

## Safeguarding Policy

This policy is made available to parents/ guardians of all girls, day and boarding, on the School website, in the Student/Parent Handbook and on request from the School Office. It is available to the Staff at the School from the School website, in the Staff Handbook and on request from the School Office. Content of this policy is directly discussed with new staff upon induction into the School.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Ms Annah Langan (Deputy Head Pastoral)  
[langana@marymountlondon.com](mailto:langana@marymountlondon.com)

020 8949 0571 x202 or 07557 271546

#### Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Ms Paula Horton (Head of Boarding):  
[boardinghead@marymountlondon.com](mailto:boardinghead@marymountlondon.com)

0208 949 0571 x268/242

Mrs Annie Plumridge (Deputy Head of Boarding):  
[plumridgea@marymountlondon.com](mailto:plumridgea@marymountlondon.com)

0208 949 0571 x268/242

#### Headmistress:

Mrs Margaret Giblin:  
[headmistress@marymountlondon.com](mailto:headmistress@marymountlondon.com)

0208 949 0571 x222

#### Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor:

Ms Cristina Serrano:  
[serranoc@marymountlondon.com](mailto:serranoc@marymountlondon.com)

0208 949 0571

The telephone numbers of the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership are as follows:

**Kingston Single Point of Access (SPA):** *(For safeguarding concerns about students)* 0208 547 5008

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** 0208 891 7370 / 07774 332 675

Referral and Contact Officer – Julie Fisher  
[LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

The LADO online referral form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdYVca4qbfFJS71sD2PzY8mhyot9GrOdzsHUUYOmJeM7uCKA/viewform>

*(For allegations against staff contact SPA who can also refer you to the LADO)* 0208 770 5000

**Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership (KRSCP)** 0208 831 6323

Guildhall 2 High Street Kingston Upon Thames KT1 1EU  
[lscb-support@kingrichlscb.org.uk](mailto:lscb-support@kingrichlscb.org.uk)

**Kingston Prevent:** *(For concerns regarding radicalization)* 0208 340 7264  
[counter-extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter-extremism@education.gov.uk)

DfE's Counter-Extremism Helpline for non-emergency advice for staff and governors 020 7340 7264

#### Channel Police Practitioner & Channel Local Authority Chair

Angela Rusby  
[Angela.rusby@met.pnn.Police.uk.cjsm.net](mailto:Angela.rusby@met.pnn.Police.uk.cjsm.net)

**Police (emergency): 999 (Non-emergency): 101**

**Kingston Police Safer Schools Team – PC Amy Gillett**  
[Amy.Yorke-Goldney@met.police.uk](mailto:Amy.Yorke-Goldney@met.police.uk)

**The NSPCC/Home Office Child Abuse Whistleblowing Helpline:** 0800 028 0285  
[help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**KRSCP Early Help Resilience Networks – Dasha Kuzina** 07795 494 705

### Reporting serious wrongdoing to the Charity Commission

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-serious-wrongdoing-at-a-charity-as-a-worker-or-volunteer>

Email: [whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk)

The following telephone numbers may be useful for students:

**Kingston Single Point of Access (SPA):** (*For safeguarding concerns about students*) 0208 547 5008

**Childline** 0800 1111

**NSPCC** 0808 800 5000

*or submit concern via the online form:*

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/report-abuse-online/>

Contact number for those who have experienced sexual harassment or abuse in education: 0800 136 663

**OFSTED Helpline** 0300 123 4666

UK Safer Internet Centre 0344 381 4771

[helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk)

**Independent Listener:** Mrs Ursula Seiler 07974 087317

**Second Independent Listener:** Ms Ann O'Shaughnessy 07584 470089

Children's Commissioner 0800 528 0731

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Refuge)** 0808 2000 247

<http://www.refuge.org.uk/get-help-now/support-for-women/what-about-my-children/>

## MARYMOUNT SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

This policy has been authorised by the Governors, is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers, and is available to parents on request. It applies wherever staff, temporary staff or volunteers are working with students even where this is away from the School; for example, at an activity centre or on an educational visit. Wherever the word “staff” is used in this document, it covers ALL persons working within the school including employed staff, Governors, Senior Leadership Team, supply and self-employed staff, contractors and volunteers, students or those on work experience. The Board of Governors takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of students; safeguarding and child protection underpin all aspects of policy and procedure development. Governors work together with other agencies to ensure adequate systems are in place within the School to identify, assess and support those students who are suffering harm.

The School's Safeguarding Policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Education Act 2011, Human Rights Act 1998, Public Sector Equality Duty, and the Equality Act 2010.

In producing this policy regard has been paid to:

*Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022) (KCSIE)*

*Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers (2020 subject to DfE updates) and Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)*

*When to Call the Police (NPCC)*

*PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) Code C (2019)*

*Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools (July 2022)*  
*Teaching online safety in school (June 2019)*  
*Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018 and updated in 2020) (WT)*  
*Review of children in need (2019)*  
*Information Sharing (2018)*  
*Mental health and behavior in schools (November 2018)*  
*Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges (September 2021)*  
*Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (December 2020)*  
*'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (2017)*  
*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)*  
*Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing (March 2015 and updated in 2021)*  
*Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (July 2015) (Prevent)*  
*The Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for Schools and childminders (June 2015)*  
*The use of social media for on-line radicalization (July 2015)*  
*Counselling in Schools: a blueprint for the future (February 2016)*  
*Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' (November 2018)*  
*Counselling in Schools: a blueprint for the future (March 2015)*

and is in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures set out by Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership. **Kingston procedures and contact details are contained within their website:** <http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/>. This policy is reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors at least annually.

Marymount London is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of each student under its care and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and understand that the student's welfare/ well-being is our paramount concern. Every student should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of maltreatment including neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation, emotional ill-treatment or impairment to mental and physical health or development. The School should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, mental and moral development of each individual student. The School strives to provide opportunities for students to talk to a trusted adult should they need someone to listen to any concerns. Those in pastoral roles are encouraged to provide "reachable moments" to enable students to talk and information about who students can contact is posted around the campus and on Microsoft Teams. Worry boxes where students can write down any concern confidentially are located in the Infirmary corridor and Gailhac bathrooms. Boarders also have access to an 'Independent Listener'. Students are also given opportunities to provide feedback through the Advisory system and surveys (as required).

All members of the Board of Governors receive training in safeguarding during their Induction. This is updated on an annual basis to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge to assure the practices and procedures are effective and robust. Governors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act (1998), the Equality Act (2010), (including the Public Sector Equality Duty) and their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Governors must carefully consider how they are supporting their students with regards to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race. At all times the Governing Body and the School will consider the best interests of the student and will have a student-centered and coordinated approach to safeguarding.

The School ensures that all contact details for agency involvement are displayed prominently, including those for support and advice about extremism. All members of the School are required to read and understand the Safeguarding Policy, Part 1 of KCSIE and Annex A of KCSIE (September 2022). Those staff not working directly with children are permitted to read a condensed version of Part 1 as found in Annex A. Staff must also read and abide by the Staff Code of Conduct, and to report instances of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect

or radicalisation to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. In the case of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), teachers recognise that they must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. In addition, all staff are familiar with the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (July 2015).

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and everyone has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. In exceptional circumstances all staff may make a referral and report directly to the local authority children's social care; however, staff are expected to raise concerns with the Schools' Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance.

Marymount International School recognises the importance of respecting the dignity of each student so that each child can flourish. As an IB school, students are encouraged to become global citizens where all cultures, protected characteristics are respected and behaviours that are intolerant of others are not accepted.

The School recognises that safeguarding incidents could happen anywhere and all staff should be alert to possible concerns being raised in this School. The School will take all reasonable measures to ensure:

- That a Safeguarding Policy and appropriate procedures are in place.
- The School's safeguarding policies are up to date, risks are assessed at regular intervals and any areas requiring action are dealt with immediately.
- Arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (May 2022).
- Safe recruitment is practised in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation), and other staff or supply staff which must be completed to work with children and young people in accordance with the principles established by the Children's Act (1989 & 2004), the Education Act (2002) and in line with government publications: Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018), and holds an up to date single central register of staff, ensuring the school meets statutory requirements and advice. (See Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy and Procedure Policy).
- That all necessary checks on the suitability of people who serve on the School's governing body in accordance with regulations and guidance as above are carried out<sup>1</sup>.
- That governors ensure that IT filters and monitoring systems are in place and regularly review their effectiveness.
- That where the School ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a prompt and detailed report is made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).
- That the local inter-agency procedures of the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership are followed.
- That each student is protected from all forms of abuse, whether from an adult or another student; we are alert to possible signs of abuse both in the School and from outside.
- That every suspicion or complaint of abuse is dealt with appropriately.
- That procedures that promote this policy are designed and operated.
- Procedures are designed and operated which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations.
- Students who have been abused are supported in accordance with their agreed Child Protection Plan.
- That staff are alert to the medical needs of students with medical conditions.
- Safeguarding students who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm are differentiated from those who are in need of additional support from one or more agencies. The former are reported to the local authority children's social care and the latter are referred to Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Team around the Child (TAC).
- That students are taught about Safeguarding in the following ways to prevent risk or harm occurring:

<sup>1</sup> Guidance regarding CRB/DBS checks recently updated by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

- The Student Leaders are given safeguarding training by the DSL in the first half- term of the school year.
  - Through the PSHEE and RSE curriculum, students focus on how to develop healthy relationships and friendships. Students consider the nature of boundaries and consent and how to recognise an abusive relationship including coercive and controlling behaviours, laws relating to sexual harassment, sexual violence and exploitation, grooming and domestic abuse. Through the PSHEE and RSE Programmes, students will also learn about so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support.
  - Emphasis is given to consider behaviour positively through Kindness Week. During this week, students will identify bullying behaviour and learn that it is unacceptable and what to do if bullying occurs in school or online.
  - Students also learn about stereotyping, prejudice and equality and how all students should be treated with dignity and respect in accordance with the Vision of the School, 'that all may have life'. Particular focus is given to the Protected Characteristics throughout the school year through the Advisory curriculum, assemblies and PSHEE so that students have a good understanding of those who are identified through the Equality Act.
  - Students will also learn about body confidence and self-esteem through the PSHEE programmes.
  - Students are reminded of how to stay safe online and also in school and in their personal lives through the Advisory system and PSHEE curriculum. (Further information about staying safe online can be found in the Staff and Student Acceptable Use Policies). Through these curricula and additional workshops and presentations, students are taught about the four key areas of risk when online:
    - content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny / misandry, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism;
    - contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;
    - conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
    - commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. Students or staff who feel they are at risk from a scam or phishing should report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).
  - External speakers are invited to the school on an annual basis to teach online safety to students. Workshops and information about keeping students safe online is provided to parents and staff.
  - Students are reminded of safeguarding issues in assemblies throughout the year. Reminders include: how to stay safe online; how to balance online activity with mental well-being; identifying key staff students can turn to if they are experiencing a problem; anti-bullying through Kindness Week; personal security should there be a crisis.
  - Boarders are advised how to stay safe during their boarding induction with emphasis given to staying safe when off campus and communicating back to school in case of emergency.
- Staff follow requirements of the Code of Conduct.
  - Robust and sensible Health & Safety procedures are operated.
  - That appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to protect students when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources.

- All practicable steps are taken to ensure that School premises are as secure as circumstances permit.
- That clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse are operated.
- Other external experts are invited in to raise student's awareness on the following concerns:
  - dangers of substance misuse;
  - nature of consent; and
  - how to respond to sexual harassment and abuse and any other concerns that arise during the school year.
- Procedures are considered and developed to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual children in our School and working with agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Interpol. Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the School will in all circumstances be referred to an external agency such as the Royal Borough of Kingston Single Point of Access Team (SPA), Achieving for Children (AfC), the Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the police or the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children NSPCC. In cases of allegations against staff, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership, within 24 hours.
- The Safeguarding Governor meets with the DSLs, at least three times a year and conducts an annual review of the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures, reporting findings back to the Governing Body. The DSL provides a report for Governors for each Board meeting summarising safeguarding issues for that period.

## ROLE OF DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD AND DEPUTIES

### The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The School has appointed a senior member of staff on the Senior Leadership Team with the necessary status and authority (Designated Safeguarding Lead) to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare.

The main responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are:

- To take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection including online safety.
- To be the first point of contact for parents, students, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection.
- To refer cases of suspected abuse to the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership and other agencies as required, and support staff who also make referrals to the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- The designated safeguarding lead and any deputies should liaise with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- To refer cases to the Channel Programme where there is a radicalization concern as required and support staff who make such referrals.
- To refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the DBS as required.
- To refer cases where a crime has been committed to the Police as required (Designated Safeguarding Leads should refer to *NPCC-When to call the police* when considering whether to call the police and to know what to expect when they do).
- To liaise with the Headteacher to inform her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. The DSL and Headmistress should be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult (See PACE Code C 2019 guidance and Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools (July 2022)).
- To liaise and support staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and co-ordinate the safeguarding and child protection procedures in the School.
- To liaise with staff (especially those who offer pastoral provision, the School Nurse, the Life Coach/Counsellor, the IT Manager and the Director of Specialist Learning Programmes) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and act as a source of support,

advice and expertise for all staff.

- To maintain an on-going and regular training programme including online safety and regular updates at least annually for all school employees, which ensures that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student (for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a student by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a student, and so on)<sup>1</sup>.

## RECORD KEEPING AND SHARING INFORMATION

### The DSL will:

- keep detailed, timely, accurate and secure written records of concerns and referrals in relation to child protection separate from student records, until the student's 25th birthday. These should be copied on to the child's next school as soon as possible and within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term. This is transferred separately from the main student file and is sent securely. Confirmation of receipt is obtained to ensure safe delivery of the file. The DSL may also consider it appropriate to share information with the new school or college in advance of that student leaving to ensure continued support when that child arrives at their new school. An indication of the existence of the additional file is marked on student files;
- understand that safeguarding information which is sensitive and personal should be treated as 'special category personal data', according to The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR and that this allows schools to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a student. It may not be possible to always gain consent and gaining consent may also place a student at risk. If providing information would put a student at risk and the *serious harms test*<sup>2</sup> is met, the School can withhold the provision of data. The School is aware that they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe;
- liaise with the Designated Person responsible for Child Protection appointed by the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and the Headmistress who will act as "case manager" in cases which concern a staff member;
- keep the Headmistress informed of all actions unless the Headmistress is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the Designated Person should consult with Ms Cristina Serrano, Chair of Governors;
- advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to her;
- liaise with the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership and other agencies on behalf of the School;
- Liaise with the Virtual School Head who manages Looked After Children and has strategic oversight of educational attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker.
- ensure that any student currently with a child protection plan who is absent from school without explanation for two days is referred to her Social Care Team.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable or is herself the subject of a complaint, her duties will be carried out by the Deputy Safeguarding Leads, who have received appropriate training which is updated every two years. This will include inter-agency working protocols and training in the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership's approach to Prevent duties.

The Designated Person and her Deputies have undertaken Child Protection Training and training in inter-agency working and will attend refresher training biennially.

The Headmistress ensures that there are sufficient resources, time, funding, and support allocated to allow the Designated Person to fulfill her child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

<sup>1</sup> *Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings* is also available on the DfE website

<sup>2</sup> *The harms test* is explained on the Disclosure and Barring service website on GOV.UK. Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002, available at [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)

## DUTY OF SENIOR LEADERS, EMPLOYEES, GOVERNORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Every employee and Governor of the School as well as every volunteer who assists the School is under a general legal duty:

- to protect children from abuse and be aware that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline;
- to read and understand Part 1 of KCSIE and Annex A (September 2022) or a condensed version of Part 1 for those staff not working directly with children;
- to be aware of the School’s Safeguarding Policy and procedures which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse;
- to know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary;
- to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;
- to be aware of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads;
- to report any matters of concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All adults working in this School (including visiting staff, volunteers and students on In exceptional circumstances staff may report directly to Local Authority Children’s Social Care however staff are expected to raise concerns with the schools’ Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance;
- to know and understand the Staff Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>;
- to be aware of the Missing Persons Procedure and Attendance and Absence Policy;
- to be aware of the student Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy;
- to be aware of the School’s Whistleblowing Policy.

## SIGNS OF ABUSE

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. A child may be abused by an adult(s) or by another child or children, which may be known as ‘child-on-child’ abuse. All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of school. Staff, (especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

Forms of abuse are:

1. **Physical abuse** – which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
2. **Emotional abuse** – the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another

<sup>1</sup> *Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings is also available on the DfE website*

person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

3. **Sexual abuse** – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and they may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.
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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

It is important that the whole Marymount community understand and are aware of the many different aspects related to Safeguarding. Specific forms of safeguarding issues are defined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education, Annex A* (September 2022) and include knowledge of the following to ensure our students safety:

- Children and the court system
- Children missing from education
- Children with family members in prison
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) as also defined in Child Sexual Exploitation (Feb 2017)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- County lines – a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs
- Domestic abuse defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.
- Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), which can have a detrimental impact on their health and wellbeing, development and ability to learn.
- Homelessness
- So called ‘honour-based’ abuse (incidents of crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing).
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Preventing radicalisation
- Peer-on-peer abuse

- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Upskirting
- Bullying
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith based abuse
- Serious violence: Gangs and youth violence; Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG). (Advice is provided in 'Preventing youth violence and gang involvement' and 'Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance'.)
- Mental health problems
- Private fostering

## **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE)**

Staff at Marymount should be aware of both CSE and CCE, which are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This power imbalance can be due to age, gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the child needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males, females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual. Exploitation can be physical and/or take place online. It is important to note that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation (although the experience may be different to boys) and that all children at risk of being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where students:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions;
- associate with other children involved in exploitation;
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- misuse drugs and alcohol;
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- regularly miss school.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. Some indicators of CSE (as well as those listed for CCE) include:

- students having older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- suffering from sexually transmitted infections;
- displaying sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development;
- becoming pregnant.

### **Abuse by one or more students against another student (peer-on-peer abuse)**

At Marymount International School London, we expect all members of our community to treat each other kindly and with respect. Procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse are in place through the PSHEE and Advisory Curricula, and also through our Pastoral Care programme that is offered throughout the School. Students are encouraged to disclose if they have been a victim of peer abuse or are aware of someone being

targeted by their peers. Students can speak to the Designated Safeguarding Leads in the School or any trusted adult who they feel comfortable talking to or can call Childline or the NSPCC contact number for those who have experienced sexual harassment or abuse in education: 0800 136 663. Students can email, use the Teams Chat function, the Pulse app or the worry boxes in Gailhac Hall / Infirmary corridor if they wish to disclose any abuse. The Counsellor and Independent Listener are also available should students require further support. There is recognition that girls are often the victims of peer on peer abuse and that abuse could still be occurring even if there are no disclosures.

There is a zero-tolerance approach to any type of abuse and peer abuse will be thoroughly investigated. It can include bullying, (including cyberbullying, prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence and harassment, abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers, sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. It may also include consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos. Although consensual image sharing (especially between older children) might not be abusive - students will still be made aware that it is illegal - whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive<sup>1</sup>.

Peer-on-peer abuse may also include 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. It may also include upskirting, which is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

The DfE September 2021 report entitled, '[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)' includes advice about what is meant by sexual violence and sexual harassment and advice on a whole school approach to preventing this. (Further information can be accessed through the above hyperlink.)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- 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.

Students who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable and will not be tolerated. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. The perpetrator will also be offered support throughout the investigation as well as any other children who are affected.

All staff should be clear that they must report any concern with regards to peer on peer abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a student may be at risk from it. Victims and perpetrators of peer-on-peer abuse will be fully supported through the pastoral care system and by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant Advisor. The Life Coach/Counsellor may also be involved as an additional support. If peer-on-peer abuse is not being reported, it could still be happening. Staff need to be vigilant to harmful behaviours and report any concerns to the DSLs.

In the event that:

- The allegation or event is one of actual bodily harm – i.e. an injury has necessitated first aid or medical treatment.
- The allegation has been reported to the Police or Children's Services by the student or parent.

<sup>1</sup> UKCIS provides detailed advice about sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and videos: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

- The student is looked after in public care.
- The student is the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- The student has a disability or Statement of Special Educational Needs.
- The student concerned has been subject to previous complaints.
- The allegation is one of sexual abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment.

The parents of the victim and the perpetrators(s) will immediately be informed, by the DSL or the Head, of the action or allegation if the child is not deemed to be at risk upon this disclosure to parents.

Advice will be sought from the Kingston SPA (or appropriate social worker if allocated) with a view to a Strategy Meeting or Discussion being held within 24 hours. This process will ensure there is an agreed appropriate course of action and the time-scale for investigations.

In considering whether or not a referral to Children's Services is appropriate, the Headmistress may seek advice from the either of the Chair of Governors and the LA's Lead Officer and advisers. Parents should also be advised of their independent right to make a formal complaint to the Police.

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures are available as a separate policy on the school website or on request from the School Office.

Peer abuse will not be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up,' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Consideration is given to the fact that students with SEN/D may be more vulnerable to bullying.

Allegations of any form of bullying or peer abuse involving mobile phones and/or social media including consensual or non-consensual sharing of nudes or semi-nudes images or videos will be thoroughly investigated and dealt with in line with the anti-bullying, acceptable use and behaviour policies, and the DSL will seek the advice of and liaise with relevant agencies. Advice about sexting in schools is available from the [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(Dec 2020\)](#). The School will ensure monitoring and filtering is in place for those who use the school network so that any inappropriate material is identified and fully investigated.

## Mental Health

At Marymount, we seek to ensure the students receive a holistic education where they are cared for intellectually, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually in a safe and calm environment. Through the pastoral care system and because of the low student-teacher ratio, issues can be identified swiftly. The PE, PSHEE and Advisory curricula, provide resources to help students understand how to adopt positive strategies for their overall well-being in order to develop their emotional resilience and physical health. Students can speak to their Advisor or Head of Year if they feel they need to access any early help to address any mental health issues that they may be experiencing, and they also have access to the School Nurse or Life Coach/ Counsellor if they need further support on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. The Director of Specialist Learning Programmes is also available to support students with special educational needs, and also those who are experiencing stress or anxiety due to their studies. Although staff are not in a position to make a diagnosis for any mental health issues, they should inform the DSL if they feel a student is suffering from a mental health problem or is at risk of suffering from one, which could become or has become a safeguarding concern. In some cases, such problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. The DSL, as Senior Mental Health Lead, will liaise with external agencies and work with families to ensure that a student has the appropriate support for a mental health issue they may be experiencing. Further resources to support staff can be found in the Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance.

### Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- the student says she has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference;
- there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a student's injury; the injury is unusual in kind

- or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries;
- the student's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the student's behaviour;
- the student asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons;
- the student's development is delayed;
- the student loses or gains weight;
- the student appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;
- the student has difficulties integrating in the school community;
- the student display signs of over-sexualisation;
- the student is in possession of pornographic material;
- the student is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by her parents or carers.
- increased absence from school;
- change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups;
- significant decline in academic performance;
- signs of self-harm or significant change in well-being;
- the student experiences mental health issues;
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries;
- unexplained gifts of new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by or involved with criminal networks or gangs.

## TRAINING

Whole-School in-service training on safeguarding issues, including the Prevent Duty, will be undertaken annually, in line with advice from the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership. Staff will receive training on how to recognise signs of abuse including child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment. All staff, including the Head and any volunteers, are expected to attend relevant training. Informal updates are given by the DSLs either by email or in minuted Staff Briefings as required, for instance by changes in regulations or best practice, and at least annually. All staff are trained in online safety through the School CPD and PSHEE Programme. Useful resources for online safety to inform governors, staff, parents and students can be found in Annex C of KCSIE (2022) and are shared with staff via SharePoint / CPD, with parents via the Parent Portal, newsletters and guest speakers, and with students through the Advisor and PSHEE curricula.

- All staff read Part One of KCSIE (2022) and Annex A. This applies not only to new staff but also to those already in post in April 2014 when KCSIE was first introduced. Special provision is available to staff who struggle with English and literacy.
- The DSL receives updated Child Protection Training at least every two years. This will include local inter-agency working protocols and training in the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership's approach to Prevent duties.
- The DSL will also refresh their knowledge and skills by keeping abreast of latest safeguarding news/developments.
- All new staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with Induction Training that includes:
  1. The School's Safeguarding Policy
  2. The Staff Code of Conduct/Behaviour Policy including Whistleblowing Policy
  3. The Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
  4. Missing Persons Procedure and Attendance and Absence Policy
  5. The identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies
  6. A copy of Part 1 of KCSIE 2022 and Annex A

Additional one-to-one training from the DSLs or their deputies will be given if necessary to ensure full understanding of these. New staff will be made aware of the identity and role of the DSL and deputy DSLs, the Whistleblowing Policy, and the Acceptable Use of Technologies Policy, and be given copies of the relevant documents.

DSLs will be expected to attend appropriate network meetings and to participate in the multi-agency training programme organized by the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.

All staff as part of their Induction will be required to read and understand the policies listed above including the Anti-Bullying Policy. Staff must sign a confirmation form to state that they have read and understood these policies. Existing staff are updated appropriately. A register of training undertaken will be kept by the HR Officer and DSL.

## PROCEDURES

Staff are given training in order to know how to deal with a safeguarding disclosure made by staff or student. They are also given training to know how to deal with an incident that includes sexual harassment or violence. All victims will be taken seriously, kept safe and will never be made to feel like they are creating a problem for reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

### Initial complaint:

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse must take immediate action. They should recognize that a student is likely to disclose to someone they trust and should be supportive and respectful. All staff should be aware that students may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful or may feel embarrassed, humiliated or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not stop staff having professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a student.

- They must listen carefully to the student and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.
- They must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer and only prompting the student where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc.
- They must reassure the student but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that s/he needs to pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will ensure that the correct action is taken. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to.
- They must keep a brief but sufficient written record of the conversation. Wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This will allow the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and listen to what they are saying. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The written report should only record facts as the child has presented them and not the personal judgements of the note taker. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. They should not make copies of the record. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The record will detail how the concern was followed up and any actions taken including the outcome.
- The School should not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a student a leading question or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse.
- Where the report includes an online element, staff should not view or forward illegal images of a student. The advice as found in 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' and UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes Advice provides more detail on what to do in this instance.
- The School will follow the flow chart of actions where there are concerns about a student to be found in KCSIE (September 2022). The DSL and other staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals following a referral. If information is not forthcoming after a referral the

DSL or the member of staff who made the referral should follow this up with the agency to whom the referral was made. Where a referral is found to require action, this will include early help and inter-agency assessment including an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Team Around the Child (TAC) approaches. If a student is suffering or is likely to suffer from harm or abuse and/or neglect and/or complex family circumstances, a referral to the appropriate safeguarding partner (and police if appropriate) will be made immediately. The School will be aware that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health. If after a referral there is no improvement in the situation the DSL (or the person who made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure the student's situation improves. Although parental permission may be sought should a referral be made, it is not necessary that such consent is given in order for the School to make a referral to the relevant safeguarding partner.

- All staff should be prepared to identify students who may benefit from early help, and should discuss early help requirements with the DSL. The advice from DFE entitled *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused* and the NSPCC website provide more advice and information. The School may decide that a student may not require a referral to statutory services but may benefit from early help to help prevent further escalation. The DSL will coordinate early help support with the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- The DSL must also be aware and apply a contextual approach to safeguarding. Incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the School and/or can occur between students outside the School. All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) should consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. Assessments of students should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a student's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Providing as much information at the time of referral will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL or Deputy will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. When there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk assessment of a report of sexual violence will consider:

- The victim (their protection and support), their wishes in terms of how they want to proceed
- The alleged perpetrator (and their support)
- All the other students (and adult students and staff) and actions to protect them.
- The nature of the alleged incident (s)
- The ages of the students involved and their developmental stages
- Understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.
- Any power imbalance between the students (e.g. Age, maturity, confidence, disability)
- Is the incident a one-off or a pattern of abuse?
- Are there ongoing risks?
- The time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Risk assessments will be recorded and kept under review to ensure that measures are put in place to protect students and keep them safe.

Whilst the incident is being investigated, the School will consider how best to keep the 'victim' and 'perpetrator' a reasonable distance apart whilst at school or taking transport to and from school, where appropriate. The School will refer to Hackett's Continuum when managing reports of Harmful Sexual Behaviours such as sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. These actions will be in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

Every report will be managed on a case-by-case basis and support will be tailored to each student involved. Sexual assault can result in a range of health needs and the DSL will work with the students to ensure appropriate support is in place. The school will consider the four following options when managing reports of sexual

violence and/or sexual harassment (or Harmful Sexual Behaviours):

1. Inappropriate: Manage the report internally.
2. Problematic: The students may benefit from Early Help from external agencies.
3. Abusive: When a student has been harmed or is likely to be harmed, the incident will be referred to the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.
4. Violent: Any sexual behaviour that would involve a referral to the Police and Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership e.g. sexual assault.

The DSL will work with Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership and specialist services as required. Incidents will be monitored and reviewed by the DSL to ensure patterns of behaviour are identified and whether further training for staff is required to minimise risks.

At Marymount London, we ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behavior is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the student, with full consideration to the impact on that student's emotional and mental health and well-being. The victim must always feel reassured when making the disclosure and feel that they are valued and respected in accordance with the ethos of the School and that they are being taken seriously. A student who has disclosed abusive or any harmful/problematic sexual behaviour will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It should be explained that the law is in place to protect students rather than criminalise them to avoid further distress. Careful handling of the situation should ensure future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment feel confident to report or come forward. Where it is known that a student has a social worker, the School will ensure that any unauthorized absences or safeguarding concerns will be communicated. Pastoral support will be offered to that student to ensure they are cared for and their needs are met, as fully as possible, in order to help that student flourish. Should a report prove to be unsubstantiated, malicious or false, the DSL will consider why the person making the allegation has made the claim and whether further support is required. Should the report be deliberately malicious, the School will follow the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions and/or Acceptable Use policies.

### Preserving evidence:

All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved not fewer than six years and at least until the student has reached the age of 25.

## **SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS MADE ABOUT STAFF, INCLUDING SUPPLY TEACHERS, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS:**

Marymount will consider and investigate all allegations against staff quickly, fairly and consistently and in accordance with Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership Practices and KCSIE (2022) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Although supply staff may not be directly employed by the School, Marymount will report any allegation about supply staff to the LADO to ensure children are kept safe. If the Headmistress is absent, the allegation should be passed on to the Chair of Governors. If an allegation concerns the Headmistress, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors without notifying the Headmistress first. In cases of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset. The reporting staff member is provided with immunity from retribution or disciplinary action for 'whistleblowing' in good faith [see Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures in Staff Handbook]. If a member of boarding staff is suspended in light of a child protection allegations, arrangements will be made for alternative accommodation away from children.

Effective protection for the child and support for the person subject to the allegation will be provided.

Allegations that are considered 'low level concerns' will be responded to differently to those where the allegation meets the harms threshold<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The harm test is explained on the Disclosure and Barring service website on GOV.UK. Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002

## 1. Allegations against staff that may meet the harms threshold

The guidance above will be followed where it is alleged that a member of staff 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 or children in a way that indicates he or she 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. (This is if there is a transferrable risk if a member of staff has been involved in an incident outside of school that may entail that students could be at risk).
- Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will ensure that the child is not at risk and refer the case of suspected abuse to the relevant Children’s Services and police in the case of emergency.
  - The Headmistress (Case Manager) will investigate and support the person subject to the allegation. They will discuss with the LADO, the nature, content and context of the allegation within 24 hours of the allegation being made and agree a course of action.

Before contacting the LADO, the School will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation. Advice about when the staff member who is the subject of the allegation will be informed will be considered carefully following advice from the LADO.

Where the Headmistress is concerned about the welfare of other students in the community or the member of staff’s family, the DSL will make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, a referral to Children’s Services will be made.

Where the initial discussion with the LADO leads to **no further action**, the Headmistress and the LADO should record the decision and justification for it and agree on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom.

Where **further enquiries** are required to enable a decision about how to proceed, the LADO and Headmistress will discuss how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. The LADO’s role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, local authority children’s social care, the School or a combination of these. Within the School, the investigation will be undertaken by the DSL or other senior member of staff. An independent investigator will be provided if the allegation requires it or is particularly complex. The Headmistress will ensure that the progress of the case is monitored and dealt with as quickly as possible in a thorough and fair process. It will be reviewed fortnightly or at monthly intervals. The first review will take place within four weeks after the initial assessment. The Headmistress will keep the LADO informed of the investigation.

**Suspension** should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. The Headmistress must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with students where there is cause to suspect student(s) may be at risk of harm or where the case is so serious there is grounds for dismissal, or until the allegation is resolved. If in doubt, the Headmistress should seek advice from the LADO and HR, as well as the police and Children’s Services where they have been involved.

Where the School is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order, in respect of a member of staff, immediate action will be taken to ensure the staff member does not carry out work in contravention of the order. This means that pending the findings of the TRA investigation, the staff member must not carry out teaching or work in boarding.

In many cases, an inquiry can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. Based on advice from HR and/or a risk analysis drawn up with the LADO, other alternatives should be considered by the Headmistress before suspending a member of staff. The Headmistress should consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unfounded, unsubstantiated, malicious, or false. If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the

Headmistress should record the rationale and justification for such a course of action. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the staff member, written confirmation should be given within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. The School will ensure a named contact and their contact details will be provided in order to support the member of staff involved.

The welfare of the student (s) is paramount whilst the investigations are ongoing. However, it is recognised that being the subject of an investigation can be very stressful for the member of staff involved and their family. Information will be treated confidentially and not shared with those not directly involved in the investigation.

The School's duty of care to their employees entails that:

- the stress caused by the allegation will be managed and minimised;
- that the staff member will be informed as soon as possible with explanations given about the course of action (as guided by the LADO or police if necessary);
- the staff member will be advised to contact their trade union representative or a colleague for support;
- the School will appoint a named representative to keep the staff member involved informed of progress of the case;
- provide access to counselling or medical advice where appropriate;
- not prevent social contact with work colleagues and friends, when staff are suspended, unless there is evidence to suggest this may prejudice the gathering of evidence.

Parents or carers of the student(s) involved will be:

- formally told about the allegation as soon as possible (what information can be disclosed will depend on consultation with Children's services and/or the police if they are involved)
- kept informed about the progress of the case, only in relation to their child – no information can be shared regarding the staff member;
- made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and unwanted publicity about any allegations made against staff members whilst investigations are in progress as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002.

Marymount will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Legislation (Education Act 2011) prevents the "publication" of material by any person that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation. Parents will be made aware of these restrictions when being informed of an investigation that may involve their daughter.

**Allegation outcomes** will depend on the nature of the allegation and the evidence available. This will range from taking no further action, to dismissal or a decision not to use the staff member's services in future.

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation;
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence; or,
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

If the allegation is substantiated, the School will report to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) within one month of leaving the School any person in regulated activity

(whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because s/he is considered unsuitable to work with children; the address to make a DBS Referral online is <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance>. The School also has a legal duty to respond to requests from the DBS and the TRA for information already held about any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student).

Where the allegation is concluded to be either, unfounded, false, malicious or unsubstantiated the Head and DSL, and if they have been involved, the LADO should consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if improvements can be made.

Serious incidents that include suspicions, allegations or incidents of abuse involving students will also be reported to the Charity Commission: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>.

Records concerning allegations of abuse will be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider if the student or person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Children's Services may be appropriate. The School recognises that false allegations can cause serious harm to innocent persons. If an allegation results in a finding that the complainant knowingly and falsely accused another person of harassment and/or bullying or inappropriate behaviour, the complainant will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including permanent exclusion.

**Allegations against students:** A student or students against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation, and the School's policy on Behaviour, Reward and Sanctions together with the Anti-bullying and Acceptable Use of Technology policies will apply. If the School determines that the latter have been violated in either the real or virtual world, the violator will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include referral to appropriate counselling, temporary or permanent exclusion. All students involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being "at risk".

Where an adult makes an allegation to a school or college that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police. Non-recent allegations made by a student, should be reported to the LADO. The LADO will coordinate with Children's Services and the police.

For all allegations that are not malicious or false, an accurate record will be kept by the School. Substantiated allegations will be included in references written by the School. Following any investigations regarding allegations involving a member of staff, the Headmistress will consider the facts and determine if improvements can be made.

## 2. Allegations against staff that do not meet the harms threshold

In accordance with the School's mission to ensure a community of love, trust and openness, students and staff are encouraged to disclose any low-level concern that they may have to the DSL. If the DSL is unavailable, staff should meet with the Headmistress. The DSL will inform the Headmistress of all low-level concerns in a timely fashion. The Headmistress will make the final decision in respect to all low-level concerns. If the low-level concern is raised about the DSL, the concern should be shared with the Headmistress. Staff are expected to know and understand the Staff Code of Conduct which should be consistently adhered to and reinforced by all staff. Staff members are encouraged to self-refer to the DSL if they believe their behaviour could be misinterpreted or, upon reflection, their behaviour has fallen below the Staff Code of Conduct.

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the School may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

The DSL will consult with the LADO if it is unclear if the allegation is a low-level concern or meets the harms threshold.

The DSL will hold all records of concerns confidentially. Should the person sharing the concern wish to remain anonymous, this will be respected as far as reasonably possible. Patterns of behaviour will be reviewed to identify harmful behaviour and the School will refer to the Disciplinary Policy to decide the best course of action. Should the pattern of behaviour meet the harms threshold, the School will also refer the concern to the LADO.

### **MISSING PERSONS:**

There is a Missing Persons Procedure, known to staff and used in practice, for searching for and, if necessary reporting, any boarder or day student missing from school (and recording any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the student for being missing). The Attendance and Absence Policy also explains procedures the School will take should a student be missing from School without authorization.

### **MONITORING:**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and make a report to the Headmistress before every Board of Governors' meeting. Monitoring will take place three times a year. The SCR is monitored by the Chair of the Board tri-annually. The Safeguarding Log is reviewed to detail the number of cases involving students and staff that have been addressed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies and a report on this is submitted by the Headmistress to the Board Chair tri-annually. An annual audit of the School's safeguarding procedures and practices is completed by the DSL and Headteacher and is submitted to the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership. Governors undertake an annual review of Safeguarding Procedures and of this policy at the November Board meeting, and how their duties under it have been discharged. They also consider how the students are safe-guarded via the curriculum. The Chair of Governors responsible for Safeguarding is Ms Cristina Serrano.

### **OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO SAFEGUARDING:**

(Policies and procedures not on the website can be found in the Student/Parent and Staff Handbooks)

Acceptable Use Policy (Staff and Student)	PSHEE Curriculum
Admissions Policy	RSE Policy and Curriculum
Anti-Bullying Policy	Recruitment, Selection & Disclosure Policy & Procedure
Attendance and Absence Policy	SEND Policy
Complaints Procedure	Short Term Hosting Guidance
Drugs Policy	Staff Code of Conduct
Health and Safety Policy	Whistleblowing Policy for Staff
Missing Persons Procedure	Whistleblowing Policy for Students
	Policy on Use of Reasonable Force

**Approved:** November 2021

**Amended:** September 2022

**To be reviewed:** October 2022