



Vita et Pax
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Vita et Pax Preparatory School
Established 1936

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Policy Originator	Head Teacher
Approved by	Governing Body
Date Approved	7 April 2026
Status	Statutory
Review Period	Annually (next: March 2027)

1. Introduction and Legal Framework

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, governors, visitors and contractors at Vita et Pax Preparatory School. It sets out the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Every member of the school community has a responsibility to safeguard children.

This policy is informed by and should be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 — all staff must read at least Part 1.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- The Education Act 2002 (Section 175).
- The Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSRs) 2014.
- The Childcare Act 2006 and the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024.
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent duty).
- The Online Safety Act 2023.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

2. Key Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989).
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, are entitled to equal protection from harm.

- All staff share responsibility for safeguarding. It is everyone's responsibility.
- Safeguarding is defined as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- The school operates a culture of vigilance where concerns are raised and addressed promptly.

3. Safeguarding Leadership and Governance

The school's safeguarding team provides strategic oversight and day-to-day management of all child protection matters:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Darren May (Head Teacher). The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding, referrals, training and inter-agency liaison. The DSL holds Level 3 safeguarding training, updated every two years, with annual refresher training.
- Deputy DSL: Kate Newton (Deputy Head). The Deputy DSL deputises in the DSL's absence and holds equivalent training.
- Nominated Safeguarding Governor: Maria Poulos. The Safeguarding Governor provides oversight, challenge and support to the DSL.
- Proprietorial Body: Pushkar Acharya (Chair). The proprietorial body ensures the school meets its safeguarding obligations under the ISSRs and KCSIE 2025.

The DSL and Deputy DSL are given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to carry out their safeguarding duties effectively, including attending inter-agency meetings and contributing to strategy discussions.

4. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

All staff must be able to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. The four categories are:

1. Physical abuse — including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
2. Emotional abuse — persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. This includes conveying to a child they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
3. Sexual abuse — forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes contact and non-contact abuse, and online abuse including the production and distribution of child sexual abuse material.
4. Neglect — the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

5. Specific Safeguarding Issues

Staff must be aware of the following specific safeguarding issues, all of which are addressed in Part 1 and Annex B of KCSIE 2025:

- Child-on-child abuse (peer-on-peer): All staff recognise that children can abuse other children. This includes bullying (including cyberbullying), sexual violence and harassment, physical abuse, sexting/sharing of nudes, and initiation/hazing. The school has a zero-tolerance approach and does not dismiss harmful behaviour as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE): Both involve an imbalance of power. CCE includes county lines — where criminal gangs use children to transport drugs across counties. Staff are trained to recognise indicators including unexplained gifts, changes in behaviour, and truancy.
- County lines: A form of CCE where children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move and store illegal drugs and money. Staff are alert to signs including children going missing, acquisition of unexplained gifts/money, and association with unknown older individuals.
- Domestic abuse: Any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16+ who are (or have been) intimate partners or family members. Children witnessing domestic abuse are victims in their own right.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM): All forms of FGM are illegal. Staff have a mandatory duty to report known cases of FGM in under-18s to the police (Section 5B, FGM Act 2003).
- Forced marriage and honour-based abuse: It is illegal to force someone to marry. Staff who suspect forced marriage contact the Forced Marriage Unit.
- Radicalisation and extremism (Prevent duty): Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the school has due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Staff use professional judgement and report concerns to the DSL, who makes a Prevent referral if appropriate.
- Serious violence: Staff are aware of indicators that may signal a child is at risk of, or involved in, serious violence. These include unexplained injuries, increased absence, changes in friendships, and signs of self-harm or significant change in wellbeing.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment: The school follows KCSIE 2025 Part 5. Sexual violence and harassment are never acceptable and will not be tolerated. Reports are taken seriously, acted upon immediately, and victims supported.
- Children missing education: The school monitors attendance rigorously and follows up absence. Children absent for prolonged periods without explanation are reported to the local authority.
- Mental health: All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The school supports pupils' mental health through PSHE, pastoral care, and referral to appropriate services.

6. Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff, but especially the DSL and deputies, consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

7. Children Requiring Particular Vigilance

- Looked after children (LAC) and previously looked after children: The DSL holds details of the child's social worker and the name and contact of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child. Staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC safe.

Previously looked after children (adopted, subject to SGO or CAO) may also be vulnerable and are given appropriate support.

- Children with SEND: Children with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect, including assumptions that indicators relate to the child's condition, being more prone to peer group isolation, and communication barriers.
- Children in the EYFS: Additional safeguarding measures apply to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including appropriate staff:child ratios, supervision during all activities, mobile phone and camera restrictions, and ensuring the suitability of all adults in regulated activity. The school complies with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024 and the Childcare Act 2006. Disqualification from Childcare declarations are maintained for all relevant staff.

8. Online Safety

The school recognises the growing risks to children online. Our approach to online safety is informed by KCSIE 2025 and the Online Safety Act 2023. The school:

- Maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on all school devices and networks, reviewed regularly for effectiveness.
- Ensures all staff receive training on online safety, including recognising the risks of: online abuse, cyberbullying, sexual exploitation online, radicalisation, and sharing of nudes/semi-nudes.
- Teaches pupils about online safety through the curriculum (RSE/PSHE and computing).
- Has clear policies on the use of mobile phones and cameras: personal mobile phones must not be used in areas where children are present (especially in EYFS). Photography and recording of children requires parental consent. School devices are used for authorised educational photography only.
- Addresses online safety as part of the wider safeguarding landscape, not as a standalone issue.

9. Early Help and Intervention

The school recognises the importance of early help — providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Any staff member may identify an emerging problem and discuss this with the DSL. Early help may involve:

- An inter-agency early help assessment (using local procedures).
- Referral to Enfield Children's Services if a statutory assessment is needed.
- Provision of targeted pastoral support within school.
- Liaison with external agencies (CAMHS, family support, health visitors).

If early help is not effective, or the child's situation does not improve or worsens, the DSL will consider whether to make a referral to children's social care.

10. Reporting Procedures

All staff must follow these procedures when a safeguarding concern arises:

1. Report immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL. If neither is available, the most senior member of staff takes responsibility.

2. Record the concern on the school's safeguarding recording system. Records must be factual, dated, signed, and made as soon as possible after the event.
3. Do not investigate — this is the responsibility of children's social care and/or the police.
4. Do not promise confidentiality — explain to the child that you must pass information on to help keep them safe.
5. If a child is in immediate danger, contact the police (999) and/or children's social care without delay.
6. The DSL will make a referral to Enfield MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) where a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

11. Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

Allegations against staff are managed under KCSIE 2025 Part 4. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

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

All allegations are reported to the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors if the allegation is about the Head). The Head contacts the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. The school follows the LADO's advice on next steps, including suspension, investigation and referral to the DBS and/or Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

12. Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern — no matter how small — that an adult working in the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. The school creates a culture where staff feel empowered to share low-level concerns. All low-level concerns are reported to the Head Teacher, recorded, and reviewed periodically to identify any patterns of behaviour.

13. Safer Recruitment and Staff Suitability

The school follows safer recruitment practices as set out in KCSIE 2025 Part 3:

- At least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.
- All appointments are subject to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.
- DBS checks: Enhanced DBS checks with barred list checks are obtained for all staff in regulated activity. Staff who have lived overseas are subject to additional checks.
- Section 128 direction checks are carried out for all governors and those in management positions.
- Prohibition checks are carried out for all teaching staff via the TRA.
- Right to work in the UK is verified for all staff before they start.

- Professional qualifications are verified as appropriate.
- References are obtained prior to interview from two referees, including the current/most recent employer.
- The Single Central Record (SCR) is maintained electronically via OnlineSCR and records all checks for all staff, governors, volunteers and agency workers. The SCR is reviewed regularly by the DSL and the proprietorial body.
- Identity checks, medical fitness declarations, and employment history checks are completed for all staff.
- Agency and supply staff: The school obtains written notification from agencies that appropriate checks have been carried out and confirms the identity of agency staff on arrival.

14. Information Sharing

Information sharing is vital for effective safeguarding. The school follows the HM Government guidance 'Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' (2018). The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes. Staff must not assume that someone else will share information; if in doubt, the DSL will advise. Safeguarding information is shared on a strictly need-to-know basis in the child's best interests.

15. British Values and the Prevent Duty

The school actively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These values are embedded in the curriculum, assemblies, PSHE and the school's ethos. Promotion of British values supports the school's Prevent duty by building resilience to radicalisation. A separate British Values Statement is available on the school website.

16. Attendance and Children Missing Education

The school maintains accurate admissions and attendance registers in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The school will notify the local authority when a child's name is to be removed from the admissions register at non-standard transition points, in accordance with regulations. Patterns of absence are monitored and followed up to help identify children who may be at risk.

17. Record Keeping

Safeguarding records are stored securely, separate from the pupil's main school file, and accessible only to the DSL, Deputy DSL and (on a need-to-know basis) relevant staff. Records are retained in accordance with statutory guidance. When a pupil transfers to another school, the safeguarding file is transferred separately and securely to the DSL at the receiving school.

18. Training and Induction

- All staff receive safeguarding training at induction, including Part 1 of KCSIE 2025 and Annex B.
- The DSL and Deputy DSL undergo Level 3 child protection training every two years.
- All staff receive regular updates (at least annually) to maintain awareness.
- The safeguarding training tracker is maintained on SharePoint and reviewed termly.
- Temporary staff and volunteers are given a safeguarding briefing before starting.

19. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following policies, all available on the school website:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- British Values Statement
- Complaints Policy
- Curriculum Policy (including EYFS)
- Educational Visits Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy / Staff Code of Conduct
- Privacy Notice & Data Protection Policy
- RSE / PSHE Policy
- SEND Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

20. Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact
DSL	Darren May	head@vitaetpax.co.uk / 020 8449 8336
Deputy DSL	Kate Newton	k.newton@vitaetpax.co.uk / 020 8449 8336
Safeguarding Governor	Maria Poulos	Via school office
Chair of Governors	Pushkar Acharya	chair@vitaetpax.co.uk
Enfield MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	020 8379 2507
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer	020 8379 2850
Prevent Referrals	DfE helpline	020 7340 7264
FGM Helpline	NSPCC	0800 028 3550
Childline		0800 1111

Role	Name	Contact
Police (non-emergency)		101

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Date: 7 April 2026