable young people's social care and statutory assessment under the children/vulnerable young people Act 1989.
- Know what to do if a vulnerable learner tells them that he or she is being harassed, abused or neglected.
- Be able to identify and act upon indicators that learners are at risk of developing mental health issues.
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they can identify cases of vulnerable learners who may need help or protection.
- Reassure children who report concerns that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

#### 5.4 Vulnerable Children and Young People

##### **Vulnerable Children and young people (learners) have a right to:**

- Feel safe, be listened to, and have their wishes and feelings taken into account.
- Confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.
- Contribute to the development of College safeguarding policies
- Receive help from a trusted adult.
- Learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

#### 5.5 Parents and Carers

##### **Parents/carers have a responsibility to:**

- Understand and adhere to the relevant College/policies and procedures.
- Talk to their vulnerable young people about safeguarding and support the College in their safeguarding approaches.
- Identify behaviours which could indicate that their vulnerable young person is at risk of harm, including online, and seek help and support from the College or other agencies.

Parents can obtain a copy of the College Vulnerable Young People Protection Policy and other related policies on request and can view them via the College website [www.theoaks.ac.uk/policies](http://www.theoaks.ac.uk/policies).

#### 6. Recognition and Types of Abuse and Neglect

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

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
  - All staff recognise that concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. The indicators of abuse and neglect can vary from learner to learner. Learners develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for one learner might be normal for another. It is important to recognise that indicators of abuse and neglect do not automatically mean a learner is being abused however all concerns should be taken seriously and will be explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.
  - Staff recognise abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot always be covered by one definition or one label alone. In many cases, multiple issues will



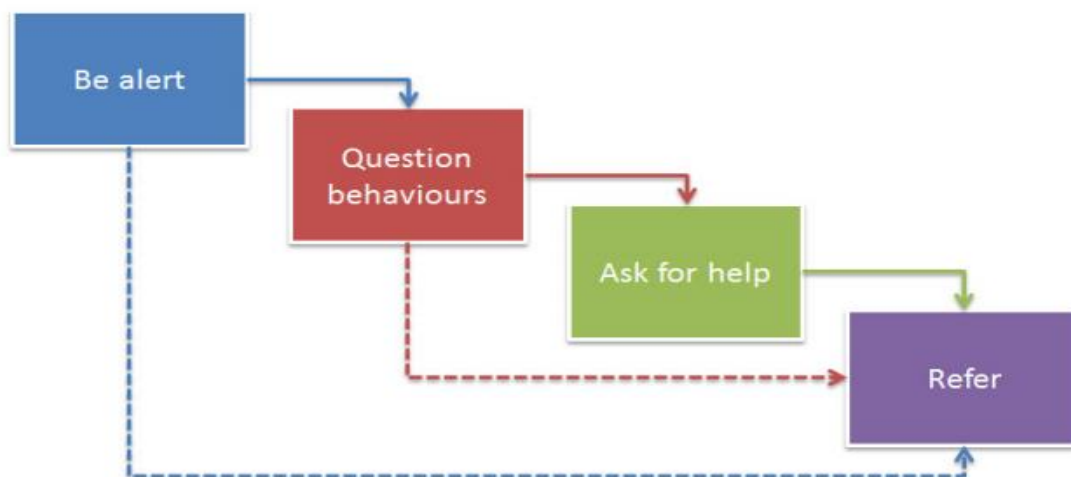
overlap with one another, therefore staff will always be vigilant and always raise concerns with a DSL.

- Parental behaviours can indicate abuse or neglect, so staff will be alert to parent-learner interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.
- Learners may report abuse happening to themselves, their peers or their family members. All reports made by learners to staff will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with this policy.
- Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors and risks outside the College. Learners can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families; extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and learner can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence, radicalisation and county lines.
- Technology can be a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Learners are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face and in many cases, abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Learners can also abuse their peers online.
- By understanding the indicators of abuse and neglect, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the learner and their family.

## 7. Safeguarding and Vulnerable Young People Protection Procedures

The Oaks adheres to the KMSAB Safeguarding Vulnerable young people Procedures. The full ~~KSCMP~~ KMSAB procedures and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the [KMSAB website](#)

All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow the following approach:



It may not always be appropriate to go through all four stages sequentially, and if a vulnerable learner is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a request for support should be made immediately to Social Care and/or the police.

## 8. Responding to concerns.

If staff are made aware of a potential safeguarding concern they are expected to:

- listen carefully to the concern and be non-judgemental.
- only use open questions to clarify information where necessary, e.g. who, what, where, when or Tell, Explain, Describe (TED).

- not promise confidentiality as concerns will have to be shared further, for example, with the DSL and potentially Integrated Children's Services.
- be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
- record the concern on Databridge.
- inform the DSL (or deputy), as soon as practically possible.

**The role of the College in situations where there are vulnerable learners' protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.**

The DSL may seek advice or guidance from the learner's social worker, or in the absence of a social worker, from the Front Door service.

The DSL or a deputy should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, a DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from Education Safeguarding Service or via consultation with a social worker from the Front Door. In these circumstances, any action taken will be shared with a DSL as soon as is practically possible.

If a vulnerable learner is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a request for support should be made immediately to Social Care and/or the police.

All members of staff are made aware of the internal and local early help support services. Where a vulnerable learner is being offered or receiving early help support, staff will be supported to understand their role in any early help assessment or intervention. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with other professionals, and in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

The DSL will keep all early help cases under constant review and consideration will be given to a request for support to the Front Door if the situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

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

**In all but the most exceptional circumstances, parents /carers will be made aware of the concerns for their vulnerable young people at the earliest possible stage.** In the event of a request for support to the Front Door being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought in line with guidance provided by KMASB, unless there is a valid reason not to do so, for example if to do so would put a vulnerable learner at risk of harm and/or it would undermine a criminal investigation.

On occasion, staff may pass information about a vulnerable learner to the DSL but remain anxious about action subsequently taken. Staff should feel able to check the progress of a case with the DSL so that they can reassure themselves that the vulnerable learner is safe, and their welfare is being considered. If following this process, the staff member remains concerned it is the responsibility of that staff member to follow the College's escalation process.

If a vulnerable learner's situation does not appear to be improving, then the DSL (or the person that made the request for support) will consider re-referral. Professional disagreements (escalation) will be responded to in line with the KMSAB procedures and DSLs may request support via the Education Safeguarding Service.

## 8. Record Keeping

Staff will record any welfare concern that they have about a vulnerable learner on Databridge. If unable to do Safeguarding Incident Forms are available in the photocopying room (with a body map if injuries have been observed) and these **must** be passed without delay to the DSL. Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the vulnerable learner's words and will be signed and dated by the member of staff. If there is an immediate concern the member of staff should consult with a DSL as this needs to take priority.

- All safeguarding concerns, discussions and decisions (and justifications for those decisions) will be recorded in writing. If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.
- Incident/Welfare concern forms are kept by the photocopier and in the Safeguarding folder in the Staff team shared drive.
- Safeguarding records are kept for individual vulnerable learners and are maintained separately from all other records relating to the vulnerable learner in the College. Safeguarding records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL. Safeguarding records are shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis only.
- All safeguarding records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the vulnerable learner's subsequent College/setting, under a confidential and separate cover. These will be given to the new DSL and a receipt of delivery will be obtained.
- Detailed guidance on Record Keeping is found in a separate document "Guidelines for Safeguarding Record Keeping in Colleges".

## 9. Multi-agency Working

The Oaks recognises and is committed to its responsibility to work with other professionals and agencies in line with statutory guidance (WTTSC 2018)

Colleges are not the investigating agency when there are vulnerable learner protection concerns. We will however contribute to the investigation and assessment processes as required. The Oaks recognises the importance of multi-agency working and will support attendance at relevant safeguarding meetings, including Vulnerable Young People Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Vulnerable Young People in Need meetings, CHANNEL Panels or other early help multi-agency meetings.

The DSL and the wider College Leadership Team and will work to establish strong and co-operative relationships with relevant professionals in other agencies.

## 10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- The Oaks recognises our duty and powers to hold, use and share relevant information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity as per statutory guidance outlined within KCSIE 2021.
- The Oaks has a dedicated Data Protection Officer to ensure that our school/college is compliant with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing requirements. This in accordance with our duties as per the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Contact details are as follows:  
**Peter Questier**  
**Data Protection Officer**  
**Information Governance, Children's Services**  
**East Sussex County Council**  
[schools.dpo@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:schools.dpo@eastsussex.gov.uk)  
**01273 337610**
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of

the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children (KCSIE 2021). DfE [“Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners”](#) (2018) provides further detail.

- The DSL will only disclose information about a pupil to other members of staff on a ‘need to know’ basis.
- All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep any information confidential, they also have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard vulnerable young people.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a vulnerable learner to keep secrets which might compromise the vulnerable young people’s safety or wellbeing.

DfE Guidance on Information Sharing (July 2018) provides further detail. This can be found in the Safeguarding folder in the Staff Team shared drive.

### 11. Complaints

The College has a **Complaints Procedure** available to parents, learners and members of staff and visitors who wish to report concerns. This can be found on our website [www.theoaks.ac.uk/policies](http://www.theoaks.ac.uk/policies)  
All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. If a member of staff is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they can raise their disclosure as per our Whistleblowing Policy.

### 12. Staff Induction, Awareness and Training

All members of staff have been provided with a copy of Part One of *“Keeping Vulnerable young people Safe in Education”* (2021) which covers Safeguarding information for all staff. College leaders will read the entire document. Members of staff have signed to confirm that they have read and understood Part One.

- The DSL will ensure that all new staff (including temporary staff) are aware of the College’s internal safeguarding processes.
- All staff members will receive training to ensure they are aware of a range of safeguarding issues.
- All staff members will receive regular safeguarding and vulnerable young people/vulnerable young people protection updates, at least annually.
- All staff members will be made aware of the College’s expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the staff or code of conduct and Acceptable Use Policy.
- The DSL will provide an annual report to the Management Board detailing safeguarding training undertaken by all staff and will maintain up to date register of who has been trained.
- Although the College has a nominated lead for the Board of Trustees (Julie Stones), all members of the Board will access appropriate safeguarding training which covers their specific strategic responsibilities on a regular basis.

### 13. Safe Working Practice

- All members of staff are required to work within clear guidelines on the College’s Code of Conduct.
- Staff should be particularly aware of the professional risks associated with the use of social media and electronic communication (email, mobile phones, texting, social network sites etc.) and should adhere to the College’s online safety and Acceptable Use policies.

### 14. Staff Supervision and Support

- Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for vulnerable learners’ welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.
- The induction process will include familiarisation with vulnerable young people protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if members of staff have any concerns about a vulnerable learner’s safety or welfare.
- The College will provide appropriate supervision and support for all members of staff to ensure that:

- All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable learners.
- All staff will be supported by the DSL in their safeguarding role.
- All members of staff will have regular reviews of their own practise to ensure they continually **improve**.
- The DSL will also put staff in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they wish. Staff can also approach organisations such as their Union, the Education Support Partnership, or other similar organisations directly.
- We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with vulnerable young people. including convictions, cautions, court orders, cautions, reprimands and warnings.

### 15. Safer Recruitment

- The Oaks is committed to ensure that they develop a safe culture and that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our pupils and staff.
- The Board of Trustees and Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the College follows safe recruitment processes outlined within guidance.
- The Oaks is responsible for ensuring that the College maintains an accurate Single Central Record (SCR) in line with statutory guidance.
- The Board of Trustees will ensure that there is at least one member of the interview panel who has completed safer recruitment training.
- We are also committed to supporting the statutory guidance from the Department for Education on the application of the Vulnerable young people (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and related obligations under the Vulnerable young people care Act 2006 in Schools/Colleges.
- We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with vulnerable young people including convictions, cautions, court orders, cautions, reprimands and warnings.
- The Oaks will maintain records of all staff who have attended Safer Recruitment training.
- Should The Oaks organise work experience placements, we will follow the advice and guidance as identified in part Three of KCSIE 2021.

### 16. Allegations Against Members of Staff and Volunteers

The Oaks recognises that it is possible for staff to behave in a way that might cause harm to vulnerable young people and takes seriously any allegation received. Such allegations should be referred immediately to the Head of College who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the vulnerable learner and staff member. In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head of College then staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer who will contact the LADO in the first instance.

- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practise and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the Leadership team.
- All members of staff are made aware of the College's Whistleblowing procedure and that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a vulnerable learner at risk. Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding vulnerable young people protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- The Oaks has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a vulnerable learner, 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 people. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our College, 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 Colleges People Service.

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## 17. Safeguarding Vulnerable young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The Oaks acknowledges that vulnerable learners with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges as they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse.

- The Oaks will ensure that vulnerable young people with SEN and disabilities, specifically those with communication difficulties, will be supported to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.
- Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that vulnerable learners with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by safeguarding concerns such as bullying. All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour/mood change or injuries, and not to assume that they are related to the vulnerable young people's disability and be aware that vulnerable young people with SEN and disabilities may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse.

## 18. Peer-on-peer Abuse

All members of staff at The Oaks recognise that vulnerable learners are capable of abusing their peers. Peer-on-peer abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to, bullying, cyberbullying, gender-based abuse, hazing (initiation type violence), sexually harmful behaviour, violence, "upskirting" and 'sexting'. Staff and leadership are to be mindful that some potential issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved.

- The Oaks believes that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated.
- 'Upskirting' is a criminal offence and will not be tolerated. It typically involves someone taking a photograph under a person's clothes without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- 'Sexting' (exchange of messages, Nude and/or semi-nude images and/or videos) will not be tolerated. The College will respond to cases of 'sexting' in line with UKCCIS "Sexting in Schools and Colleges" guidance and in line with Kent Safeguarding Vulnerable young people Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP) guidance.

## 19. Gangs, County Lines, Violent Crime and Exploitation

The Oaks recognises the impact of gangs, county lines, violent crime and exploitation. It is recognised that the initial response to vulnerable young victims is important and that staff will take any allegation seriously and work in ways that support vulnerable young people and keep them safe.

- All staff have been trained and recognise the need to be vigilant for the signs that may include, but not exclusively:
  - Unexplained gifts/new possessions – these can indicate vulnerable learners have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs.
  - Increased absence from College.
  - Change in friendships/relationships with others/groups.
  - Significant decline in performance.
  - Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing.
  - Signs of assault/unexplained injuries.

## 20. Online Safety

It is recognised by The Oaks that the use of technology presents challenges and risks to vulnerable learners and young people both inside and outside of College.

- The DSL has overall responsibility for online safeguarding within the College.
- The Oaks identifies that the issues can be broadly categorised into three areas of risk:
  - **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 of, or causes, harm.

- The DSL and leadership team have read annex C regarding Online Safety within ‘Keeping Vulnerable Young People Safe in Education’ 2021.
- The Oaks recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile phones and cameras and in accordance with KCSIE 2021, it has appropriate policies in place that are shared and understood by all members of the College community. Further information reading the specific approaches relating to this can be found in the Colleges **Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy** which can be found on our website and on the college shared drive respectively.
- The Oaks will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place when pupils and staff access College systems and internet provision.
- The Oaks acknowledges that whilst filtering and monitoring is an important part of the College’s online safety responsibilities, it is only one part of our approach to online safety. Learners may have access to systems external to the College control such as mobile phones and other internet enabled devices and technology, and where concerns are identified appropriate action will be taken.
- The Oaks will ensure a comprehensive whole College curriculum response is in place to enable all pupils to learn about and manage online risks effectively and will support parents and the wider College community (including all members of staff) to become aware and alert to the need to keep vulnerable learners safe online.

### 21. Curriculum and Staying Safe

- We recognise that Colleges play an essential role in helping vulnerable learners to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate vulnerable young people and young people behaviour; what is ‘safe’; to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned.
- Our embedded PSHE curriculum provides opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making so that students have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and that of others. Online safety is integrated into the curriculum.
- The Oaks recognises that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.
- Our College systems support vulnerable learners to talk to a range of staff. Vulnerable learners will be listened to, and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.

### 22. The Use of College Premises by Other Organisations

- Where services or activities are provided separately by another body using the College premises, the Head of College and Board of Trustees will seek written assurance that the organisation concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place with regard to safeguarding vulnerable young people and vulnerable young people protection and that relevant safeguarding checks have been made in respect of staff and volunteers.
- If this assurance is not achieved, then an application to use premises will be refused.

### 23. Security

- All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light.
- Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into College as outlined within guidance. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors log and to display a visitors badge whilst on College site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

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

#### 24. Monitoring and Review

- All College staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) will have access to a copy of this policy. The policy will also be available to parents/carers via The Oaks' website.
- The policy forms part of our College development plan and will be reviewed annually.

#### 25. Local Support

All members of staff in The Oaks are made aware of local support available: Please see below

##### **Contact details for Area Safeguarding Advisor (Education Safeguarding Service)**

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts>

Telephone: 03000 412284

Mobile: 07540677200

##### **Contact details for Online Safety in the Education Safeguarding Service**

Rebecca Avery, Education Safeguarding Advisor (online protection)

Ashley Assiter, Online Safety Development Officer – 03000 415797

[esafetyofficer@kent.gov.uk](mailto:esafetyofficer@kent.gov.uk) (non-urgent issues only)

##### **Contact details for LADO**

Telephone: 03000 410888

Out of Hours: 03000 411111

Email: [kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk)

##### **Vulnerable young people Social Work Services**

Front door: 03000 411111

Out of Hours: 03000 419191

##### **Kent Police**

101 (999 if there is an immediate risk of harm)

##### **Kent Safeguarding Vulnerable young people Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP)**

[kscmp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kscmp@kent.gov.uk)

Telephone: 03000 421126

##### **Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board**

[KMSAB@kent.gov.uk](mailto:KMSAB@kent.gov.uk)



## 26. National Support

### Support for staff

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

### Support for Pupils

- NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- Vulnerable young people Line: [www.vulnerableyoungpeopleline.org.uk](http://www.vulnerableyoungpeopleline.org.uk)
- Papyrus: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)
- Young Minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- The Mix: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

### Support for young people

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

### Support for Learning Disabilities

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

### Domestic Abuse

- Refuge: [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)
- Women's Aid: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)
- Men's Advice Line: [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)
- Mankind: [www.mankind.org.uk](http://www.mankind.org.uk)
- Domestic abuse services: [www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk](http://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk)

### Honour based Violence

- Forced Marriage Unit: [www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage)

### Sexual Abuse and CSE

- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: [www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk](http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk)
- Stop it Now!: [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)
- Parents Protect: [www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk)
- CEOP: [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)
- Marie Collins Foundation: [www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk](http://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk)
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

### Online Safety

- Vulnerable young people International: [www.vulnerableyoungpeoplenet.com](http://www.vulnerableyoungpeoplenet.com)
- UK Safer Internet Centre: [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- Parents Info: [www.parentinfo.org](http://www.parentinfo.org)
- Internet Matters: [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)
- Net Aware: [www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk)
- Get safe Online: [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

### Radicalisation and hate

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

## Annex A

### Specific Safeguarding Issues

- The Oaks is aware of a range of specific safeguarding issues and situations that can put children at greater risk of harm. In addition to Part One, DSLs, College leaders and staff who work directly with children will read annex B of KCSIE 2021 which contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.
- Where staff are unsure how to respond to specific safeguarding issues, they should follow the processes as identified in part 3 of this policy and speak with the DSL or a deputy.

#### 1.1 Peer-on-peer Abuse

- All members of staff at College recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers, and that it can happen both inside and outside of College and online.
- College staff recognise that peer-on-peer abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:
  - Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
  - abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
  - physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
  - sexual violence and sexual harassment
  - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
  - causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
  - upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
  - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- The Oaks believes that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated or dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.
- The Oaks recognise that even if there are no reported cases of peer-on-peer abuse, such abuse is still likely to be taking place.
- All staff have a role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers. Staff recognise that that some peer-on-peer abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved, i.e. for gender based abuse, girls are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators.
- Concerns about learner's behaviour, including peer-on-peer abuse taking place offsite will be responded to as part of a partnership approach with learners and parents/carers. Offsite behaviour concerns will be recorded and responded to in line with existing appropriate policies, for example anti-bullying, acceptable use, behaviour and child protection policies.

“Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives headteachers a statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises e.g. when children are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, to such extent as is reasonable. Note legislation is for schools only and is not applicable to independent schools”.

- In order to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, The Oaks will:
  - implement a robust anti-bullying policy
  - provide an appropriate PSHE and RSE curriculum
  - provide a range of reporting mechanisms e.g. worry boxes, dedicated reporting emails monitored by DSLs, online report forms.
- The Oaks want children to feel able to confidently report abuse and know their concerns will be treated seriously. All allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be reported to the DSL and will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated college policies, including child protection, anti-bullying and behaviour. Learners who experience abuse will be offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.
- Alleged victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer-on-peer abuse will be supported by:
  - taking reports seriously
  - listening carefully
  - avoiding victim blaming
  - providing appropriate pastoral support
  - working with parents/carers
  - reviewing educational approaches
  - following procedures as identified in other policies e.g. the school/college anti-bullying, behaviour and child protection policy, and where necessary and appropriate, informing the police and/or ICS.

## 1.2 Child on Child Sexual Violence or Harassment

- When responding to concerns relating to child on child sexual violence or harassment, The Oaks will follow the guidance outlined in Part Five of KCSIE 2021 and the DfE [‘Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges’](#) guidance.
- The Oaks recognises sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children and can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable.
- All victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment or be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- When there has been a report of sexual violence or harassment, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis which explores how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted).
  - The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other adult students and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.

- Reports will initially be managed internally by the College and where necessary will be referred to Social Services and/or the Police.
  - The decision making and required action taken will vary on a case by case basis, but will be informed by the wishes of the victim, the nature of the alleged incident (including whether a crime may have been committed), the ages and developmental stages of the children involved, any power imbalance, if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse, if there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or College staff, and, any other related issues or wider context.
- If at any stage the DSL is unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

### 1.3 Nude and/or Semi-Nude Image Sharing

The term ‘sharing nudes and semi-nudes’ is used to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams of/by young people under the age of 18. Although learners at The Oaks are over 18 they remain vulnerable and so the sharing of nudes/semi nudes will be taken very seriously and appropriate action will be taken, including contacting the police if necessary.

- The Oaks recognises that consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “sexting”) can be a safeguarding issue; all concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL (or deputy).
- When made aware of concerns involving consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos by learners, staff are advised to:
  - Report any concerns to the DSL immediately.
  - Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it – this may be illegal. If staff have already viewed the imagery by accident, this will be immediately reported to the DSL.
  - Not delete the imagery or ask the child to delete it.
  - Not say or do anything to blame or shame any learner involved.
  - Explain to the learners involved that they will report the issue to the DSL and reassure them that they will receive appropriate support and help.
  - Not ask the learner/s involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery and not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the learner/s involved or their, or other, parents and/or carers. This is the responsibility of the DSL.
  - the DSL will hold an initial review meeting to explore the context and ensure appropriate and proportionate safeguarding action is taken in the best interests of the learner involved. This may mean speaking with relevant staff and the learners involved as appropriate.
  - parents and carers will be informed at an early stage and be involved in the process to best support learners, unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put a learner at risk of harm.
  - All decisions and action taken will be recorded in line with our safeguarding procedures.
  - a referral will be made to ICS and/or the police immediately if:
    - the incident involves an adult (over 18).
    - there is reason to believe that a vulnerable learner has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed.
    - the image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of 13, depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child’s developmental stage, or are violent.

- a learner or another young person is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
- The DSL may choose to involve other agencies at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed at a later date.
- If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from Social Services.

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

- The Oaks recognise that CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a young person into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect males and females and can include young people who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.
- If staff are concerned that a learner may be at risk of CSE or CCE, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

#### **1.5 Serious Violence**

- All staff are made aware of the indicators which may signal a vulnerable learner is at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include unexplained gifts or new possessions, increased absence from college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- Any concerns regarding serious violence will be reported and responded to in line with other safeguarding concerns.
  - The initial response to victims is important and staff will take any allegations seriously and work in ways that support learners and keep them safe.

#### **1.6 So-called honour based abuse**

- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.
- All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and concerns should be responded to in line with Section 6 of this Policy. Staff will report any concerns about HBA to the DSL or a deputy.

#### **1.7 Preventing radicalisation**

- The Oaks is aware of our duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism", also known as the Prevent duty and the specific obligations placed upon us as an education provider regarding risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.
- We recognise that young adults with special educational needs are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation and staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

- Staff will report any concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who is aware of the [local procedures](#) to follow.

## **1.8 Cybercrime**

- The Oaks recognises that learners with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen offline but are enabled at scale and at speed online) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer/internet enabled device) cybercrime.
- If staff are concerned that a learner may be at risk of becoming involved in cyber-dependent cybercrime, the DSL will be informed, and consideration will be given to accessing local support and/or referring into the [Cyber Choices](#) programme, which aims to intervene when 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.
- Where there are concerns about 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs online, child sexual abuse and exploitation, or other areas of concern such as online bullying or general online safety, they will be responded to in line with this and other appropriate policies.