

James Rennie School

Appendix to Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Effective Date: September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

Key Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Kerry Dunbobbin kerry@jamesrennie.cumbria.sch.uk 01228 554280

Deputy DSL(s):

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Statutory? Y

Contents

Safeguarding Procedures.....	2
Information about the school.....	5
Curriculum.....	5
Esafety and Mobile Devices.....	6

Safeguarding Procedure

A flow chart is attached at the end of this document that outlines the procedures staff should follow when they have safeguarding concerns.

If staff notice any indicators of abuse/neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue they should record these concerns on a cause for concern form through the CPOMS safeguarding software and submit it to the DSL. They may also discuss their concerns in person with the DSL, but the details of the concern should also be recorded through CPOMS. This should be factual, objective and not place subjective views on the record, these records could be used in legal procedures and must be treated in as such. All staff will be given training and appropriate log ins as part of induction.

If, for any reason, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. The safeguarding flow chart contains alternative Eden Academy Trust members of staff who can be contacted in these circumstances. In emergencies contact the LSCB, ASB or police using the numbers on the safeguarding flowchart.

If a member of staff has a concern about the conduct of another member of staff, they should inform the Head Teacher or one of the DSLs if the Head is unavailable. This includes any concerns regarding the behaviour of agency staff or volunteers.

All concerns forms and safeguarding information is kept on the CPOMS system and this information is only accessible to DSLs. From time to time the DSL may be asked to share concern forms with statutory bodies. All information shared must be in compliance with GDPR 2016.

When and what to report

If staff notice any indicators of abuse/neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue they should record these concerns on an electronic cause for concern form and submit it to the DSL. They should speak to a DSL in person without delay if they believe that a child is in danger of significant imminent harm. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process. If staff have a concern, they should act on it. They should not assume a colleague, or another professional will act.

Staff should also be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification,

assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision. Staff should not assume that other professionals will share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed. Staff should recognise that the signs may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill, or an accident has occurred. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or needs additional safeguarding action. In these circumstances staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the electronic cause for concern form to record these early concerns. If the pupil begins to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below regarding a pupil making a disclosure. If, for any reason, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible

Pupil disclosure to a member of staff

We recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty, or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse. A child who makes a disclosure may have to tell their story on several subsequent occasions to the police and/or social workers. Therefore, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one. During their conversation with the pupil staff will;

- listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overact or act shocked or disgusted – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener
- reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how difficult it is for the pupil and allow them time to talk
- take what the child is disclosing seriously
- ask open questions and avoid asking leading questions
- avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child

who is being abused.

- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing sooner. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about it when it started' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong.
- tell the child what will happen next. If a pupil talks to any member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing the staff member will let the child know that they will have to pass the information on – staff are not allowed to keep secrets.

The member of staff should write up their conversation as soon as possible on an electronic cause for concern form in the child's own words. Staff should make this a matter of priority. It should also detail where the disclosure was made and who else was present.

Notifying parents

Schools will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion, or disclosure. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care.

Where there are concerns about forced marriage or so-called honour-based violence parents should not be informed a referral is being made as to do so may place the child at a significantly increased risk. Eden Academy Trust – Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 4 Reporting system for pupils

Schools will ensure pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations. The system that the school has in place to for pupils to report abuse is: CPOMS Making a referral Concerns about a child or a disclosure should be discussed with the DSL who will help decide whether a referral to children's social care, early help or other support is appropriate in accordance with local safeguarding partners' thresholds. If a referral is needed, then the DSL should make it. However, anyone can make a referral and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one hasn't been made, they can and should consider making a referral themselves.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving the designated safeguarding lead (or the person that made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed, and most importantly the child's situation improves. If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. Anybody can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

Supporting staff

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has

suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSLs and to seek further support as appropriate.

Low level concerns

The Headteacher will manage Low level concerns and all concerns should be reported to the Headteacher who will determine if these concerns are at the threshold for a low-level concern or need to be escalated. Having one recipient of all such concerns should allow any potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic, or concerning behaviour to be identified, and ensure that no information is possibly lost.

Information about the school

James Rennie is a school for pupils aged 3-19 who have severe or profound learning needs and live in the North of Cumbria. Over the last few years the School has had a significant increase in population of young people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and relatively more complex education and health needs. The school expanded onto a new site in the Autumn Term of 2023 for our Post 16 students-St Edmund's Sixth Form. This guidance is applicable to both sites

Our pupils have complex learning needs, some have complex communication needs, and some have fixed mind-sets making it difficult for others to understand their view of the world, and for them to understand others view of the world. This means that they may not be able to tell others if they are worried, scared or something has happened. This makes them more vulnerable to manipulation and being coerced, and they may also have trouble understanding if they themselves are manipulating or coercing, and why this is wrong.

Our pupils' sphere of understanding can be limited or restricted to their own personal experience, so understanding socially acceptable norms is not always possible. Because of this we must be hyper aware that our pupils rely on much more than their peers in mainstream education to protect and teach and them.

For those who do work with our young people there is a danger that signs of safeguarding issues are put down to the individuals learning needs, e.g. being withdrawn, poor communication, being tired etc. It is up to us to advocate for our young people and explain their and our concerns to ensure they are heard.

Curriculum

Staff should be guided when thinking about our young people's learning what do they need to learn and how do they learn, this needs to be relevant to their ability, communication skills, age, conditions or disabilities. Reference should be made to our curriculum document and an annual view taken on their needs when planning. For example, we must not presume that because a young

person learnt something in year 9, they understand it in year 10.

Appropriate thought should be given to all young people's learning needs and mind-sets; this can be particularly pertinent for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC).

We should also be mindful that just because we have taught something, it does not mean it has been learnt and revisiting on an annual, termly, monthly or even daily basis maybe needed. Staff should not just teach safety in lessons but also at any time it is relevant to the young person. Many pupils, especially those with ASC, can have difficulty with the application and transference of knowledge and skills and it may appropriate for pupils to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) target to focus on a particular area, reviewed on a termly basis.

Esafety

The Eden Academy Trust has an IT and Online Safety policy, which explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and how we respond to online safety incidents.

Pupils are taught about online safety throughout the curriculum at a level appropriate to their age and level of cognitive ability, and all staff receive online safety training which is regularly updated. We also routinely filter our services for inappropriate content.

At James Rennie School, we acknowledge that just filtering websites for our whole school including YouTube, Facebook etc. is not appropriate as the web and social media can be wonderful and inclusive. Furthermore, when our pupils go home or use their mobile phones, they may well have access to these services which could be filtered. Therefore, we need to teach our pupils how to be safe online by actually being on-line and using the sites. As a school we will also be aware of mobile technology evolving. Any device that can record video, photos or sound which can subsequently be transmitted should be viewed in the same as a mobile phone (including smart watches). As a school we work closely with our IT providers (Gemini) to ensure that appropriate Filtering and Monitoring processes are in place and all staff know that they need to report inappropriate content or anything of concern. We have recently started using Senso to ensure we have robust Filtering and Monitoring systems in place

Appropriate access; will be decided on a pupil by pupil basis. Those who can access services safely and independently will be granted appropriate access via a James Rennie on-line licence which can be revoked at any time.

Mobile devices

Staff may bring mobile devices to work, however, staff are not permitted to use their mobile phones during the school day, and these should be placed on silent and kept in a locked cupboard. Staff must not use personal devices to take photographs of pupils.

Date of next review: September 2026

Signed on behalf of the trustees: A Sanders