Safeguarding, Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

This policy will be reviewed <u>at least</u> once a year and/or if there are any updates made to guidance.

Key Contacts

	Name	Contact information
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	**Emily Hollis MBE**	emily.hollis@elmleydrayschool.co.uk safeguarding@elmleydrayschool.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	**Gemma Connolly**	gemma.connolly@elmleydrayschool.co.uk safeguarding@elmleydrayschool.co.uk
	Sian Bailey	sian.bailey@elmleydrayschool.co.uk safeguarding@elmleydrayschool.co.uk
	Hayley Furnell	hayley.furnell@elmleydrayschool.co.uk safeguarding@elmleydrayschool.co.uk
NSPCC	**NSPCC**	Under 18's - 0800 1111 https://www.nspcc.org.uk/ 0808 800 5000 (11am–5pm Monday to Friday) help@NSPCC.org.uk.

Remember: If you are worried, tell a member of staff or email safeguarding@elmleydrayschool.co.uk

Introduction

- Elmley Dray School knows that it is our responsibility to safeguard all children and young people in our care and keep them safe.

- Safeguarding is every member of staff's responsibility.

- Elmley Dray School believes that the best interests of children and young people always come first. All children and young people (defined as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and all children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity or orientation, have equal rights to protection.

- Elmley Dray School wants to make an environment that will help children to be safe and to feel safe. In our school children and young people are respected and are encouraged to talk openly.

- Our core safeguarding principles are:
  - o **Prevention**: positive, supportive, safe culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children, safer recruitment procedures.
  - o **Protection**: following the agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns.
  - o **Support**: for all children and young people, parents and staff, and where appropriate specific interventions are required for those who may be at risk of harm.
  - o **Collaborating with parents and other agencies**: to ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.

Definition of safeguarding

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in this policy, is defined as:
  - o providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
  - o protecting children from being mistreated, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
  - o preventing harm to children's mental and physical health or development.
  - o ensuring that children grow up in with safe and effective care.
  - o taking action to make sure all children have the best outcomes.

- **Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

- **Abuse** is a type of harm to a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

- **Neglect** is a form of abuse and is 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.

- **Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

- **Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

- **Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

- **Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

Policy updates and review

- Elmley Dray School will review this policy at least once a year and will update it as needed.

- All staff will complete yearly safeguarding training to make sure they know the rules and any updates to make sure they can help to keep you safe.

Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- o   Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions
- o   Are young carers
- o   May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- o   Have English as an additional language (EAL)

o Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
o Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
o Are asylum seekers
o Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
o Are looked after or previously looked after
o Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
o Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

The Governing Board (PAT) and Leadership

The **governing board (PAT)** will:

● Make sure that there is a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection is the most important thing in everything we do.

● Check and approve this policy at each review.

● Make sure all staff do safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety.
●
● Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering on the internet to protect you from inappropriate content.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

● The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Emily Hollis MBE, Headteacher. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school. This includes online safety and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.

● During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Out of school hours, the DSL can be contacted via email.

● When the DSL is absent, the Deputy DSLs, Gemma Connolly, Deputy Headteacher and Sian Bailey, SENDCo, will act as cover.

Children and young people

● Children and young people have a right to:

o Feel safe, be listened to, and have their wishes and feelings taken into account.

o Confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.
o Contribute to the development of Elmley Dray School safeguarding policies.
o Receive help from a trusted adult.
o Learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Parents and carers

- Parents/carers have a responsibility to:

  o Understand and adhere to the relevant Elmley Dray School policies and procedures.
  o Talk to their children about safeguarding issues and support Elmley Dray School in their safeguarding approaches.
  o Identify behaviours which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm including online.
  o Seek help and support from Elmley Dray School or other agencies.

Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

- We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

- We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

- Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school's behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:
  o Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
  o Could put pupils in the school at risk
  o Is violent
  o Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
  o Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

- We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- o Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images

- o Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys

- o Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent

- o Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems

- o Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously

- o Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners

- o Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed

- o Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment

- o Ensure staff are trained to understand:

    - ☐ How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports

    - ☐ That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"

    - ☐ That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:

        - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to

        - A friend may make a report

        - A member of staff may overhear a conversation

        - A child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong

    - ☐ That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them

    - ☐ That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation

- That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
- That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes ('sexting')

- Elmley Dray School's approach is based on guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety for all staff and for DSLs and senior leaders.

Curriculum
- Students are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our relationships and sex education and PSHE programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:
  o What it is
  o How it is most likely to be encountered
  o The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
  o Issues of legality
  o The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

- Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:
  o Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
  o Reiving of of such images

- This policy on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

- Teaching follows best practice in delivering safe and effective education, including:
  o Putting safeguarding first
  o Approaching from the perspective of the child
  o Promoting dialogue and understanding
  o Empowering and enabling children and young people
  o Never frightening or scare-mongering
  o Challenging victim-blaming attitudes

Reporting systems for our learners

- Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

- We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

- To achieve this, we will:

  - Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse

  - Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils

  - Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback

  - Inform pupils of our reporting systems and processes, through our relationships and sex education, and PSHE curriculum, ensuring they are aware of who the safeguarding team are and where they can go for support

  - Provide reassurance following disclosures to ensure pupils feel safe in submitting any concerns

All staff are aware they cannot promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child.

Online Safety

- Online safety is a very important part of safeguarding. We will ensure you are taught about keeping yourself safe online and there is also a display board which gives you tips and information.

- Our internet is filtered to prevent you accessing or being exposed to unwanted images or content.

Safer working

- All members of staff are have to work to clear guidelines on safer working practice as outlined in their staff code of conduct.

- The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers have read the organisation's safeguarding policy and are aware of the school's expectations regarding safe and professional practice.

- Staff will all be DBS checked to ensure they are safe to work with you.

Version control - Approval and review

Version No.	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Change	Review Period
1	Hayley Furnell	October 2024	Initial policy approved	Annually
2	Hayley Furnell	August 2025	Annual review in line with KCSIE 2025 Change to DDSL	Annually
2.1	Hayley Furnell	December 2025	Updated to include additional DDSL	Annually

Hayley Furnell, Director,
on behalf of Elmley Dray School
Dated: December 2025
Next review: August 2026