

Policy Title:	Schools Child Protection Policy and Procedures			
Policy Code:	OPSP09			
Applies to:	All Staff			
Date Reviewed:	July 2025			
Next Update Due:	September 2026			
Policy Lead:	Mary Aurens – Head of Safeguarding			
Policy Sponsor:	Richard Wilkins – Chief Operating Officer			
Cross Reference:	OPSP03	Allegations against staff policy		
	OPSP04	Anti-Bullying policy		
	OPSP06	Attendance policy		
	OPSP07	Behaviour policy		
	OPP04	Code of Conduct		
	DPP05	Data Protection and BYOD Policy		
	SGP03	Low Level Concerns policy		
	ITP03	Online Safety		
	HRP18	Recruitment and Selection Policy		
	OPSG04	School Policy on the Education of Looked After Children		
	CLP03	Self-Harm and Suicide Intent Policy and Guidance		
Outcome:	This policy: - To ensure that all staff are aware of the school’s child protection procedures - To ensure that all children are safeguarded and protected from harm - To ensure that all referrals where there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children are made in a timely and robust manner - To ensure that concerns about children are identified at the earliest opportunity and are acted upon			
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT Witherslack Group is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.				
ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, GOVERNANCE (ESG) STATEMENT Witherslack Group is committed to responsible business practices in the areas of: Environmental Stewardship, Social Responsibility, Governance, Ethics & Compliance. An ESG impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure it can be implemented successfully without adverse implications on our Group goals.				
To ensure that this policy is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, please email the named policy lead.				

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1. **PART ONE: POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES**

1.1 **Introduction:**

Witherslack Group is committed to the safety and protection of all children and young people living in or attending our establishments. We strive to ensure the provision of a safe and caring environment in which children and young people can develop educationally, socially and emotionally, safe from fear and free from harm.

This policy is one of a series in Witherslack Group’s integrated safeguarding portfolio. This includes policies for child protection, staff code of conduct, recruitment and selection, managing allegations against staff, low level concerns, complaints and representations, positive behaviour support, data protection and online safety.

Every member of staff within Witherslack Group has a shared responsibility for safeguarding; however, there are specific roles in relation to safeguarding that all staff should be aware of. A member of Witherslack Group Senior Leadership Team has specific responsibility for safeguarding across Witherslack Group. The Director and Safeguarding Lead with this responsibility is Richard Wilkins and Head of Safeguarding, Mary Aurens, supports this role. Together they have responsibility for ensuring that Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and procedures across the group are robust and consistently applied.

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At our school, safeguarding permeates *all* aspects of the school life and is everyone's responsibility, the school forms part of a wider safeguarding system. In order to fulfil our responsibilities, we adopt a child-centred approach. This means that:

- Safeguarding systems and procedures are oriented around the wishes, feelings and best interests of children.
- We seek to give children a 'voice', listen to what they say, take them seriously and work collaboratively in order to meet their needs.

Our school aims to provide a positive, stimulating, caring and safe environment, which promotes the social, physical, emotional and moral development of each child. We work hard to maintain a safeguarding ethos and culture whereby children feel safe and are safe whilst at school, and on their way to and from the school. This policy applies to everyone in our school, and it should be read and understood alongside the following School/Witherslack Group policies:

- Managing Allegations against staff
- Low Level Concerns policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- School Policy on the Education of Looked After Children
- Online Safety
- Staff Recruitment and Selection
- Behaviour policy
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Whistleblowing
- Code of Conduct
-

1.2 Definitions:

Child(ren) means everyone under the age of 18. Statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) defines **safeguarding and promoting welfare** as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development Staff teams

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- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Therefore, 'safeguarding' includes but is about much more than 'child protection'. However, all staff are aware of the school's collective responsibility to act in order to **protect** children from various potential sources and types of harm:

- Physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.
- Bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying.
- Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse.
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour.
- Child sexual exploitation.
- Criminal exploitation.
- Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking.
- Gang involvement and youth violence.
- The impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour, for example sharing nudes and semi-nudes.
- Substance misuse.
- Domestic abuse.
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, breast ironing / flattening.
- Perplexing Presentations (PP)/Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)
- Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children.

1.3 Named staff with specific responsibility for Child Protection:

Academic Year	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (s)
2025-2026	Hannah Rowe	Josef Ardley

Training for Designated Staff in the school (DSLs should refresh their training every 2 years (KCSiE 2025))

Name of Staff Member	Date when last attended DSL Training	Provided by Whom
Hannah Rowe	23.9.25	
Josef Ardley	3.3.26	Mary Auren

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1.4 Framework Underpinning this Policy:

This policy and procedures have been written and will be implemented in-line with the safeguarding and child protection procedures established by Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership: <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/>

It is also written in accordance with legislation established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Education Act 2002, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003, and other core legislation and guidance [See References]

1.5 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities:

school staff have no investigative role where child protection is concerned; this is a matter for children's social care and the police. However, schools do have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and all staff, including volunteers, have a responsibility to act to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

Some people have specific and / or additional safeguarding responsibilities:

a) The Proprietary Board

The Proprietors and Board of Directors take seriously their responsibility under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and section 157 of the Education Act 2002. The proprietors monitor compliance with statutory requirements and identify areas for improvement. At least annually, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will prepare a safeguarding report to be tabled at a full school board meeting. Discussions will be recorded and any agreed and/or remedial action(s) documented and followed-through, formally and immediately.

The Chair of the school board is:

Matthew Carbutt

The Nominated / Link Safeguarding school board member is:

Patricia Wilson

b) The Head

- The Head will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Proprietors and Board of Directors, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- Act as a strategic conduit between the DSLs, the Proprietors and Board of Directors and Witherslack Group on safeguarding matters.
- Be the case manager and liaise with the LA designated officer (LADO) in the event of allegations of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Where a member of staff conducts or behaviour does not meet threshold of an allegation or is not in accordance with the Guidance for Safer Working Practice or Staff Code of Conduct, to manage the process in line with the Low-Level Concern policy
- Ensure that a senior member of staff from the leadership team is appointed as the DSL in the school and that there is always cover for this role.
- Ensure that the DSL's access appropriate training which is regularly updated in-line with statutory and the Local Safeguarding Partnership guidance.
- Ensure that sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities. Refer cases to the DBS where an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or resigns, or the employer ceases to use their person's services - this is a legal

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join and leave our school (this includes written acknowledgement of receipt from receiving schools/professionals).

- Consider and where appropriate, share information with the receiving school or college in advance to the child attending to enable support to be in place when the child arrives at the new setting.
- Ensure that they understand the unique risks associated with online safety and have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at the school. They also recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff
- Act as a point of contact with the Safeguarding Partnership

The DSL and DDSL's in our school will work as a team, the DSL will delegate to a suitably trained deputy and will hold weekly team meetings. As part of this meeting, the DSL will delegate duty for each day of the week and this means that on duty day, the DSL or DDSL on duty will be the point of contact for all staff in relation to any safeguarding concerns and will pick that concern up and manage it in accordance with this policy and the local safeguarding partnership procedures.

As part of the weekly team meeting, half termly reviews will be undertaken in line with the half termly review practice guidance available in the shared drive.

Meetings the DSL would attend

Our DSL will attend and contribute to all multi-agency meetings convened by statutory organisations, whether this is Children's Social Care, the police, health or YOT. They will ensure where required under the Safeguarding Partnership procedures that they compile and produce a written report that is in accordance with the Safeguarding Partnership procedures. Examples of such meetings would be [*this list is not exhaustive*].

- Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)
- Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC)
- Core Group
- Strategy meetings
- Planning Meetings
- Care Planning Meeting
- Child in Need
- Complex Abuse Meetings

Any meetings attended will be recorded as a meeting via the add event tab on safeguarding database within TWO working days of the meeting occurring. Meetings notes will be taken using the WG notes of a meeting pro forma and be uploaded as an attached document

1.6 Sources of Support:

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Sara Roe	Operations Director	Sara.Roe@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Patricia Wilson	Regional Director (Education)	Patricia.Wilson@witherslackgroup.co.uk
The Front Door	LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership

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FOR SUPPLY STAFF ONLY

This form is not to be used for allegations against staff.		
PART 1: INTERNAL NOTIFICATION of CP/WELFARE CONCERN TO THE DSL		
DATE and TIME of CONCERN	date	time
Name(s) of child/young person		
D.O.B.		
What is the nature of your concern		
To consider: • What is the nature of your concern • How did this come about • Where is this said to have taken place • When did it happen • Who is involved MAKE SURE THAT YOU INCLUDE THE WISHES & FEELINGS OF THE CHILD IN THE RECORD i.e. how do you feel now, what do you want to happen?		
Details		
WG SG Reference no: For DSL use only		

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CONTINUATION SHEET ATTACHED Y/N			
Note: - Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation and stick to the facts as you understand them wherever possible! - if you have used quotes please ensure that they are accurate - make a note of any open questions asked or minimal prompts used - Any notes made 'at the time' should be attached to this pro-forma; these may be required as evidence if the matter goes to court Attach a body map if relevant			
Signed			
Name (print)		Job title	
Received by the DSL			
Signed			
Name			
Date		Time	

- ☐ Does/could the suspected harm meet the Local Safeguarding Partnership definitions of abuse?
- ☐ Are there cultural, linguistic or disability issues?
- ☐ I am wrongly attributing something to impairment.
- ☐ Does the chronology indicate any possible patterns which could/do impact upon the level of risk?
- ☐ Are any injuries or incidents acute, cumulative, episodic?
- ☐ Did any injuries result from spontaneous action, neglect, or intent?
- ☐ Explanations consistent with injuries/behaviour?
- ☐ Severity and duration of any harm?
- ☐ Impacts on the child's health/development?
- ☐ Immediate/longer term effects?
- ☐ Likelihood of recurrence?
- ☐ Child's reaction?
- ☐ Child's perception of the harm?
- ☐ Child's needs wishes and feelings?
- ☐ Parent's/carer's attitudes/response to concerns?
- ☐ How willing are they to cooperate?
- ☐ What does the child mean to the family?
- ☐ What role does the child play?
- ☐ Possible effects of intervention?
- ☐ Protective factors and strengths of/for child (i.e. resilience/vulnerability)
- ☐ Familial strengths and weaknesses?
- ☐ Possibilities?
- ☐ Probabilities?
- ☐ When and how is the child at risk?
- ☐ How imminent is any likely risk?
- ☐ How grave are the possible consequences?
- ☐ How safe is this child?
- ☐ What are the risk assessment options?
- ☐ What are the risk management options?
- ☐ What is the interim plan?

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