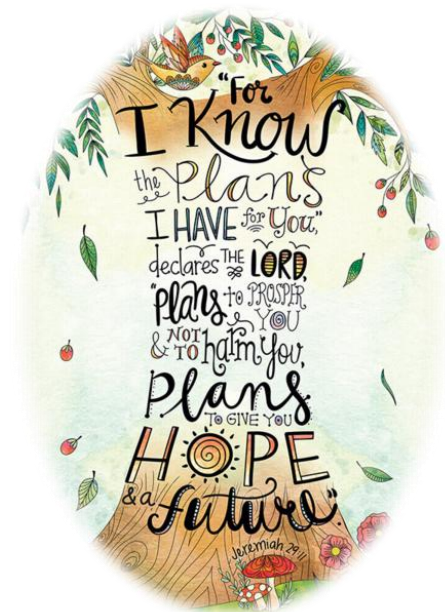


# Marston Moreteyne VC School Safeguarding Handbook for Parents



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## **Aim of this handbook**

Marston Moreteyne VC School is committed to prioritising the safety of your child and ensuring that they are not at risk of being harmed at school. This handbook has been designed to help you understand what safeguarding is and the measures the school has in place to protect your child from harm. The handbook will also provide you with information on what safeguarding concerns are and what you should look out for. It also outlines as what to do if you are concerned about a safeguarding issue and who to contact.

The school is committed to:

- Protecting your child from abuse.
- Preventing harm to your child's health or development.
- Ensuring your child feels safe in the school and is able to report their concerns if they do not feel safe.
- Taking action where safeguarding concerns arise.
- Promoting the welfare of your child.
- Developing effective safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Ensuring staff members receive regular safeguarding training and updates and know what to do if they have safeguarding concerns.

## **Key contacts and their safeguarding responsibilities**

### **Designated safeguarding lead**

The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for overseeing safeguarding and ensuring that effective procedures are in place to keep children safe. They lead on reviewing current systems and procedures to ensure they are working effectively and decide whether any changes to current systems are required. If you have any safeguarding concerns, you should report them to the DSL or their deputies as and when they arise. Where it is likely that there is an immediate risk to a child's safety, you should contact the emergency services. The DSL makes appropriate referrals, e.g. to social services, and works with external agencies where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils at the school.

The DSL and deputy DSLs are specially trained in safeguarding practices and hold the necessary qualifications. The DSL team is as follows:

- Amanda Watts
- Nicky Straccia, Amanda Di-Folco, Debbie Short and Gill Kent

### **Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the school's policies and procedures are effectively implemented and followed by staff. They are also responsible for ensuring that all staff members have access to training and support to help them understand their responsibilities and how to act in the event of a safeguarding concern.

The headteacher is Brian Storey and they can be contacted on 01234 768271 or via [office@marstonmoreteyneschool.org](mailto:office@marstonmoreteyneschool.org)

### **Staff members**

All staff members are responsible for keeping children safe in school and acting in their best interests. They are required to report any safeguarding concerns that they become aware of to the DSL, who will decide what to do next.

Staff members are regularly reminded to maintain a mindset of 'it could happen here' and to remain vigilant to indicators of a safeguarding concern.

While we encourage you to discuss safeguarding concerns with the DSL, you can also speak to any member of staff about any concerns you have – they will make sure the appropriate action is taken.

### **The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for holding the school to account for its safeguarding arrangements and ensuring that appropriate measures are in place. They approve the appointment of the DSL and any deputies and ensure that staff members are suitable to work with children and have the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to protect their safety.

The chair of governors is Chris Sweetnam and she can be contacted via the school office on 01234 768271 or [office@marstonmoreteyeneschool.org](mailto:office@marstonmoreteyeneschool.org)

## **Keeping your child safe at school**

### **The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy underpins the school's robust safeguarding procedures and ensures that all staff and other relevant individuals are aware of them.

The school also has a number of other safeguarding-related policies and procedures that are all there to keep your child safe, including the following:

- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy

You can find a copies of these policies on the school website or you can request copies by contacting the school office at [office@marstonmoreteyeneschool.org](mailto:office@marstonmoreteyeneschool.org)

### **Following statutory guidance**

All schools must follow the government's guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE). It outlines what all schools must do to keep children safe by providing statutory guidance on the issues such as:

- What staff members must know.
- How to manage safeguarding.
- Safer recruitment.
- Allegations against staff members.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Online safety.

All our members of staff understand their responsibilities in line with KCSIE and also keep up-to-date with any changes to safeguarding guidance.

### **Safeguarding training**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. The school ensures that it takes a child centred approach which considers what is in the best interests of the child and where everyone has a role in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

The school ensures that all staff members receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training alongside regular updates to help them acquire the relevant skills and knowledge to effectively safeguard children.

## **Reporting concerns**

All staff members are aware of the warning signs that a child is being abused, exploited or neglected and know what to do if they have a concern or a child makes a disclosure to them. Staff members know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality when dealing with safeguarding concerns which means they will not tell anyone who does not need to know as this may not be in the best interests of the child. Where staff are unsure of how to deal with a safeguarding concern, they will always speak to the DSL or a deputy.

Staff members, and especially the DSL, consider whether pupils are at risk of abuse or exploitation and provide targeted support on a case-by-case basis. Targeted support could involve referrals being made to mental health professionals where appropriate to help a pupil access the support they need. They also work with relevant external agencies to implement child protection plans.

The school also has procedures in place to manage any concerns regarding the conduct of staff members, volunteers and contractors working at the school. All concerns and allegations will be taken seriously and managed in line with the school's robust safeguarding procedures.

## **DBS checks**

Everyone who works and comes into contact with our pupils has gone through the appropriate level of DBS check. The school also has robust procedures in place to maintain a culture of ongoing vigilance to ensure any concerns are identified and dealt with.

## **Requirements for parents**

When visiting the school, we require you to sign in and out at reception and that you wear a yellow visitor lanyard whilst on the premises unless exceptions apply, e.g. when picking your child up from school, or attending a school production. You will not be permitted to move around the school unaccompanied unless you are working with children having undergone an appropriate enhanced DBS check.

The school understands that this can be inconvenient; however, it is deemed essential in ensuring that no unidentified individuals are present on the school site in order to protect the safety of pupils.

We ask that you familiarise yourself with the safeguarding information available on the school website prior to visiting the school.

## **Recognising safeguarding concerns**

The below provides information on safeguarding concerns and the warning signs to look out for – if you come across any of these behaviours or your child reports witnessing, engaging or being subjected to them, it is important that you or your child inform the school so that we can take appropriate action. The information provided is by no means exhaustive – if you would like more information on the signs to look out for, we would encourage you to speak to the DSL.

## **Child-on-child abuse**

Children can abuse other children both inside and outside of school and online. It is important to challenge inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Child-on-child abuse can include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (teenage relationship abuse).
- Physical abuse, e.g. hitting.
- Sexual violence, including online elements which facilitate, threaten or encourage sexual violence.
- Sexual harassment, including online, e.g. sexual comments and remarks.
- Causing someone to engage in a sexual act without consent.
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos – whether consensual or not, this is illegal for children under 18.
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without consent to cause humiliation, distress, or alarm, or to gain sexual gratification.
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, this can include activities which involve harassment, abuse or humiliation as a way of initiating a person into a group and may include an online element.

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

CSE and CCE occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants:

- **CCE** can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis production, shoplifting or pickpocketing. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation through threats of violence towards them and their families. They may be coerced into carrying weapons and develop further criminal tendencies in later life. Children being criminally exploited may also be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.
- **CSE** is a form of sexual abuse which can be physical contact, e.g. rape, or non-contact, e.g. involving children in the production of sexual images.

## **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a variety of behaviours and can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse or they may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships.

Marston Moreteyne VC School work with Bedfordshire police as part of Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass is the reporting to schools, prior to the start of the next school day, when a child or young person has experienced or been exposed to any domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass will ensure that a member of the school staff, known as a Key Adult, is trained to allow them to liaise with the police and to use the information that has been shared, in confidence, while ensuring that the school is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been experienced a domestic abuse incident.

### **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed with no medical reason. Teachers will speak to the DSL or deputy with regard to any concerns about FGM; however, they are under a legal duty to report FGM to the police if they discover that the act has been carried out on a girl under 18.

### **Mental health**

Mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. As a parent, you are well placed to observe your child's mental health and would encourage you to reach out to your child if you have noticed a negative change in your child's mood or behaviour. Teachers take immediate action if it comes to light that a pupil is in immediate danger to themselves or others due to a mental health crisis. The Samaritans has provided [advice on how to support others](#) for people who are worried that someone they know, including their child, is suicidal.

### **Serious violence**

Serious violence is classed as acts of violence which cause, or intend to cause, serious bodily harm, e.g. knife crime. Warning signs can include, absences, a change in friendships, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm, change in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Serious violent crimes are often associated with CCE where warning signs could include unexplained gifts or new possessions.

### **Radicalisation and extremism**

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation and can be groomed or manipulated to join groups with extremist ideologies. The Prevent duty places a requirement upon schools to have due regard to prevent people being drawn into terrorism and plays a part in the school's wider safeguarding obligations. The warning signs that a child is being drawn into an extremist group are similar to that of CCE and serious violence; e.g. unexplained gifts, and entering new friendship groups, particularly where they are spending time with older people.

### **Keeping your child safe online**

The school's Online Safety Policy outlines what measures the school takes to ensure pupils are kept safe when using the internet at school – the school ensures that this is kept under review and that procedures to protect pupils online are robust.

Filtering systems and supervision ensure that pupils are not able to access inappropriate material when using school technology; however, there are ways in which your child may be accessing inappropriate materials when using personal technology.

Online safety risk may be present in a variety of mediums including:

- Messaging platforms, e.g. Whatsapp
- Gaming, e.g. Xbox Live
- Social media, e.g. Facebook
- Content sharing platforms, e.g. TikTok
- Online blogs, e.g. Reddi
- Search engines, e.g. searching for inappropriate material

Pupils can be exposed to a number of risks online such as:

- Being abused or bullied online.
- Being manipulated, e.g. exposure to extreme views or blackmail.
- Self-harming or developing eating disorders.
- Having data stolen and being scammed.
- Developing obsessions with inappropriate materials, e.g. pornography.

Warning signs to look out for could include:

- **Change in use** – your child is spending a lot more or less time online and texting.
- **Change in mood** – your child seems distant, angry or upset after being online or texting.
- **Secrecy** – your child may be secretive about who they are talking to and what they are doing online.
- **Many contacts** – your child has lots of new contacts on their device.
- **Being protective** – your child has become protective over their devices and refuse to allow others to use it.
- **Personality change** – your child wants to change who they are or begin dressing differently.

We advise that you make use of filtering systems and parental controls to avoid your child's improper use of technology and encourage them to use their devices at a healthy amount, e.g. by introducing time limits.

## Additional information and support

If you have any concerns or queries relevant to the safeguarding of your child or other pupils at the school, please contact the school using the details provided above.

You can also find additional guidance and support regarding safeguarding concerns below:

- [NSPCC](#) - If you are worried about your child or another child and need advice, you can contact the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or [online](#).
- Online safety - [Think U Know](#), [Internet Matters](#), [Net Aware](#), [Child Exploitation and Online Protection](#).
- [Childline](#) – for pupils to seek support with bullying, abuse, harassment or neglect.
- [Stop It Now!](#) – If you are worried that a child is a victim of CSE.
- [The Children's Society](#) – for advice and support on county line and child CCE
- [Educate Against Hate](#) - resources and government advice for parents on keeping children safe from extremism and radicalisation.

- [NHS - every mind matters](#) and [advice for parents](#) for mental health resources and advice and support.