Hillside Education

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Governance Table

Field	Details
Policy owner	Hillside Education
Responsible lead	Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Nyree Parker
Deputy lead	SENCO / Deputy DSL – Emily Wilson
Approved by	Proprietor / Governing Body
Review cycle	Annually, or sooner following statutory or local safeguarding partnership updates
Applies to	All staff, pupils, parents/carers, volunteers, contractors and visiting professionals
Policy area	Safeguarding, child protection, safer practice, pastoral care
Linked policies	Behaviour & Safety; Pastoral Care & Wellbeing; Anti-Child-on-Child Abuse; Online Safety; Attendance; Complaints; Trauma-Informed Practice Statement; Staff Code of Conduct

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1. Statement of Intent

Hillside Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. Safeguarding is the responsibility of every adult working in, visiting, volunteering for, or acting on behalf of the school. The welfare of the child is our paramount consideration and remains central to all decision-making, practice and planning.

As an independent special school supporting pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, Hillside recognises that many pupils may have experienced significant adversity before admission. This may include abuse, neglect, trauma, adverse childhood experiences, disrupted education, family instability, domestic abuse, exclusion, exploitation, gang

affiliation, community violence, contextual safeguarding risks, social isolation and mental health difficulties.

The school understands that behaviour communicates need, distress, fear, trauma or vulnerability. Unsafe behaviour must always be addressed, but Hillside seeks to understand behaviour within the wider context of a child's lived experiences, developmental stage, communication profile and safeguarding vulnerabilities. This approach is grounded in trauma-informed practice, the Neurosequential Model of Education (NME), Polyvagal Theory and the school's Shared Language Framework.

Safeguarding at Hillside is:

- child-centred
- trauma-informed
- relational
- contextual
- SEND-aware
- inclusive
- evidence-informed
- safeguarding-led

The school aims to create a culture where children feel:

- safe enough to speak
- known well enough to be understood
- supported enough to seek help
- valued enough to engage with learning and relationships

Relational safety, predictability, co-regulation and belonging are recognised as safeguarding interventions. These are embedded through the school's hapū structure, daily routines, relational practice and Shared Language Framework.

Safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of school life and underpins attendance, behaviour, curriculum design, staff development, therapeutic support, pastoral practice and leadership decision-making.

All safeguarding concerns, actions and decisions are recorded within the HubMIS Safeguarding Module, which is the school's single source of truth for safeguarding information and DSL oversight.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based upon and should be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Education Act 2002;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- UK GDPR;
- Prevent Duty Guidance;
- Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners;
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance;
- Independent School Standards Regulations;
- Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

This policy reflects statutory expectations relating to:

- safeguarding and child protection;
- attendance;
- early help;
- child-on-child abuse;
- exploitation;

- online safety;
- artificial intelligence and emerging technologies;
- filtering and monitoring;
- Prevent duties;
- low-level concerns;
- safeguarding culture;
- safer recruitment;
- work experience and off-site safeguarding;
- support for vulnerable groups including young carers, children with social workers and looked after children.

Hillside interprets all statutory safeguarding duties through a trauma-informed, contextual safeguarding lens, ensuring legal requirements are applied in ways that recognise adversity, neurodevelopment, relational safety and the lived experiences of pupils with SEMH needs.

3. Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of mental and physical health or development
- ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- providing help and support as soon as problems emerge

Safeguarding includes harm occurring within families, between peers, within communities, online environments, education settings, transport routes and social networks.

Safeguarding is broader than child protection.

At Hillside, safeguarding also includes:

- relational safety
- felt safety

- co-regulation
- predictable routines
- trauma-informed communication
- contextual safeguarding
- early help delivered through relational practice

All safeguarding concerns are recorded within the HubMIS Safeguarding Module.

4. Whole School Safeguarding Culture

Hillside Education seeks to build and maintain a strong safeguarding culture where safeguarding is visible, understood and actively practiced every day. Safeguarding is viewed as a culture rather than a process.

The school promotes a culture where:

- pupils are listened to
- concerns are reported promptly
- professional curiosity is expected
- low-level concerns are encouraged
- mistakes are learned from
- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- attendance is considered through a safeguarding lens
- early intervention is prioritised

Many pupils entering Hillside may have experienced inconsistent relationships with adults and services. Staff therefore understand that building safety, trust, predictability and relational consistency is a safeguarding intervention in itself. Co-regulation, attuned communication and the Shared Language Framework underpin daily safeguarding practice.

The hapū structure provides relational stability and predictable adult relationships, supporting safeguarding through belonging, attunement and daily relational contact.

Safeguarding is reinforced through briefings, quizzes, scenarios, newsletters, DSL updates, National College modules and learning from safeguarding reviews.

5. Contextual Safeguarding

The school recognises that safeguarding risks do not exist solely within family environments.

Many risks affecting young people may emerge through peer groups, neighbourhoods, social networks, online activity and wider community environments.

This is particularly relevant within SEMH settings where pupils may be vulnerable to:

- criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- county lines activity;
- gang affiliation;
- coercion;
- violence;
- radicalisation;
- community-based harm;
- online recruitment;
- unsafe peer relationships.

The school adopts a contextual safeguarding approach when assessing risk.

Staff are expected to consider:

- peer associations;
- transport routes;
- attendance patterns;
- online activity;
- local community issues;
- social media influences;
- patterns of missing episodes;
- family circumstances.

Safeguarding decisions must consider not only what is happening to a child, but where harm may be occurring and who may be exerting influence over them.

The school will work collaboratively with:

- parents and carers;
- social workers;
- youth justice services;
- police;
- exploitation teams;
- local authorities;
- health services;

to respond to contextual safeguarding concerns effectively.

All contextual safeguarding concerns are recorded within HubMIS.

The hapū structure supports contextual safeguarding by providing relational stability, predictable adult oversight and daily attuned contact.

6. Governance and Accountability

Anthony Prichard serves as Proprietor and Chair of the Proprietor Board.

The Proprietor Board holds strategic and ultimate accountability for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

As governance arrangements continue to develop, the Proprietor Board will consist of no fewer than three members, including an identified safeguarding proprietor responsible for providing safeguarding oversight, challenge and support.

The Proprietor Board will:

- ensure safeguarding remains a standing agenda item;
- ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding duties;
- ensure compliance with Independent School Standards;
- oversee safer recruitment arrangements;
- monitor safeguarding effectiveness;
- receive safeguarding assurance reports from the DSL;
- scrutinise safeguarding trends and themes;

- monitor attendance and safeguarding data;
- review the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems annually;
- ensure appropriate safeguarding resources are available;
- ensure safeguarding training requirements are met;
- challenge leaders where evidence of safeguarding weakness is identified.

Safeguarding governance extends beyond policy compliance and includes active oversight of safeguarding culture, safeguarding effectiveness and safeguarding outcomes for pupils.

7. Designated Safeguarding Lead Arrangements

The Headteacher, Nyree Parker, serves as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety.

The DSL's responsibilities include:

- managing referrals to children's social care;
- managing referrals to police where appropriate;
- acting as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns;
- providing safeguarding advice and support to staff;
- maintaining safeguarding records;
- overseeing HubMIS and safeguarding chronologies;
- coordinating safeguarding responses;
- leading attendance-related safeguarding intervention;
- overseeing contextual safeguarding assessments;
- managing safeguarding quality assurance;
- analysing safeguarding trends;
- overseeing online safety;
- overseeing filtering and monitoring arrangements;

- managing allegations and low-level concerns;
- supporting staff safeguarding development;
- reporting safeguarding matters to proprietors.

DSL Availability and Contingency Arrangements

Until Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are appointed, the Headteacher will undertake all DSL responsibilities.

Safeguarding concerns must never be delayed due to the temporary absence of the DSL.

Where urgent safeguarding action is required and the DSL is unavailable, staff must seek immediate support from:

- Children's Social Care;
- Nottinghamshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- Nottinghamshire Police;
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- emergency services where appropriate.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff must contact emergency services without delay and inform the DSL as soon as reasonably practicable.

The DSL will ensure robust oversight of:

- attendance safeguarding;
- child protection;
- contextual safeguarding;
- exploitation;
- low-level concerns;
- safer recruitment;
- safeguarding training;
- safeguarding audits;
- safeguarding reporting.

8. Staff Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Every member of staff, volunteer, contractor, visitor and proprietor has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All staff must:

- read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE);
- understand the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures;
- know how to recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- know how to report concerns;
- maintain professional curiosity;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- contribute to a strong safeguarding culture;
- undertake safeguarding training as required;
- identify emerging concerns early;
- act in the best interests of children at all times.

All staff must be aware that a child may not be ready or able to disclose abuse directly and may instead communicate distress through:

- changes in behaviour;
- attendance concerns;
- withdrawal;
- aggression;
- anxiety;
- risk-taking behaviour;
- non-engagement;
- poor emotional regulation.

Staff must never assume another person has reported a concern.

If in doubt, staff should consult the DSL immediately.

Any safeguarding concern must be recorded on HubMIS before the end of the working day.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, action must be taken immediately and must not be delayed while a record is completed.

9. Safeguarding Training and Professional Development

Hillside Education is committed to maintaining a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

The school recognises that safeguarding is most effective when learning is continuous rather than limited to annual training events.

Induction

All staff receive safeguarding induction prior to working with pupils.

This includes:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- KCSIE Part One;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Behaviour and Safety Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- safeguarding reporting procedures;
- HubMIS training;
- low-level concerns procedures.

Mandatory Annual Training

All staff complete:

- face-to-face safeguarding training;
- Prevent Duty training;
- online safeguarding training;

- child-on-child abuse training;
- exploitation awareness training;
- online safety training;
- updates arising from changes in statutory guidance.

Ongoing Safeguarding Development

Safeguarding knowledge is continually reinforced through:

Weekly

- safeguarding quizzes;
- safeguarding scenarios;
- safeguarding discussions;
- professional reflection.

Fortnightly

- safeguarding newsletters for staff.

Half-Termly

- safeguarding communications for parents and carers.

Ongoing

- National College safeguarding training modules;
- safeguarding updates from the DSL;
- learning from local and national safeguarding reviews;
- policy updates;
- professional supervision and discussion.

The effectiveness of safeguarding training is evaluated through observation, discussion, audits, supervision and monitoring of safeguarding practice.

10. Early Help

The school believes children should receive help as soon as difficulties emerge.

Early intervention is often the most effective safeguarding intervention.

All staff should remain alert to indicators that a pupil may benefit from Early Help.

This may include concerns relating to:

- attendance;
- emotional wellbeing;
- family difficulties;
- parenting challenges;
- housing instability;
- exploitation risk;
- behaviour changes;
- peer relationships;
- mental health;
- caring responsibilities;
- emerging safeguarding concerns.

The school's response to concerns should be proportionate, graduated and child-centred.

The DSL may coordinate support through:

- Early Help Assessments;
- Team Around the Child meetings;
- multi-agency planning;
- attendance support plans;
- therapeutic intervention;
- pastoral support plans;
- external agency referrals.

The school will work collaboratively with families and professionals wherever appropriate.

11. Attendance, Missing Education and Safeguarding

Hillside Education recognises that attendance is a safeguarding responsibility.

For many pupils within an SEMH provision, attendance is a protective factor and a key indicator of wellbeing and safety.

The school recognises that unexplained absence may indicate:

- neglect;
- abuse;
- domestic abuse;
- family instability;
- exploitation;
- criminal activity;
- gang involvement;
- mental health difficulties;
- bullying;
- contextual safeguarding risks.

Attendance concerns are always considered through a safeguarding lens.

Attendance Monitoring

Attendance is monitored through LearnTrak.

Staff monitor:

- daily attendance;
- punctuality;
- attendance trends;
- patterns of absence;
- contextual safeguarding indicators associated with attendance.

Attendance concerns are shared with the DSL where safeguarding factors may be present.

First-Day Response

Where a pupil fails to attend and no reason has been provided:

- first-day calling procedures will be initiated;
- parents and carers will be contacted;
- alternative emergency contacts may be contacted;
- attendance staff will escalate concerns where appropriate.

Where safeguarding concerns exist, immediate DSL consultation will occur.

Welfare Checks and Safe and Well Checks

Where a child's safety cannot be established, the school may:

- undertake welfare checks;
- carry out safe and well investigations;
- liaise with social workers;
- liaise with youth justice services;
- liaise with police;
- request partner agencies undertake welfare visits.

Actions taken will be proportionate to the known level of risk.

Attendance and Contextual Safeguarding

Attendance concerns may indicate:

- child criminal exploitation;
- county lines activity;
- gang affiliation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- coercion;
- violence;
- unsafe peer associations.

Staff must remain professionally curious about attendance patterns and consider what wider safeguarding concerns may exist.

Children Missing Education

The school recognises that children missing education are at increased risk of:

- abuse;
- neglect;
- exploitation;
- criminal activity;
- forced marriage;
- radicalisation;
- mental health deterioration.

The school will fulfil all statutory responsibilities in relation to Children Missing Education and will work collaboratively with local authorities and safeguarding agencies where children cannot be located.

Recording

All attendance-related safeguarding concerns must be:

- recorded on HubMIS;
- incorporated into safeguarding chronologies;
- considered within safeguarding risk assessments;
- reviewed by the DSL where appropriate.

12. Child-on-Child Abuse

Hillside Education recognises that children can abuse other children.

Child-on-child abuse is never tolerated, minimised or dismissed as:

- banter;

- horseplay;
- normal behaviour;
- part of growing up.

The school recognises that abuse can occur both on and off site, including online.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying;
- cyberbullying;
- discriminatory abuse;
- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- image-based abuse;
- coercive behaviour;
- hazing;
- initiation activities;
- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- exploitation.

The school will always consider:

- the needs of the victim;
- the safety of all children involved;
- contextual safeguarding factors;
- proportional and educational responses.

All child-on-child abuse concerns must be referred immediately to the DSL.

13. Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation and Serious Violence

The school recognises that some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation due to:

- SEMH needs;
- previous trauma;
- exclusion histories;
- disrupted education;
- social isolation;
- community risks.

Children involved in exploitation are viewed primarily as victims rather than offenders.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs when a child is manipulated, coerced or controlled into criminal activity.

This may include:

- county lines activity;
- transporting drugs;
- carrying weapons;
- theft;
- violence;
- storing drugs or money;
- criminal association.

Indicators may include:

- missing episodes;
- unexplained money;
- expensive possessions;
- multiple phones;
- gang association;
- changes in friendship groups;
- secrecy;

- fearfulness;
- increased absence.

County Lines

The school recognises county lines as a significant safeguarding concern.

Staff remain alert to indicators including:

- unexplained travel;
- possession of train tickets;
- regular missing episodes;
- gang affiliation;
- threats or intimidation;
- unexplained cash.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse.

Indicators may include:

- inappropriate relationships;
- gifts;
- secrecy;
- online grooming;
- emotional manipulation;
- missing episodes;
- sexualised behaviour.

Serious Violence

The school also recognises links between:

- exploitation;
- gangs;
- weapon carrying;
- violence;
- criminal networks.

Staff should remain alert to:

- unexplained injuries;
- violent behaviour;
- changes in friendships;
- fearfulness;
- association with high-risk peers.

School Response

Where exploitation is suspected, the school may:

- complete safeguarding risk assessments;
- consult police;
- consult social care;
- consult exploitation teams;
- review attendance information;
- review contextual safeguarding factors;
- convene multi-agency meetings.

All exploitation concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

14. Domestic Abuse

The school recognises that domestic abuse can have a profound impact upon children and young people.

Children may experience abuse:

- directly;
- indirectly through witnessing abuse;
- through coercive and controlling behaviour within the home.

Domestic abuse may be:

- physical;
- emotional;
- psychological;
- sexual;
- financial;
- coercive;
- controlling.

Children affected by domestic abuse may experience:

- trauma;
- anxiety;
- emotional dysregulation;
- attendance difficulties;
- behavioural changes;
- reduced concentration;
- increased safeguarding vulnerability.

Staff should remain alert to indicators of domestic abuse and report concerns immediately.

The school will work closely with:

- children's social care;
- police;
- domestic abuse services;
- Early Help services;
- relevant safeguarding partners.

The safety and welfare of the child will remain the primary consideration in all decision-making.

15. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the United Kingdom and constitutes a form of child abuse.

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to female genital organs, for non-medical reasons.

The school recognises that:

- FGM is a serious safeguarding concern;
- children may be unable or unwilling to disclose concerns;
- FGM can have significant physical and emotional consequences;
- preventative safeguarding action is essential.

Staff must remain alert to indicators that a pupil may:

- be at risk of FGM;
- be discussing a special procedure or ceremony;
- be preparing for extended travel abroad;
- have experienced a prolonged absence;
- display significant anxiety relating to travel or family expectations.

Indicators that FGM may already have occurred may include:

- difficulty walking or sitting;
- prolonged absence from school;
- repeated medical concerns;
- emotional distress;
- reluctance to participate in physical activities.

Mandatory Reporting Duty

Where a member of staff discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under eighteen years of age, the staff member must make a report to the Police in accordance with mandatory reporting requirements.

All concerns regarding FGM must also be reported immediately to the DSL.

The school will work closely with:

- social care;
- police;
- health professionals;
- safeguarding partners;

to ensure children receive appropriate protection and support.

16. Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage

Honour-based abuse and forced marriage are forms of abuse and significant safeguarding concerns.

The school understands that honour-based abuse can occur when an individual is harmed or threatened because family or community members perceive that behaviour has brought shame upon the family or community.

Forced marriage occurs when one or both parties do not consent to a marriage and pressure, threats or coercion are used.

The school recognises that children may be vulnerable to:

- emotional abuse;
- coercive control;
- isolation;
- threats;
- physical abuse;
- removal from education;
- overseas travel linked to safeguarding concerns.

Indicators may include:

- sudden restrictions on freedom;
- excessive parental control;
- emotional distress;
- references to marriage;
- concern regarding travelling abroad;
- unexplained absence;
- disengagement from education;
- fear of family consequences.

Staff Response

Staff must never:

- attempt mediation with family members;
- contact family members without DSL advice;
- assume a child is safe because concerns have not been disclosed openly.

All concerns relating to honour-based abuse or forced marriage must be reported immediately to the DSL.

The child's safety and welfare must remain the primary consideration.

17. Mental Health and Safeguarding

The school recognises that safeguarding and mental health are closely linked.

Many children who experience safeguarding concerns may also experience mental health difficulties.

Mental health challenges may:

- result from abuse or neglect;
- increase vulnerability to exploitation;
- contribute to attendance difficulties;
- affect relationships and behaviour;
- indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

Staff should remain alert to indicators including:

- significant changes in presentation;
- withdrawal;
- increased anxiety;
- self-harm;
- suicidal ideation;
- risk-taking behaviour;
- persistent emotional distress.

As a specialist SEMH setting, the school understands that behaviour may communicate emotional need, trauma or distress.

Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions.

However, staff are expected to:

- identify concerns;
- record concerns;
- share concerns promptly;
- seek appropriate support;
- contribute to safeguarding planning.

Mental health concerns must be reported to the DSL where safeguarding factors are present.

18. Online Safety, Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

Online safety forms a central part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Children's access to technology can provide significant benefits but may also increase vulnerability to harm.

The school recognises risks relating to:

- online grooming;
- child sexual exploitation;

- child criminal exploitation;
- cyberbullying;
- radicalisation;
- extremist content;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- sexual coercion;
- online harassment;
- image-based abuse;
- sextortion;
- online fraud.

Emerging Technology Risks

The school recognises the rapidly evolving risks associated with:

- artificial intelligence systems;
- large language models;
- AI chatbots;
- AI companion applications;
- deepfakes;
- manipulated imagery;
- nudification applications;
- synthetic media;
- immersive online environments.

Staff must remain vigilant to the potential misuse of emerging technologies in ways that may:

- facilitate exploitation;
- generate harmful sexual imagery;
- promote misinformation;
- support radicalisation;

- expose children to inappropriate content.

Online Safety Education

Online safety is embedded across the curriculum and reinforced through:

- safeguarding education;
- PSHE;
- relationship education;
- pastoral support;
- behaviour interventions;
- safeguarding discussions.

The school promotes safe and responsible use of technology whilst recognising individual pupil vulnerabilities.

Any online safety concern must be reported immediately to the DSL.

19. Filtering and Monitoring

The school maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements to safeguard pupils online.

Filtering and monitoring systems are designed to:

- restrict access to harmful content;
- identify safeguarding concerns;
- support safe use of technology;
- assist leaders in identifying emerging risks.

Responsibilities are clearly allocated between:

- safeguarding leaders;
- technical providers;
- proprietors.

The DSL maintains oversight of safeguarding concerns generated through monitoring systems.

The Proprietor Board receives annual assurance relating to:

- effectiveness of filtering systems;
- monitoring arrangements;
- safeguarding incidents arising from technology use;
- emerging online risks.

Any safeguarding concern identified through filtering or monitoring systems will be managed through safeguarding procedures.

20. Prevent Duty

The school fulfils its responsibilities under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

The school recognises that protecting children from radicalisation forms part of wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Staff receive appropriate training to recognise vulnerability to:

- extremism;
- radicalisation;
- online recruitment;
- extremist ideology;
- conspiracy-based harmful influences.

The school understands that vulnerability may arise through a combination of factors including:

- isolation;
- trauma;
- grievance;
- exploitation;
- online influence;
- identity concerns.

Staff should remain alert to:

- significant behavioural changes;
- extremist language;
- intolerance towards others;
- concerning online activity;
- fixation upon extremist narratives.

Concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

The DSL will consider referrals to:

- social care;
- police;
- Prevent teams;
- Channel processes;

where appropriate.

21. Gender-Questioning Children

The school recognises that some children may experience uncertainty regarding their gender identity.

The school also recognises that gender-questioning children may experience:

- bullying;
- social isolation;
- emotional distress;
- anxiety;
- exploitation risks;
- safeguarding vulnerabilities.

The welfare of the child remains the paramount consideration.

Safeguarding decisions relating to gender-questioning children will be:

- child-centred;
- evidence-informed;

- individualised;
- proportionate;
- regularly reviewed.

The school will avoid assumptions and will seek to understand each child's circumstances individually.

Parents and carers will normally be involved unless doing so would place the child at risk of harm.

The school will work collaboratively with relevant professionals where appropriate.

22. Children with SEND and SEMH Needs

The school recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs may face additional safeguarding barriers.

Children within SEMH provision may be disproportionately vulnerable to:

- exploitation;
- coercion;
- criminalisation;
- bullying;
- online harm;
- social isolation;
- peer pressure;
- mental health difficulties.

The school further recognises that some pupils may:

- have difficulty communicating concerns;
- struggle to recognise abuse;
- interpret situations differently from peers;
- display distress through behaviour;
- require additional support to understand risk.

Staff must not assume that indicators of harm are solely attributable to SEND or SEMH needs.

Professional curiosity remains essential.

Safeguarding assessments involving pupils with SEND or SEMH needs should consider:

- communication profiles;
- trauma history;
- EHCP outcomes;
- emotional regulation needs;
- attendance patterns;
- contextual safeguarding risks;
- vulnerability to exploitation.

The school views effective SEND provision, relational practice and trauma-informed support as protective safeguarding measures that contribute directly to pupil safety and wellbeing.

23. Young Carers

The school recognises that some pupils may have caring responsibilities within their families.

A young carer is a child who provides or intends to provide care for another person. This may include caring responsibilities relating to:

- physical illness;
- disability;
- mental health difficulties;
- substance misuse;
- additional family needs.

The school recognises that young carers may be more vulnerable to:

- emotional strain;
- social isolation;

- anxiety;
- fatigue;
- reduced attendance;
- safeguarding concerns;
- barriers to learning.

Staff should remain vigilant to indicators that a pupil may have caring responsibilities.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- identify young carers early;
- provide pastoral support;
- liaise with families;
- contribute to Early Help arrangements;
- work with external agencies;
- monitor attendance and wellbeing.

The school aims to ensure that caring responsibilities do not prevent pupils from accessing education, support and safeguarding protection.

24. Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and Children with a Social Worker

The school recognises that children who are looked after, previously looked after or who have a social worker may experience increased safeguarding vulnerability.

These pupils may have experienced:

- trauma;
- instability;
- family breakdown;
- neglect;
- abuse;
- disrupted education.

The school will work closely with:

- local authorities;
- social workers;
- Virtual School Heads;
- foster carers;
- residential providers;
- parents and carers;
- relevant professionals.

Staff should recognise that these pupils may have additional needs relating to:

- emotional wellbeing;
- attachment;
- attendance;
- trust in adults;
- educational engagement.

Safeguarding, educational progress and wellbeing will be considered together when planning support.

The school recognises that the presence of a social worker may indicate increased vulnerability and should encourage staff to maintain professional curiosity regarding the child's circumstances.

25. Information Sharing

The school recognises that effective safeguarding relies upon appropriate information sharing.

Fears regarding information sharing must never be allowed to prevent action where a child may be at risk of harm.

Information sharing decisions will be:

- lawful;
- necessary;

- proportionate;
- relevant;
- timely;
- secure.

Effective safeguarding may require information to be shared with:

- social care;
- police;
- health professionals;
- local authorities;
- alternative providers;
- safeguarding partners.

The protection of children takes precedence over concerns relating to confidentiality where there is a safeguarding risk.

Staff should seek advice from the DSL where uncertainty exists regarding information sharing.

26. Record Keeping

Accurate safeguarding records are essential to effective child protection practice.

The school uses HubMIS, as its primary safeguarding recording system.

All safeguarding records must be:

- factual;
- objective;
- accurate;
- contemporaneous;
- securely stored;
- compliant with data protection legislation.

Records should include:

- concerns raised;
- observations;
- disclosures;
- actions taken;
- decisions made;
- professional rationale;
- outcomes achieved.

The school recognises that safeguarding records may form part of future:

- child protection investigations;
- court proceedings;
- safeguarding reviews;
- multi-agency assessments.

Professional recording standards are therefore essential.

Safeguarding records will be retained and transferred securely in accordance with statutory guidance.

27. Alternative Provision, Work Experience and Vocational Placements

The school recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond the school site.

Where pupils access:

- work experience;
- vocational training;
- alternative provision;
- off-site educational activities;
- external providers;

Hillside Education retains overall safeguarding responsibility.

Prior to placement, the school will complete:

- safeguarding due diligence;

- risk assessments;
- suitability checks;
- safeguarding assurance processes;
- information-sharing arrangements.

The school will ensure providers understand:

- reporting responsibilities;
- safeguarding expectations;
- attendance procedures;
- child protection requirements.

Safeguarding arrangements will be reviewed regularly throughout placements.

28. External Therapists and Professionals

The school frequently works alongside external professionals in support of pupils.

This may include:

- therapists;
- educational psychologists;
- counsellors;
- health professionals;
- family support workers;
- independent specialists.

All professionals working with pupils must:

- understand safeguarding procedures;
- understand reporting pathways;
- comply with safeguarding expectations;
- raise concerns immediately where necessary.

Safeguarding concerns identified by external professionals must be reported through school safeguarding procedures.

The welfare of the child remains paramount regardless of which professional identifies the concern.

29. Allegations Against Staff

The school recognises its responsibility to manage allegations against adults working with children fairly, consistently and without delay.

This section applies to:

- staff;
- volunteers;
- agency staff;
- contractors;
- supply staff;
- proprietors.

Any concern that an adult has:

- behaved in a way that harmed a child;
- behaved in a way that may have harmed a child;
- committed a criminal offence against a child;
- behaved towards a child in a manner indicating they may pose a risk;

must be reported immediately.

The Headteacher will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where required.

Where concerns involve the Headteacher, the concern should be referred immediately to the Proprietor.

The school will ensure that:

- allegations are managed appropriately;
- confidentiality is maintained;
- staff welfare is considered;
- safeguarding remains the overriding priority.

30. Low-Level Concerns

The school promotes an open, transparent and reflective safeguarding culture.

Staff are encouraged to report low-level concerns that do not meet the threshold for referral to the LADO but are inconsistent with expected professional conduct.

A low-level concern may include:

- over-familiarity;
- boundary concerns;
- favouritism;
- inappropriate language;
- poor professional judgement;
- behaviour capable of being misinterpreted.

Low-level concerns will be:

- recorded;
- reviewed;
- assessed proportionately;
- monitored for themes and patterns.

The purpose of reporting low-level concerns is to:

- protect children;
- protect staff;
- strengthen safeguarding culture;
- identify emerging risks early.

All low-level concerns are overseen by the Headteacher and DSL.

Appendix G outlines the school's Low-Level Concerns Procedure and recording process.

31. Safer Recruitment

The school is committed to operating robust safer recruitment procedures.

Safeguarding considerations are integrated throughout recruitment and selection processes.

The school undertakes:

- enhanced DBS checks;
- barred list checks where required;
- prohibition checks;
- identity verification;
- qualification verification;
- employment history scrutiny;
- reference checks;
- online searches of shortlisted candidates;
- right-to-work checks.

The Headteacher maintains the Single Central Record (SCR).

Shortlisting decisions will consider safeguarding information identified through recruitment processes.

The school seeks to ensure that unsuitable individuals are prevented from working with children.

32. Whistleblowing

All staff have a responsibility to raise concerns about safeguarding practice where necessary.

Staff must feel able to challenge practice and raise concerns without fear of disadvantage.

Concerns may be raised with:

- the DSL;
- the Headteacher;
- the Proprietor;

- the Local Authority;
- the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline;
- other appropriate agencies.

The school will support staff who raise concerns in good faith.

Victimisation of individuals who raise safeguarding concerns is not tolerated.

33. Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Review

The school recognises that safeguarding effectiveness must be continually evaluated.

Safeguarding quality assurance includes:

- HubMIS audits;
- attendance audits;
- safeguarding supervision;
- safeguarding reviews;
- training compliance monitoring;
- staff safeguarding discussions;
- low-level concern analysis;
- proprietor scrutiny.

The DSL undertakes termly audits of:

- safeguarding records;
- attendance trends;
- safeguarding referrals;
- exploitation concerns;
- low-level concerns;
- safeguarding chronologies;
- staff training compliance.

Safeguarding findings are reported to the Proprietor Board and used to:

- identify strengths;
- identify emerging risks;
- improve practice;
- inform school improvement planning;
- strengthen safeguarding culture.

The Proprietor Board provides challenge and oversight regarding safeguarding effectiveness and compliance.

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier where:

- statutory guidance changes;
- local safeguarding arrangements change;
- safeguarding learning identifies the need for revision;
- organisational changes occur.

The school continuously evaluates safeguarding practice to ensure it remains effective, compliant and responsive to the changing needs of pupils and emerging safeguarding risks.

Independent School Standards (ISS) Compliance Table

ISS Standard	How This Policy Meets the Standard
Part 2 – SMSC	Promotes emotional safety, respect, belonging and relational trust through trauma-informed safeguarding practice.
Part 3, Paragraph 7 – Safeguarding & Welfare	Provides clear, compliant procedures for identifying, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns, aligned with KCSIE and local partnership guidance.
Part 3, Paragraph 9 – Behaviour Policy	Ensures safeguarding is embedded within behaviour responses, relational practice and early intervention.
Part 6 – Provision of Information	Ensures parents/carers and placing authorities have access to a full safeguarding policy on the website, as required by law.

ISS Standard	How This Policy Meets the Standard
Part 8 – Leadership & Management	Demonstrates strong safeguarding leadership, DSL oversight, staff training, monitoring and accountability.

Appendix A

Staff Safeguarding Quick Reference Guide

Safeguarding at Hillside Education

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

At Hillside Education, safeguarding is:

- Child-centred
- Trauma-informed
- Relational
- Contextual
- SEND-aware

Many pupils communicate distress through behaviour. Behaviour should always be understood within the context of the child's experiences, vulnerabilities, communication profile and environmental factors.

If you are worried about a child

Act immediately

✅ Listen

✅ Reassure

✅ Record

✅ Report

Do Not

❌ Investigate

❌ Ask leading questions

❌ Promise confidentiality

❌ Delay reporting

❌ Assume somebody else will act

Immediate Danger

If a child is in immediate danger:

Call 999

Notify the DSL as soon as possible.

Report Concerns To

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Nyree Parker

Deputy DSL

To be appointed

Report Immediately If A Child:

- Makes a disclosure
- Appears fearful or unsafe
- Is missing from education
- Is at risk of CCE or CSE
- Is involved in gang activity
- Is self-harming
- Is expressing suicidal thoughts
- Is being bullied
- Is involved in child-on-child abuse
- Is vulnerable to radicalisation
- Appears neglected
- Shows unexplained injuries
- Demonstrates significant changes in presentation

Key Principle

If in doubt, record and report.

Appendix B

Safeguarding Recording Expectations

The quality of records is critical to safeguarding.

All concerns must be recorded on HubMIS before the end of the working day.

Every Entry Must Include

1. Date and Time

- Date of incident
- Time of incident
- Date recorded

2. Location

Examples:

- Classroom
- Vehicle
- Community
- Online
- Work placement
- Playground

---

3. Nature of Concern

Examples:

- Disclosure

- Observation
- Child-on-child abuse
- Online safety
- Attendance concern
- Exploitation
- Mental health
- Staff conduct concern

---

4. Factual Description

Record:

- What you saw
- What you heard
- What happened

Use:

- Clear language
- Chronological order
- Objective facts

Avoid:

- Opinions
- Diagnoses
- Assumptions

---

5. Child's Words

Where possible record verbatim.

Example:

"They told me I had to carry it."

Use quotation marks.

---

6. Child Presentation

Examples:

- Tearful
- Withdrawn
- Anxious
- Agitated
- Exhausted

Only record observable facts.

---

7. Context

Include:

- Attendance concerns
- Previous incidents
- Known exploitation vulnerabilities
- Changes in peer association
- Recent family incidents

---

8. Action Taken

State:

- What you did
- Who was informed
- Any immediate safeguarding action

---

9. DSL Notification

Hillside Education
STRONGER together

Confirm:

- DSL informed
- Date and time
- Method of communication

Example HubMIS Entry (Model for Staff)

Date: 19/05/2026
Time: 11:20
Location: Playground

Concern: Disclosure / possible criminal exploitation

Description:
During break time, [Pupil Name] appeared withdrawn and avoided interaction with peers. When I asked if he was okay, he stated he did not want to go home.

He said:
"They're making me do stuff after school. I can't say no."

He did not provide further detail but appeared anxious and looked towards the gate repeatedly.

Presentation:
Quiet, visibly distressed, avoided eye contact

Context:
Pupil has had increased absence over the past two weeks and has previously been flagged as vulnerable to exploitation

Action Taken:
Remained with pupil and informed DSL immediately

Reported to: DSL

Key Reminders for Staff

- ✅ **Record everything, even small concerns**
- ✅ **Be accurate, factual and timely**

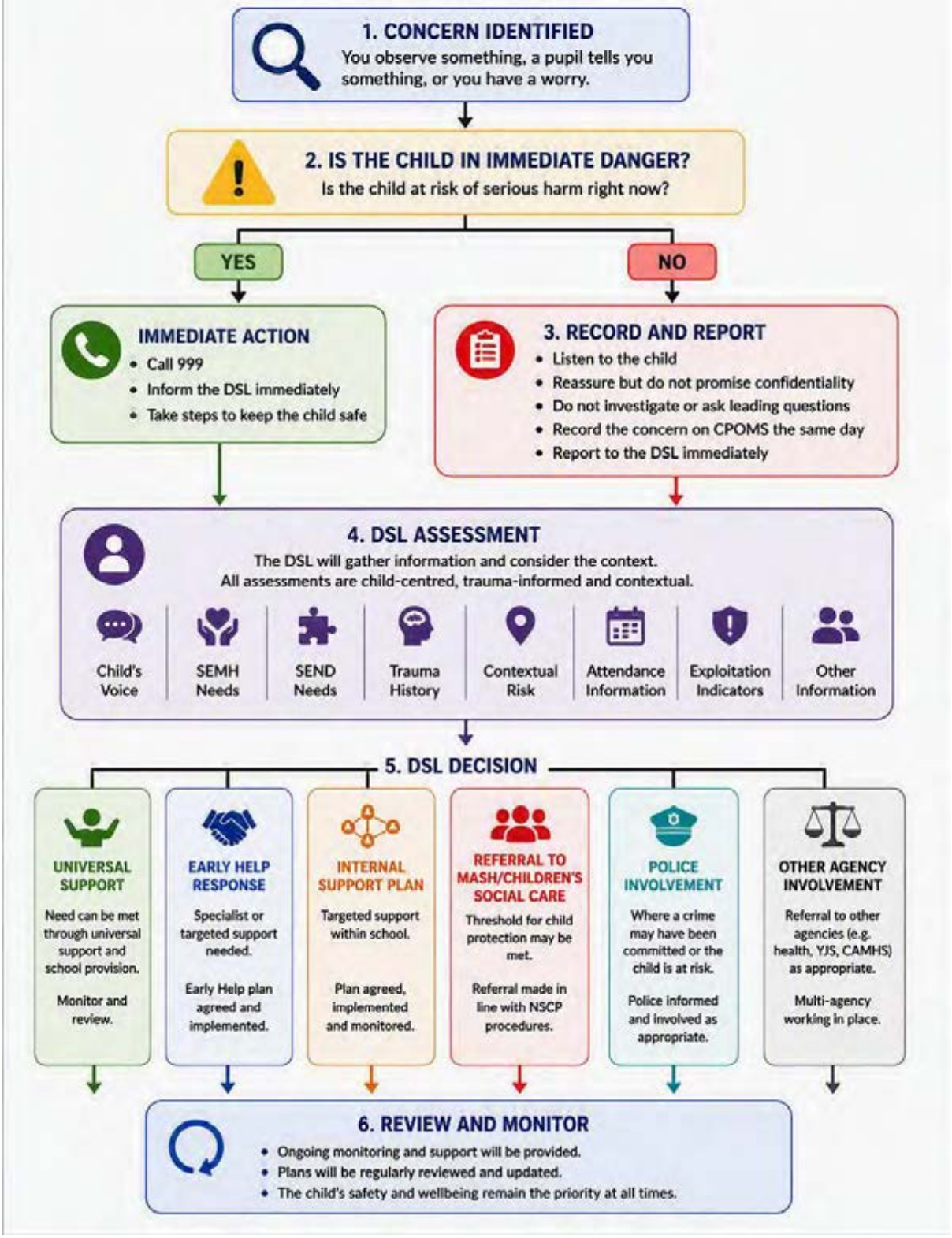
- ✅ **If in doubt, record and report**
- ❌ **Do not investigate**
- ❌ **Do not delay**

Appendix C

Hillside Safeguarding Decision-Making Flowchart

APPENDIX C
HILLSIDE EDUCATION SAFEGUARDING DECISION-MAKING FLOWCHART

This flowchart supports staff in understanding what to do when they have a safeguarding concern.
If in doubt, record and report.



Appendix D

Child Criminal Exploitation Risk Indicators

Staff should remain vigilant to:

Attendance Patterns

- Missing episodes
- Persistent lateness
- Frequent unexplained absence
- Leaving lessons

Possessions

- New clothing
- Expensive items
- Multiple phones
- Unexplained cash

Behaviour

- Increased secrecy
- Anxiety
- Aggression
- Fearfulness
- Withdrawal

Peer Associations

- Older peers
- Known offenders
- Gang members

Community Indicators

- Unsafe locations

- County lines routes
- Frequent travel
- Unknown adults

Immediate DSL Referral Required

Where two or more indicators are present, or where coercion, threats, weapons or criminal activity are suspected.

Appendix E

Attendance Safeguarding Escalation Framework

Attendance is viewed as safeguarding.

Same-Day DSL Referral

Where:

- Parents cannot be contacted
- Child's whereabouts are unknown
- There are existing exploitation concerns
- Absence patterns indicate risk
- Absence follows a safeguarding incident
- Social care involvement already exists

DSL Actions May Include

- Welfare check
- Safe and well visit
- Social worker consultation
- Police notification
- Youth Justice liaison

- Risk assessment review
- Multi-agency meeting

All actions must be recorded on HubMIS.

Appendix F

Online Safety and Emerging Technology Risks

Staff should remain alert to:

Online Abuse

- Grooming
- Sextortion
- Sexual coercion
- Cyberbullying

Emerging Risks

- Deepfakes
- AI-generated imagery
- Nudification applications
- AI companionship apps
- Online radicalisation
- Online criminal recruitment

Misinformation

- Conspiracy theories
- Extremist content
- Harmful online communities

Any concern must be reported via HubMIS and to the DSL.

Appendix G

Low-Level Concerns Procedure

A low-level concern is any conduct which:

- Does not meet allegations threshold
- Is inconsistent with professional expectations
- Could become a pattern of concern

Examples include:

- Over-familiarity
- Boundary concerns
- Favouritism
- Dismissive communication
- Poor professional judgement

Reporting Route

Key Principle

All low-level concerns will be:

- Recorded
- Reviewed
- Analysed for patterns
- Retained securely

HILLSIDE EDUCATION – LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS RECORDING SHEET

For concerns about the behaviour or conduct of staff

Purpose: To promote a culture of openness, professional curiosity and safeguarding vigilance. To ensure all low-level concerns are recorded, reviewed and acted upon proportionately, in line with KCSIE and Hillside's trauma-informed safeguarding approach.

LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS RECORD

1. Basic Information

Date concern raised: **Time concern raised:**

Name of staff member raising the concern:

Role:

Name of staff member the concern relates to:

Role:

2. Nature of the Concern

(Select all that apply)

☐ Inappropriate or unprofessional language

☐ Inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour ☐ Boundary concern

☐ Conduct inconsistent with Hillside's relational and trauma-informed culture

☐ Behaviour that could be misinterpreted ☐ Over-familiarity or favouritism

☐ Dismissive or minimising response to pupil distress

☐ Poor judgement in relation to pupil safety ☐ Breach of staff code of conduct

☐ Other (specify):

Brief description of the concern (factual, objective): (Record what was seen, heard or reported. Avoid opinion or assumption.)

3. Context and Circumstances

(Provide relevant background to help understand the situation.)

- Where did the concern occur?
- Who was present?
- What was happening at the time?
- Any relevant pupil needs, triggers or vulnerabilities?

4. Impact or Potential Impact

(What was the effect or possible effect on pupils, staff or the school environment?)

☐ No immediate impact ☐ Potential for misinterpretation

☐ Potential to undermine professional boundaries

☐ Potential safeguarding risk if repeated ☐ Impact on pupil emotional safety

☐ Impact on staff culture or team dynamics

Details:

5. Immediate Action Taken

(What did you do straight away?)

☐ Spoke to Headteacher ☐ Spoke to Deputy Headteacher

☐ Provided support to pupil(s) ☐ Ensured safe environment

☐ No immediate action required

Details:

6. Headteacher Review and Decision

(To be completed by Headteacher)

Headteacher Name:

Date reviewed:

Decision:

☐ Recorded as low-level concern ☐ Pattern identified – further review required

☐ Threshold met – consult LADO ☐ Threshold met – refer to LADO

☐ Support or guidance to be provided to staff member

☐ Training or coaching required ☐ No further action

Rationale for decision: (Explain why the concern meets low-level threshold or requires escalation.)

7. Follow-Up Actions

(To be completed by DSL / Headteacher)

☐ Meeting with staff member ☐ Reflective conversation

☐ Additional supervision or oversight ☐ Update to staff code of conduct

☐ Team briefing or learning point ☐ Added to pattern-tracking log

☐ Other (specify):

Details and timescales:

8. Communication

(Record any communication with staff involved.)

☐ Staff member informed ☐ Staff member given opportunity to respond

☐ Notes of discussion recorded ☐ Support offered

9. Final Outcome

(To be completed by DSL / Headteacher)

Outcome summary:

Date closed:

10. Signatures

Staff member raising concern: Date:

DSL / Headteacher: Date:

Guidance for Staff

A low-level concern is any behaviour by a staff member that does not meet the threshold for harm but is inconsistent with Hillside's professional, relational and trauma-informed culture.

Examples include:

- using a tone that is overly harsh or dismissive
- being overly familiar with a pupil
- failing to maintain appropriate boundaries
- ignoring or minimising pupil distress
- behaviour that could be misinterpreted by others
- poor judgement in relation to pupil safety

You must report:

- any concern, however small
- any pattern of small concerns
- anything that "doesn't feel right"

Reporting low-level concerns protects pupils, staff and the culture of the school.

Appendix H

Safeguarding Training Framework

Induction

Before working with pupils:

- KCSIE Part One
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety

- Attendance Safeguarding

Annual Mandatory Training

- Child Protection
- KCSIE Updates
- Prevent Duty
- Online Safety
- Child-on-Child Abuse
- CCE/CSE
- SEND and Safeguarding

Ongoing Learning

Weekly

- Safeguarding quizzes
- Case scenarios
- Professional discussion

Fortnightly

- Staff safeguarding newsletter

Half-Termly

- Parent safeguarding newsletter

Ongoing

- National College training
- Safeguarding updates
- Learning from safeguarding reviews

Appendix I

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Contacts

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

0300 500 80 90

Out of Hours

0300 456 4546

Nottinghamshire LADO

0115 804 1272

LADO@nottscc.gov.uk

Emergency

999

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

0800 028 0285

help@nspcc.org.uk

Appendix J

Child Protection File Transfer Checklist

When a pupil leaves Hillside Education:

- ✅ DSL notified
- ✅ Receiving DSL identified
- ✅ HubMIS records reviewed
- ✅ Chronology updated
- ✅ Risk assessments included
- ✅ Attendance safeguarding information included

- ✅ Child protection records transferred securely
- ✅ Transfer confirmed and documented