



Classroom Safeguarding Procedures for Academies within The Forge Trust

2025-26

At The Forge Trust, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers, and visitors must report any concerns about a child's welfare, safety, or behaviour **immediately**. We follow clear procedures for reporting, recording, and escalating concerns in line with statutory guidance and local protocols.

1. Immediate Response to a Disclosure

If a child, parent, or carer shares a concern or discloses abuse:

- **Listen calmly and attentively**, allowing them to speak freely.
 - **Use open-ended questions** (e.g., "Can you tell me what happened?").
 - **Avoid leading or investigative questions.**
 - **Reassure them** that they are being taken seriously and will be supported.
 - **Do not promise confidentiality** — explain that you must share the information to keep them safe.
 - **Avoid physical comfort gestures** unless clearly appropriate.
 - **Do not ask the child to write a statement or sign your notes.**
 - **Record the child's exact words** and any wishes or feelings expressed.
 - **Report verbally to the DSL** and **write up the conversation as soon as possible.**
- Where possible**, manage disclosures with **two staff present**, ideally including the DSL or Deputy DSL.

FGM Mandatory Reporting:

In known cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), **teachers must report directly to the police via 101 by the end of the next working day**, in addition to informing the DSL.

2. Reporting Procedures

Staff must:

- **Report concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible**, (in person/ phone-call) and **during the school day**.
- If the DSL is unavailable, **report to the most senior person on site** and ensure the DSL is informed later.
- In emergencies, **call 999** or **make a direct referral to Nottinghamshire MASH — anyone can make a referral.**
- **Do not delay reporting due to uncertainty** — if unsure, speak to the DSL.
- **Do not view, copy, or share images** in cases involving nudes/semi-nudes.
- **Share information only on a need-to-know basis.**
- **Report concerns about staff** (including supply staff and volunteers) to the **Principal**, or to the **Chair of Trustees** if the concern is about the Principal.

Examples of concerns include:

- Signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or radicalisation
- Child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, or harassment
- Domestic abuse, forced marriage, FGM, or honour-based abuse
- Online abuse or inappropriate adult communication
- Private fostering arrangements
- Changes in behaviour, attendance, or presentation
- A person who may pose a risk to children living in the same household

3. Recording and Escalation Protocols

All concerns, decisions, and actions must be recorded:

- **Record immediately**, and **by the end of the same working day.**
- Use the **school's secure safeguarding system.**
- Include **date, time, context**, and **direct quotes or observations.**
- Record **facts, not assumptions**, and include your **full name and role.**
- Note **non-verbal behaviour** and **physical indicators** (e.g., "bruise on right arm above elbow").

General signs of abuse in children

- Regularly experiencing nightmares or sleeping problems.
- Changes in personality.
- Outbursts of anger.
- Changes in eating habits.
- Showing an inexplicable fear of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people.
- Self-harming (includes head banging, scratching, cutting).
- Not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries.
- Showing violence to animals, toys, peers or adults.
- Knowledge of "adult issues" e.g. alcohol, drugs, sexual behaviour.
- Lacking in confidence or often wary/anxious.
- Regressing to the behaviour of younger children.
- Regular flinching in response to sudden but harmless actions, e.g. someone raising a hand quickly.

Signs of Neglect

Some of the most obvious signs of neglect (e.g. children being thin, dirty or not wearing a coat) are not in themselves indicators of abuse. However, if, over time, it is clear that a child is not receiving an adequate level of care and supervision appropriate to their age, it may indicate that the child is being neglected.

The following are general and age-specific signs of neglect:

- Medical needs are not being met: not being registered with a G.P; not being taken to the dentist despite having obvious dental problems; failing to ensure that the school has a child's medication, e.g. asthma inhalers.
- Not taking the child to see a doctor when they are ill or have been injured.

Infancy to pre-school:

- Frequent and untreated nappy rash.
- Child has numerous accidental injuries and the explanations given suggest a lack of supervision.
- Immunisations are not up to date.
- Child is significantly underweight, but eats well when observed.

Middle childhood:

- Child has poor school attendance and punctuality and is often picked up late at the end of the day.
- A child is frequently tired at school due to a lack of routine at home (e.g. regular bedtimes).
- Parents are unsupportive and uninterested in the child's education or behaviour.
- A child frequently appears to be hungry and does not have a packed lunch or money to buy food.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

It is important to remember that some children are naturally open and affectionate, whilst others are more self-contained. Children also develop at different rates from one another and some may be slightly more or less advanced than other children in their age group. Mood swings and challenging behaviour are also a normal part of growing up. Be alert to behaviours which appear out of character for the individual child. The following are signs of sexual abuse.

- Talking about sexual acts or using sexually explicit language.
- Having sexual contact with other children.
- Using toys or other objects in a sexual way.
- Becoming withdrawn or very clingy.
- Physical signs such as anal or vaginal soreness or an unusual discharge.
- Masturbating in public.
- Showing adult-like sexual behaviour or knowledge.
- Inappropriate knowledge of adult matters such as sex, alcohol and drugs.
- Displays a lack of attachment towards known adult.
- Over affectionate towards adults they haven't known very long.
- Regularly experiencing sleep difficulties or nightmares.
- Frequently soils the bed.
- Extreme emotional outbursts which are out of character.

Signs of Emotional h-Harm

The following signs may indicate emotional abuse for children of all age groups:

- Inappropriate knowledge of 'adult' matters such as sex, alcohol and drugs.
- Extreme emotional outbursts.
- Regularly experiencing nightmares or sleep difficulties.

Infancy to pre-school:

- Over-affectionate towards strangers or people they haven't known for very long.
- Lacks confidence and is often wary or anxious.
- Displays lack of attachment to parent, e.g. when being taken to or collected from nursery etc.
- Is frequently aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals.

Middle childhood:

- Frequently soils the bed.
- Language and behaviour are not socially appropriate.
- Struggles to control strong emotions.
- Shows lack of attachment to a parent.
- Lacks social skills and has few if any friends.
- Self-harms, e.g. scratching, head banging.

Signs of Physical Abuse

It is normal for children to have cuts and bruises on their bodies caused by accidents which happen whilst they are moving about and/or playing. These are marks that have an acceptable and reasonable explanation.

Marks or injuries which do not have an acceptable explanation may indicate that a child has been abused. This may include:

Bruising

- Bruises on the cheeks, ears, palms, arms and feet.
- Bruises on the back, buttocks, tummy, hips and backs of legs.
- Multiple bruises in clusters, usually on the upper arms or outer thighs.
- Bruising which looks like it has been caused by fingers, a hand, or an object i.e. belt, shoe etc.
- Large oval shaped bite marks.

•Burns or scalds

- Any burns which have a clear shape of an object, e.g. cigarette burns.
- Burns to the backs of hands, feet, legs, genitals, or buttocks.
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Injuries that have conflicting explanations between the child and parent should always be looked into with more detail.

Support for Staff and Pupils

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We recognise that reporting safeguarding concerns can be distressing. Support is available through:

Support for Staff:

- **Named link staff** for safeguarding cases who act as a point of contact and support.
 - **Access to helplines**, counselling, and peer support, including referral to external services where appropriate.
 - **Time-out or supervision** opportunities for staff affected by disclosures or safeguarding processes.
 - **Confidentiality and respectful handling** of sensitive information to protect staff wellbeing.
 - **Whistleblowing and complaints procedures** to raise concerns about unsafe practice or safeguarding failures.
- Staff wellbeing and supervision sessions**, where available, to reflect on safeguarding practice and emotional impact.

Support for Pupils:

- **Pastoral support** from trusted adults, including form tutors, learning mentors, or designated pastoral staff.
- **Safe spaces within school** where pupils can go if they feel overwhelmed or need time out.
- **Regular check-ins** for pupils involved in safeguarding concerns, including those subject to child protection or early help plans.
- **Empowerment through education**, including RSHE and PSHE lessons that build resilience, self-esteem, and understanding of safeguarding risks.

Staff should speak to the DSL or Principal if they feel a pupil requires additional support following a safeguarding concern.