



Child Protection Policy with child-on-child addendum

Discovery Special Academy and Discovery Special Academy Secondary

Version:	1.0
Next review date:	September 2026
Directorial lead:	Emma Lowe
Operational lead:	Louise Stogdale
Document reviewer:	Louise Stogdale
Statutory (Y/N):	Y
Published on website (Y/N):	Y
Type of document:	Policy
Approved by:	Trust Board



The Child-on-Child Abuse Policy is an addendum to our whole-school Child Protection Policy and should be read alongside it.

Introduction

At **Discovery Special Academy**, a proud member of Tees Valley Education (TVED), safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. Our Child Protection Policy ensures that every child, parent, carer, staff member, and trustee knows exactly what steps we will take if we believe a child is at risk of harm or in need of support.

Across TVED, we are united in our commitment to act quickly, sensitively, and appropriately so that children feel safe, heard, and supported.

We recognise that children may be at risk of harm from adults – whether parents, carers, teachers, professionals, family members, or strangers – but we also acknowledge that children can harm one another. This could happen with siblings, friends, peers, or even in online spaces. Harmful behaviours can take place at home, in the community, during external activities, in school, or online.

At **Discovery Special Academy**, we foster a culture of safeguarding where every child knows there are safe adults and safe spaces available to them. Our promise is that every child will be treated with respect and care, their voice will be listened to, and their experiences will be validated. All staff will act immediately and within the correct safeguarding thresholds to ensure the best possible outcome for every child.

Staff are expected to model respectful relationships and challenge all inappropriate or harmful behaviour (including sexual harassment or harmful sexualised behaviour), recognising that not doing so could normalise abuse.

We expect all staff to show professional curiosity about the lived experiences of the children they work with, and to report and record any concerns without hesitation.

In conjunction with this child protection policy, all staff must read Part 1 of [KCSIE 2025](#), and those who work directly with children should also read Annex B. Staff not working directly with children can read either the full Part 1 or the condensed Annex A. This should be along with the school's specific safeguarding policies, whistleblowing policy, and behaviour policy. Staff should also be familiar with [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) and, annually, they must read and sign to confirm their understanding of the most current version of these documents.

Purpose and Aim

This policy reflects TVED's commitment under the Children Act (1989) to make the welfare of children our absolute priority. Our aim is to ensure children receive the **right help at the right time** (Working Together, 2023).

That means:

- Acting early and proactively to prevent concerns from escalating.
- Offering intervention as soon as possible when children need support.
- Handling all referrals with sensitivity, confidentiality, and professionalism.

Across Tees Valley Education, we take our safeguarding responsibility seriously. We have robust policies and procedures in place, but more importantly, we share a culture that prioritises children's safety above everything else.

Our Commitment

Five key elements of safeguarding at **Discovery Special Academy** within TVED:

1. **Prevention and Interception** – Identify vulnerabilities early and act quickly to reduce risks. Prevent harm such as bullying, harassment, exploitation, domestic abuse, serious youth violence, radicalisation, and honour-based abuse. Child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, upskirting, initiation/hazing-type violence, bullying, and harmful sexual behaviour, is included.
2. **Safeguarding and Protection** – Ensure staff understand responsibilities, respond swiftly, and receive regular training. Staff can always go directly to the DSL, Deputy DSL, or Multi-Agency Children's Hub if necessary.
3. **Escalation** – Ensure no child is left without help. Persistently challenge decisions until children are safe.
4. **Scaffolding and Supporting** – Provide training and reflective practice to recognise vulnerability and put the right support in place.
5. **Timely Record Keeping** – Record concerns accurately, factually, and promptly to enable appropriate action.

Recognising Vulnerability

TVED schools are aware that some children are more vulnerable to harm than others. Staff are trained to notice these risks and act early. Children may be at higher risk and staff would be particularly alert to the potential of early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- has a mental health need

- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation • is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of 'Honour'- Based Abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child

(KCSIE 2025)

Staff adopt a **zero-tolerance approach** to harmful behaviour – including banter that could be minimised or overlooked elsewhere. We make it clear that every child has the right to feel safe, and every concern will be taken seriously.

We also recognise that mental health can sometimes be an indicator of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and we are committed to supporting children holistically.

Children with SEND

At **Discovery Special Academy**, we recognise that children with SEND, behavioural difficulties and disabilities can be especially vulnerable. Because of this, we are particularly vigilant when working with children who have profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairments, or emotional and behavioural needs. Staff understand that children with SEND may face additional barriers in disclosing abuse and that assumptions should never be made about the reliability of their accounts. Staff will provide extra time, support, and appropriate communication methods if needed.

We know that sometimes safeguarding concerns may be mistakenly attributed to a child's medical condition or additional needs, when in fact they may be signs of harm. That is why we take any changes in behaviour, presentation, mood, or injury seriously, looking carefully at each child's individual circumstances.

Children with SEND or certain medical conditions may also be more likely to experience isolation from their peers and may be disproportionately affected by issues such as bullying (including prejudice-based bullying). Some children may not show clear outward signs, which is why it is so important that we are proactive in noticing the small details.

We are committed to making sure that the voice of every child is heard – whether through spoken language, alternative communication methods, or behaviour. When a referral is made, we will always ensure that the child’s circumstances, strengths and challenges are clearly understood, so that they receive the right support.

The DSL will work closely with the SENCO to ensure that safeguarding arrangements take account of the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and communication methods of children with SEND.

To support children with SEND effectively, we may put in place additional pastoral support, recognising that their needs may require tailored safeguarding approaches.

Legislation, Policy and Practice

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. We work closely with partner agencies, following both national and local guidance, to ensure children are safe. This includes statutory duties such as the **mandatory reporting of radicalisation and extremism (PREVENT)** and **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**.

In our local area, safeguarding procedures are overseen by the **South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (STSCP)**. We follow the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) to ensure joined up working and the highest standards of safeguarding practice.

Where there are concerns of **significant harm** (Children Act 1989, Section 47), the Local Authority has a duty to investigate, and we will always support and contribute to those enquiries to protect children.

We also adhere to **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, September 2025)** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**, which set out the legal framework and statutory duties for schools.

Our responsibility for Keeping Children Safe

Every member of staff at **Discovery Special Academy** has a role to play in safeguarding. Keeping children safe is not just the job of the DSL – it is the responsibility of all of us. We work to a shared principle: **“It could happen here.”**

Safeguarding means:

- Helping children and families early, before problems escalate.
- Protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm.
- Preventing the impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring children grow up in safe, supportive environments.

This includes tackling issues such as sexual abuse and harassment, child criminal and sexual exploitation, county lines, serious youth violence, domestic abuse, online abuse, radicalisation, bullying, and honour-based abuse (including FGM and forced marriage).

To achieve this, staff at **Discovery Special Academy** commit to the following:

1. **Reporting and Recording** – Staff must raise concerns immediately with the DSL or deputy and record them accurately (using CPOMS). No concern is ever too small to report. Staff also have the right to go directly to the Multi-Agency Children’s Hub or the police if necessary.
2. **Listening to Children** – We value the voices of children and take their concerns seriously. Staff will provide reassurance, act with sensitivity, and always ensure that children know they are believed, supported and safe. Trusted relationships are key.
3. **Whistleblowing** – Staff must raise concerns about unsafe practice or potential failures in safeguarding. Our whistleblowing and low-level concerns procedures are in place to protect both children and staff.
4. **Training** – All staff complete induction safeguarding training and receive regular updates (at least annually). This includes online safety, recognising risks early, and understanding statutory duties.
5. **Online Safety** – We know that technology plays a role in many safeguarding cases. Staff are trained to understand online risks, including those posed by mobile phones and smart devices. Our **Online Safety Policy, Mobile and Smart Technology Policy, and AI Policy** make clear the expectations and consequences for misuse. Staff are alert to new and emerging online risks, including AI-generated abuse, deepfakes, online blackmail and sextortion. Children will be educated about these risks through the curriculum, and staff will act immediately if such concerns arise. Staff are also aware to be vigilant to online sexual harassment, including non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos, and the use of technology to facilitate coercion or control.
6. **Mandatory Reporting** – Staff understand their legal duties under PREVENT and the FGM reporting duty, and act on them without delay.
7. **Visitors** – All staff remain vigilant with visitors on site, ensuring that mobile phone and device expectations are followed at all times to maintain a safe environment.
8. **Collaboration** – We work in partnership with local authorities, social care, police, health, and other relevant services, because keeping children safe is always a team effort. Staff will work with external agencies to ensure risk assessments and safety plans are in place for both victims and alleged perpetrators of child-on-child abuse, in line with statutory guidance.

Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm Children with a Social Worker

Children who have been assigned a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare concerns- including abuse, neglect, or complex family circumstances—are at heightened risk of harm. Experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm and educational disadvantage, manifesting as barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.

Local authorities have clear duties to share the fact that a child has a social worker. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at **Discovery Special Academy** will hold and use this information to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of the child’s safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.

Contextual Safeguarding

All staff at **Discovery Special Academy** are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. Extra-familial harms (contextual safeguarding) take a variety of different forms, and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms. Indicators of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different from those of boys; however, for both boys and girls being criminally exploited, they may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation. Staff are aware of the indicators that signal a child is at risk from or involved in serious violent crime, such as being missing from education, changing friendships, a decline in school performance, self-harming, and unexplained gifts and possessions.

Risk factors that increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include being male, unexplained and/or persistent absences from education or permanent exclusion from school, having experienced child maltreatment, and having been involved in offending such as theft or robbery.

Artificial Intelligence and Online Safety

At **Discovery Special Academy**, all stakeholders are committed to the safe use of artificial intelligence, and there is an AI Policy in place. Although there are clear benefits in the use of AI, there are also clear risks, including exposure to inappropriate content and bias, misuse of AI to deceive, harm, or blackmail, and data privacy breaches.

In the event that evidence suggests a child is at risk of harm from inappropriate or unacceptable use of artificial intelligence, all stakeholders must follow this Child Protection Policy (if exposed to risk within the family home) or the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy (if exposed to risk from a peer). In both circumstances, notification to the Designated Safeguarding Lead must occur in the first instance, followed by a fact-based record using the school's CPOMs system/recording system. Parents will be informed of any concerns unless doing so would place the child at further risk of harm.

Following any recorded incidents, a full review of the school's AI Policy and procedures will be instigated, and appropriate actions/changes will be made.

Role of the Safeguarding Lead (this should be read alongside [Annex c](#) in KCSIE 2025- page 171).

At **Discovery Special Academy**, safeguarding is everybody's responsibility – but we also have specific members of staff who are here to lead, guide, and support when it comes to keeping children safe.

Our **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** are:

- **DSL:** Michelle Armour
- **DDSL:** Jennifer Duncan, Ann Titchener, Cheryl Arkle and Andy Smyth
- **Contact:** Tel: 01642 248333 Email: enquiries@discoveryspecialacademy.org.uk
- **Availability:** During school hours (term time)

In an emergency, you can also contact the **Multi Agency Children's Hub on 01642 726004** or the police.

Our DSL and DDSL are trusted senior members of staff with the authority, time, and training needed to carry out their role. They are here to:

- Support staff with advice and guidance on safeguarding matters.
- Take the lead on referrals and decisions about children at risk.
- Attend strategy meetings and multi-agency discussions, sharing the school's perspective and ensuring children's voices are represented.
- Keep the whole safeguarding picture for vulnerable children in our care, so we can make informed and timely decisions.

If our school is invited to attend a child protection conference or other multi-agency meeting, the DSL or DDSL will attend wherever possible. If they are unable to, another appropriately trained member of staff will attend in their place.

Role of Trustees (this should be read alongside [Part 2](#) of KCSIE 2025- page 25).

Safeguarding is not only the responsibility of staff – it is also a strategic priority for our Trustees.

At **Discovery Special Academy**, our **Trustees** hold overall responsibility for ensuring safeguarding is effective. They make sure that:

- The school complies with all legal duties, including those under the **Human Rights Act 1998**, the **Equality Act 2010**, the **Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR)**, and local multiagency safeguarding arrangements.
 - Staff are confident in their roles and responsibilities, as set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)**.
 - Policies and procedures around safeguarding are clear, understood, and consistently followed.
 - Trustees receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on online safety and filtering/monitoring responsibilities, so that they can challenge and test how well safeguarding is working in school.
 - Trustees will assure themselves that the school has effective filtering and monitoring systems in place. They will receive regular reports on how online safety is managed, including filtering breaches, to ensure the systems are working and children are not exposed to harmful content online.
- **Safeguarding Trustee:** Richard Hodges • **Trust Safeguarding Lead:** Louise Stogdale
- **Contact:** 01642 221156/ info@tved.org.uk
 - **Availability:** both roles are part time; however, contact can be made with the Trust who can raise the query with the necessary person.

Making a Safeguarding Referral & Threshold Guidance

At **Discovery Special Academy**, we know that children may share important information with us in many ways – sometimes directly by talking to us, other times through their behaviour, role play, or

in the small moments of connection we have with them each day. Every adult in our school, whether teaching staff, support staff, or volunteers, has an important role to play in listening carefully and taking children's worries seriously.

Often, the person a child chooses to speak to will be the adult they trust the most. If a child shares something that causes concern, or if you notice anything that makes you worried about their safety or wellbeing, it is essential that you:

- **Listen** to the child without judgement.
- **Reassure** them that they have done the right thing in speaking up.
- **Pass on** your concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

We must always act straight away if there is:

- A concern, worry, or suspicion that a child is being harmed.
- Any evidence that a child is being harmed.

Understanding Harm

The law is clear about what counts as "significant harm" (Children Act 1989, Section 31(9)). This includes:

- Ill-treatment of a child.
- Impairment of health or development, compared with what would normally be expected for a child their age.
- Witnessing ill-treatment of others

Harm also includes when a child is affected by witnessing the ill-treatment of another person (Adoption and Children Act 2002).

The four categories of harm defined in *Working Together 2023* are (these should be read in conjunction with indicators of abuse and neglect in [KCSIE 2025](#) pg 11):

Physical Abuse

Causing physical harm to a child (e.g. hitting, shaking, burning, suffocating, poisoning, drowning, or fabricating illness).

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's physical or emotional needs (e.g. lack of food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, or emotional support).

Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child into sexual activity, whether physical or non-contact. Abuse can also happen online, and it can be committed by both adults and other children (known as *Child-on-Child Abuse*). All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent behaviour that damages a child's emotional development (e.g. bullying, belittling, ignoring, isolating, setting inappropriate expectations, or exposing them to the ill-treatment of others). Emotional abuse is part of all forms of abuse.

Management of Allegations Towards Adults in School

(including Whistleblowing/Confidential Reporting)

At **Discovery Special Academy**, we believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – and that includes safeguarding children from the actions of adults. We want all staff, volunteers, governors, parents, and visitors to feel confident in speaking up if they ever have a concern.

Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing

Our Trust has a **Whistleblowing/Confidential Reporting Policy** to make sure that anyone connected to our school knows how to raise a concern and feels safe to do so. Staff, volunteers, or contractors who are worried about the behaviour of an adult in school can report this without fear. We will always listen, act appropriately, and provide feedback wherever possible.

If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made about a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor who may have harmed or posed a risk of harm to children, this will be reported to the **Headteacher straight away**.

- If the concern is about the Headteacher, it must go to the **Chair of Trustees**.

The LADO (Tel: **01642 726004/ 07929854418**) may be contacted and would advise on next steps. Sometimes this may include a multi-agency meeting to look carefully at the situation. The Headteacher or another senior leader will attend on behalf of the school. Everything will be recorded clearly on an allegation management form, including the final outcome.

Where behaviour does not meet the threshold of "harm" but is inconsistent with our staff code of conduct (for example, poor judgement, unprofessional behaviour, or actions outside of school that could raise concern), it will still be taken seriously as a **low-level concern**. These are recorded and addressed by the Headteacher in line with our *Low-Level Concerns Practice (staff handbook)*.

Professional Confidentiality

We know that confidentiality is vital when dealing with safeguarding matters. Concerns will only ever be shared with those who need to know – such as the DSL, Headteacher, LADO, or children's social care. The purpose of confidentiality is always to protect the child.

When staff raise concerns, the DSL will provide limited feedback, enough to reassure the person who raised the issue, but without sharing unnecessary detail or breaching confidentiality. Parents and other stakeholders who raise concerns will also be supported, and, where appropriate, encouraged to make their own safeguarding referral.

Record Keeping/ Transfer of Files

Good record keeping is essential to safeguarding practice. At **Discovery Special Academy**, we make sure that every concern, discussion, decision, and action is clearly logged. Records include:

- A summary of the concern.
- Details of how the concern was followed up.
- The decision reached and why.
- The outcome and any next steps.

All safeguarding records are stored securely on **CPOMS**. Staff are trained in how to record accurately and professionally. Any historic records (before electronic systems were introduced) are kept securely in paper format. Safeguarding files will be transferred securely and within 5 working days when a child leaves our school. A receipt of transfer will always be obtained, and DSLs will liaise to ensure the receiving school has all relevant safeguarding information

When a child moves on to another school, safeguarding information is transferred securely so the receiving school can provide the right support. Information is only ever shared on a **need-to-know basis**, following GDPR and data protection guidance.

Support for Staff

We know that safeguarding can feel heavy at times. That's why we make sure all staff are fully supported. As part of their induction, every new colleague is introduced to:

- The Child Protection Policy.
 - The Child-on-Child Abuse Policy.
 - The Behaviour Policy.
 - The Staff Code of Conduct (including whistleblowing and low-level concerns).
 - The Safer Working Practice Guidance.
-
- Procedures for children missing from education.
 - The names and roles of the DSL and deputies.

Regular safeguarding training is provided for all staff, including updates on online safety, safer working practice, and lessons learned from case reviews. At **Discovery Special Academy**, safeguarding training takes place every September for all staff, with weekly updates and additional sessions where needed from the Trust Safeguarding Lead and/ or Academy DSL. Safeguarding is also a regular agenda item in staff and SLT meetings, so we keep it at the heart of our work. DSL's also meet half termly from across the Trust to share best practice, learn alongside and with each other and to receive updated training.

The Trust is also committed to offer external case and clinical supervision for DSLs/ DDSLs.

Support for Children

We understand that children who experience harm or trauma may find it difficult to trust others, manage their behaviour, or feel safe. For some, school may be the most stable part of their lives. That's why we work hard to provide a consistent, caring environment where children feel respected and valued. The Trust offer a broad wellbeing offer for children (displayed on websites) that is reviewed bi-annually.

As an **Operation Encompass** partner, we are notified when police have attended a domestic abuse incident at a child's home. Our trained lead then ensures that appropriate support is offered in school the very next day.

We also recognise that children can harm each other (Child-on-Child Abuse). This may take the form of bullying, sexual harassment, or other unacceptable behaviours. At **Discovery Special Academy** we have a **zero-tolerance approach** to Child-on-Child Abuse. Concerns will be investigated promptly, children will be supported, and behaviour will be challenged.

Our curriculum plays a huge role in prevention. We teach children to:

- Build self-esteem and resilience.
- Form healthy, respectful relationships.
- Recognise unsafe or abusive behaviour.
- Understand online safety and digital citizenship.
- Value equality, diversity, and human rights.
- Develop strategies for managing risk and keeping themselves safe.
- Report concerns (including child-on-child abuse) in confidence and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

Child-on-child abuse may be facilitated online, including through the sharing of indecent images, coercion, blackmail, or harmful challenges/trends. We treat all such incidents as safeguarding concerns and provide support to both victims and alleged perpetrators.

Where child-on-child abuse has occurred, support will be offered to both the victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s). This includes pastoral support, risk assessments, and consideration of safeguarding measures for all children involved. No child will ever be left without support.

This learning is age-appropriate, inclusive, and carefully adapted for children with SEND or additional vulnerabilities.

EYFS Reforms

At **Discovery Special Academy**, we know that our youngest children need extra care and attention to keep them safe. Early years are such an important stage in a child's life, and because of their age, our safeguarding approach is tailored to their unique needs and vulnerabilities.

Mealtimes and Allergies

We recognise that snack and mealtimes can be a particular risk for young children. All children in our Early Years provision are **closely supervised while eating**, and our staff are trained in **Paediatric First Aid** so they can respond quickly and confidently to choking incidents.

We also operate a **robust allergen policy**. Every food allergy is carefully documented, and children with allergies have individual care plans that are shared with all relevant staff. Our team is trained to manage allergic reactions, including the use of adrenaline auto-injectors (e.g. EpiPens), and we make sure all staff are confident in following emergency procedures. Food is prepared in ways that minimise risk, with portion sizes and menu choices designed to keep children safe.

Play and Risk Management

Play is at the heart of learning in the Early Years – but we know that outdoor and unstructured play can carry risks. To keep children safe, all playtimes are **supervised by trained staff**, and we carry out **regular risk assessments** of indoor and outdoor areas. Risk assessments are also reviewed after any incidents to make sure our practice is always improving.

Attendance and Emergency Contacts

For our youngest children, regular attendance is especially important. We follow up every absence, and if we cannot reach families, our **escalation protocols** are put into action. Each child has **two emergency contacts** recorded, wherever possible, so we can always reach someone quickly if needed.

Toileting and Intimate Care

We know that toileting can be a sensitive time. Our procedures are designed to protect each child's **privacy and dignity**, while also making sure there is **appropriate visibility** for safeguarding purposes. Staff are trained to manage these situations with care, sensitivity, and respect.

Recruitment and Whistleblowing

Everyone who works with our children has a role in keeping them safe. Our school follows safer recruitment practices to ensure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. Staff are also reminded regularly of their duty to speak up if they have a concern about another adult's behaviour. Our **Whistleblowing Policy** ensures that concerns can be raised safely and will always be taken seriously.

Support for Parents

We understand that safeguarding processes can feel overwhelming for parents, particularly when social workers or other agencies become involved. At **Discovery Special Academy**, we are committed to working in partnership with families. We will always do our best to:

- Explain what is happening and why.

- Offer support and signpost families to services that can help.
- Be open and approachable in our communication.

However, it is important to be clear: the school has a **statutory duty to put the safety of children first**. This means that if we believe a child is at risk of significant harm, we **must** follow the procedures set out in this policy and in national guidance.

Supporting Safeguarding Policies

This policy should be read alongside our wider suite of safeguarding and child protection policies, which together create a strong framework for keeping children safe. These include (but are not limited to):

- **HR handbook**
- **Safer Recruitment** (with Single Central Record checks).
- **Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)**, including whistleblowing, safer working practice, and low-level concerns.
- **Behaviour Policy** inc. Anti-Bullying and Online Bullying.
- **Positive Handling procedures and guidance** •
Online Safety, AI and Mobile Technology
- **SEND Policy and procedure.**
- **Educational Visits Policy.**
- **Child-on-Child Abuse Policy.**
- **Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (pupils) guidance.**
- **Medicines and Medical Policy**
- **Supporting children with medical needs and life-threatening illnesses.**
- **Attendance Policy**, including procedures for children missing in education.
- **Children missing on and off-site procedures.**
- **Complaints Procedure.**
- **Intimate and Invasive Care Practice guidance.**
- **Equality information and objective policy.**
- **Curriculum offer (inc. core and non-core).**
- **Relationships and Health Education (mainstream) Policy.**

At Tees Valley Education Multi Academy Trust, safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility**. Every adult in our schools is expected to act swiftly to protect children, whether from harm by adults or peers. Our policies, procedures, and culture work together to create safe, nurturing, and supportive learning environments across all TVED schools.

In every part of school life, our message is clear:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you are ever worried about a child, or about the behaviour of an adult, you must speak up.

* This policy will be reviewed annually or in light of any changes in legislation and/or guidance.

References:

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/22/section/ZA2> Children Act

1989/2004

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents> Data

Protection Act 2018

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted>

DfE Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Sept 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Multi Agency Children's Hub Early Help

[Early help information | Redcar and Cleveland Education](#)

Act 2002 Section 175

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/175

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made>

Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/en/ukpga/2021/16/enacted> Equality

Act 2010

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance> General

Data Protection Regulations, 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-toolkit-for-schools> Human

Rights Act, 1998

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights>

Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharingadvice>

Freedom of Information Act 2000

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/pdfs/ukpga_20000036_en.pdf Keeping Children Safe
in Education 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

After-school clubs, community activities and Tuition: Safeguarding Guidance for Providers –

[Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings: code of practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Non-

Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/728/made>

Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England

https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/16086/1/public_sector_equality_duty_guidance_for_schools_in_england_final.pdf

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents> Working

Together to Improve School Attendance

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) Sexual

Offences Act 2003

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>

South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership

[Homepage | South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership \(STSCP\)](#) What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf Working Together to Safeguard Children

HM GOV (2023) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> **Appendix 1 Links from KCSIE 2025**

Abuse or Safeguarding Issue	Link to Guidance/Advice	Source
Abuse	Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse - CSA Centre	CSA Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse has free evidencebased practice resources to help professionals working with children and young people to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of child sexual abuse.
	What to do if you're worried a child is being abused	DfE advice
	Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance	Home Office (HO)
	Faith based abuse: National Action Plan	DfE advice
	Forced marriage resource pack	

	Disrespect NoBody Campaign	Home Office website
	Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy	Home Office Policy Paper
	Together we can stop child sexual abuse	HM Government campaign
Bullying	Preventing bullying including cyberbullying	DfE advice
Children missing from education, home or care	Children missing education	DfE statutory guidance
	Children who run away or go missing from home or care	DfE statutory guidance
	Missing Children and Adults Strategy	Home Office strategy
Children with family members in prison	National Information Centre on Children of Offenders	Barnardo's in partnership with HM Prison and Probation Service

Child Exploitation	Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked -	DfE and HO guidance
	Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery	DfE statutory guidance
	Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims	HO statutory guidance
	Child exploitation disruption toolkit	Home Office guidance
	County Lines Toolkit For Professionals	The Children's Society in partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council

	Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm	Non-statutory guidance for local areas, developed by the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme, funded by the Department for Education and supported by the Home Office, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice
Confidentiality	Gillick competency Fraser guidelines	Guidelines to help with balancing children's rights along with safeguarding responsibilities.
Drugs	From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives	Home Office strategy
	Honest information about drugs	Talk to Frank website
	Drug and Alcohol education – teacher guidance & evidence review	PSHE Association website
(So-called) 'Honour' - Based Abuse" including FGM and forced marriage	Female genital mutilation: information and resources	Home Office guidance
	Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance	DfE, DH and HO statutory guidance

	Forced Marriage	Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) resources
	Forced Marriage	Government multi-agency practice guidelines and multiagency statutory guidance
	FGM Resource Pack	HM Government guidance

Health and Well-Being	Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience	Public Health England
	Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions	DfE statutory guidance
	Mental health and behaviour in schools	DfE advice
	Overview – Fabricated or induced illness	NHS
Homelessness	Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities guidance
Information Sharing	Government information sharing advice	Guidance on information sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.
	Information Commissioner's Office: Data sharing information hub	Information to help schools and colleges comply with UK data protection legislation including UK GDPR
Online safety advice	Childnet	Provides guidance for schools on cyberbullying
	Educateagainsthate	Provides practical advice and support on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation
	London Grid for Learning	Provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements
	NSPCC E-safety for schools	Provides advice, templates, and tools on all aspects of a

		school or college's online safety arrangements
	Safer recruitment consortium	'Guidance for safe working practice', which may help ensure staff behaviour policies are robust and effective

	Searching screening and confiscation	Departmental advice for schools on searching children and confiscating items such as mobile phones
	South West Grid for Learning	Provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements
	Use of social media for online radicalisation	A briefing note for schools on how social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq
	Online Safety Audit Tool	From UK Council for Internet Safety to help mentors of trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers induct mentees and provide ongoing support, development and monitoring
	Online safety guidance if you own or manage an online platform	DCMS advice
	A business guide for protecting children on your online platform	DCMS advice
	UK Safer Internet Centre	Provides tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online
Online Safety – Remote Education, Virtual Lessons & Live Streaming	Guidance Get help with remote education	Resources and support for teachers and school leaders on educating pupils and students
	Departmental guidance on safeguarding and remote education	Including planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely
	London Grid for Learning	Guidance, including platform specific advice
	National cyber security centre	Guidance on choosing, configuring and deploying video conferencing

	UK Safer Internet Centre	Guidance on safe remote learning
Online Safety – Support for Children	Childline	For free and confidential advice
	UK Safer Internet Centre	To report and remove harmful online content
	CEOP	For advice on making a report about online abuse
Online Safety – Parental Support	Childnet	Offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, and to find out where to get more help and support
	Commonsensemedia	Provides independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents
	Government advice	About protecting children from specific online harms such as child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying
	Internet Matters	Provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls, and practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
	How Can I Help My Child?	Marie Collins Foundation – Sexual abuse online
	London Grid for Learning	Provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
	Stopitnow	resource from The Lucy Faithfull Foundation – Can be used by parents and

		carers who are concerned about someone's behaviour, including children who may be displaying concerning sexual behaviour (not just about online)
	National Crime Agency/CEOP Thinkuknow	Provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
	Parentzone	Provides help for parents and carers on how to keep their children safe Online
	Talking to your child about online sexual harassment: A guide for parents	This is the Children's Commissioner's parental guide on talking to their children about online sexual Harassment
Private Fostering	Private fostering: local authorities	DfE statutory guidance
Radicalisation	Prevent duty guidance	Home Office guidance
	Prevent duty: additional advice for schools and childcare providers	DfE advice
	Educate Against Hate Website	DfE and Home Office advice
	Prevent for FE and Training	Education and Training Foundation (ETF)
	Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Resources	Resources by London Grid for Learning
	Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting	DfE Guidance
Serious Violence	Serious violence strategy	Home Office Strategy
	Factors linked to serious violence and how these factors can be used to identify individuals for intervention	Home Office
	Youth Endowment Fund	Home Office
	Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges	Home Office advice

	Tackling violence against women and girls strategy-	Home Office strategy
	Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims	Home Office guidance
Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment – Specialist Organisations	Barnardo's	UK charity caring for and supporting some of the most vulnerable children and young people through their range of services.
	Lucy Faithful Foundation	UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse. They work with families affected by sexual abuse and also run the confidential Stop it Now! Helpline.
	Marie Collins Foundation	Charity that, amongst other things, works directly with children, young people, and families to enable their recovery following sexual abuse
	NSPCC	Children's charity specialising in child protection with statutory powers enabling them to take action and safeguard children at risk of abuse
	Rape Crisis	National charity and the umbrella body for their network of independent member Rape Crisis Centres.
	UK Safer Internet Centre	Provides advice and support to children, young people, parents, carers and schools about staying safe online.
Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Rape Crisis (England & Wales) or The Survivors Trust	For information, advice, and details of local specialist sexual violence organisations.

	NICE guidance	Contains information on, amongst other things: developing interventions; working with families and carers; and multiagency working
	HSB toolkit Shorespace	The Lucy Faithfull Foundation – designed for parents, carers, family members and professionals, to help everyone play their part in keeping children safe. It has links to useful information, resources, and support as well as practical tips to prevent harmful sexual behaviour and provide safe environments for families. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation also run shorespace.org.uk which provides a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support to prevent harmful sexual behaviours
	NSPCC Learning: Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour and NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework-	Free and independent advice about HSB.
	Contextual Safeguarding Network – Beyond Referrals (Schools)	Provides a school self assessment toolkit and guidance for addressing HSB in schools
	Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children - Stop It Now	Provides a guide for parents, carers and professionals to help everyone do their part in keeping children safe, they also run a free confidential helpline.

Support for Victims	Anti-Bullying Alliance	Detailed information for anyone being bullied, along with advice for parents and schools. Signposts to various helplines and websites for further support.
----------------------------	--	--

	Rape Crisis	Provides and signposts to a range of services to support people who have experienced rape, child abuse or any kind of sexual violence.
	The Survivors Trust	UK-wide national umbrella agency with resources and support dedicated to survivors of rape, sexual violence and child sex abuse.
	Victim Support	Supporting children and young people who have been affected by crime. Also provides support to parents and professionals who work with children and young people – regardless of whether a crime has been reported or how long ago it was.
	Childline	Provides free and confidential advice for children and young people.
Toolkits	NSPCC Online self-assessment tool	Online Self-assessment tool to ensure organisations are doing everything they can to safeguard children.
	NSPCC -	Resources which help adults respond to children disclosing abuse.
	NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework	NSPCC also provide free and independent advice about HSB

	Safeguarding Unit, Farrer and Co. and Carlene Firmin, MBE, University of Bedfordshire.	Peer-on-Peer Abuse toolkit provides practical guidance for schools on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to peer-on-peer abuse.
	Contextual Safeguarding Network	Self-assessment toolkit for schools to assess their own response to HSB and levers for addressing HSB in schools.
	Childnet - STAR SEND Toolkit	Equips, enables and empowers educators with the knowledge to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
	Childnet - Just a joke?	Provides lesson plans, activities, a quiz and teaching guide designed to explore problematic online sexual behaviour with 912 year olds.
	Childnet - Step Up, Speak Up	A practical campaign toolkit that addresses the issue of online sexual harassment amongst young people aged 13-17 years old.
	NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework	An evidence-informed framework for children and young people displaying HSB.
	Addressing child on child abuse: a resource for schools and colleges – Farrer & Co	This resource provides practical guidance for schools and colleges on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to child-on-child abuse.
Sharing Nudes & Semi-Nudes	London Grid for Learning collection of advice	Various information and resources dealing with the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

	UKCIS Sharing nudes and seminudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people	Advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
Support for Parents/Carers	National Crime Agency's CEOP CEOP Education Programme	Provides information for parents and carers to help protect their child from online child sexual abuse, including #AskTheAwkward - help to talk with your children about online relationships (thinkuknow.co.uk) – Guidance on how to talk to their children about online relationships

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy Addendum

(to be read alongside the Child Protection Policy)

Introduction

Although this addendum has been written as a Trust-wide policy for Tees Valley Education (TVED), it applies specifically to **Discovery Special Academy**. It should therefore be read in conjunction with the academy's Child Protection Policy and other safeguarding documents that are tailored to the school context.

At **Discovery Special Academy**, safeguarding is the golden thread that runs through everything we do. This Child-on-Child Abuse Policy Addendum provides detail on how our school prevents, identifies, and responds to incidents where children may harm one another.

We recognise that abuse can be perpetrated not only by adults but also by peers, and that it can occur in person, online, at home, within the community, or in school. As a Trust, we adopt a zero-tolerance approach: all forms of child-on-child abuse are unacceptable and will always be taken seriously.

We are committed to ensuring that all children feel safe, valued, and respected, and that they understand their right to protection from harm. Staff across the Trust are trained to recognise the signs of child-on-child abuse, to challenge inappropriate behaviours, and to support children with sensitivity and care when concerns arise.

Purpose and Aim

The aim of this policy addendum is to provide clarity and consistency across TVED and for **Discovery Special Academy**, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). It ensures that:

All incidents of child-on-child abuse are recognised and acted upon quickly. •

Responses are consistent across all schools within the Trust.

- Victims are always supported, and alleged perpetrators are also safeguarded while enquiries take place.
- Staff, pupils, and parents understand that safeguarding children from peer abuse is part of our wider protective culture.

Our overarching purpose is to ensure that no child is left feeling unsafe or unheard, and that our whole community works together to create environments where children can thrive without fear of harm from their peers.

Forms of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse can manifest in many ways. Staff must be aware that it includes, but is not limited to:

- Bullying (including prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying)
- Cyberbullying and online abuse, including sextortion, harmful online challenges or trends, and the non-consensual sharing of images
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment (both online and offline)
- Upskirting and image-based abuse
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, or causing injury
- Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals
- Coercion, exploitation, or blackmail by peers
- Emotional or psychological harm, such as humiliation, exclusion, or controlling behaviours

We acknowledge that some children may not identify themselves as victims or may not wish to disclose abuse. Staff must remain vigilant and proactive in recognising patterns of behaviour or signs of distress.

Shared Principles Across TVED

Across the Trust, all schools commit to a unified approach built on five key principles:

1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – every adult, regardless of role, has a duty to protect children.
2. Consistency across schools – procedures are standardised across TVED, ensuring that all children experience the same level of protection.
3. Proactive prevention – abuse is addressed not only through intervention but by fostering safe, respectful cultures through curriculum, assemblies, and pastoral systems.
4. Sensitivity and fairness – disclosures are always handled with care, ensuring children are listened to, believed, and supported.
5. Collaboration – schools work with parents, carers, external agencies, and one another to provide wraparound support.

Responsibilities of the Workforce

Every member of staff and volunteer across TVED has a duty to:

- Recognise and respond to all concerns, never dismissing behaviour as “banter” or “just part of growing up.”
 - Record accurately using CPOMS (or equivalent) promptly and factually.
 - Model respectful behaviour and challenge harmful or inappropriate language and actions.
 - Promote safe disclosure by being approachable and clearly signposting safe adults to children.
 - Act without delay if a child is at immediate risk, including contacting police or social care.
 - Engage in training and keep safeguarding knowledge up to date.
- Collaborate across the Trust, sharing lessons learned to strengthen collective practice.

•

Support for Victims and Alleged Perpetrators

Our response is guided by a child-centred approach: • Victims are always reassured, supported, and never made to feel at fault.

- Alleged perpetrators are also safeguarded, with recognition that they may have experienced harm themselves.
- Safety plans and risk assessments are developed for all children involved.
- SENCOs and pastoral teams are consulted to ensure support is inclusive and meets individual needs.
- Parents and carers are involved wherever it is appropriate and safe to do so.

Recording, Reporting and Escalation

- All concerns must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.
- DSLs analyse records to identify patterns across individuals, groups, and contexts.
- Where thresholds are met, referrals are made to children's social care, the police, or other agencies without delay.
- TVED reviews records at school and Trust level to monitor safeguarding trends and improve practice.

Training and Development for the Workforce

Safeguarding children from child-on-child abuse requires confidence and consistency across all schools. Therefore:

- Induction training includes clear guidance on child-on-child abuse and reporting.
- Annual updates and scenario-based training ensure ongoing vigilance.
- Half-termly DSL network meetings provide opportunities to share case studies and best practice across the Trust.
- Regular Safeguarding Bulletins keep all staff up to date with local risks, online threats, and changes in statutory guidance.

Whole-Academy and Trust-Wide Preventative Strategies

TVED recognises that prevention is more effective than reaction. Our strategies include:

- Curriculum integration – RSHE, computing, and PSHE explicitly teach about consent, respect, equality, diversity, and online safety.
Pupil voice – children are consulted through surveys, school councils, and safeguarding forums, ensuring their experiences shape practice.

-
- Parent engagement – families are supported through workshops, newsletters, and direct communication to help them identify risks.
- Pastoral support – robust systems in every school provide early help and targeted intervention for vulnerable pupils.
- Trust collaboration – joint campaigns, shared resources, and collective safeguarding reviews strengthen practice across all schools.

Key Reminders for All Staff

- Abuse is abuse. Do not minimise or excuse harmful behaviours.
- Staff are never “off duty” – vigilance is required in all contexts, from classrooms to playgrounds to online spaces.
- Every incident must be taken seriously, properly investigated, and followed through to resolution.
- Always act in the best interests of the child.

Review and Accountability

This addendum is reviewed annually alongside the Child Protection Policy, and earlier if statutory guidance or local safeguarding context changes.

Safeguarding is not only a policy within Tees Valley Education – it is a culture lived and modelled by every member of the workforce. Together, we ensure that every child feels safe, respected, and able to thrive across all our schools.