

# The irtual School

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



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## Section 1: Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002 and in line with statutory guidance: 'Working together to safeguard children' (DfE 2015) and 'Keeping children safe in education' (DfE guidance commencing 5th September 2016).

This policy also takes into account the procedures and guidance set out by Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board.

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health and/or development, ensuring that children grow up in the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

The Virtual School follows the procedures established by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) [www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk). All staff are signed up to receive regular email alerts from the GSCB. All staff are encouraged to visit this website regularly, as this is updated on the 'live' system, which guides and informs the Virtual School. All staff are trained on a 3 yearly basis in Child Protection Awareness.

The Virtual School ensure they have suitable staff by adhering stringently to safer recruitment processes and ensuring any unsuitable behaviour is reported and managed quickly using the Allegations Management procedures.

To ensure that within the Virtual School there is an understanding that safeguarding is the responsibility of EVERYONE. If at any point there is immediate risk of serious harm to a child a referral must be made to social care immediately or dial 999. Anybody can make a referral.

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, The Virtual School will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- ✓ The Children Act 1989
- ✓ The Children Act 2004
- ✓ Education Act 2002 (section 175)
- ✓ The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- ✓ Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures) (Electronic – live online – [www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk))

- ✓ Keeping Children Safe in Education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DFE guidance commencing 5th September 2016)
- ✓ Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2015)
- ✓ Child sexual exploitation (Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation (February 2017)
- ✓ Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2015) requires all schools and PRUs to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board. Schools are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or are at risk of abuse - these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse.

Furthermore Keeping Children Safe in Education (**DfE September 2016**) places the following responsibilities on all schools:

- ✓ All staff members should be aware of systems within the team which support safeguarding and these should be explained part of induction.
- ✓ All staff must understand the role of the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters rest with the Designated Senior Person (referred to in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE, September 2016) as Designated Safeguarding Lead'). This responsibility cannot be delegated. Staff with the designated safeguarding lead responsibility will undertake child protection and Multi Agency training every 2 years.

**The Virtual school staff should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB).**

All staff should be alerted to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.

All concerns or discussions, decisions made and reasons for those decisions must be recorded in writing by staff. Staff must be able to distinguish between a CONCERN, RISK OF HARM or IMMEDIATE DANGER.

Training for all staff must now be 3 yearly (with regular updates as necessary).

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE September 2016) also states:

*“The child protection policy should describe procedures which are in accordance with government guidance and refer to locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by the GSCB.”*

**DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) within the Virtual School is**

**Jackie Ellis, Education Inclusion Lead**

[jackie.ellis@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.ellis@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01452 328360

### **Section 2: The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The broad areas of responsibility for the designated safeguarding leads and deputy safeguarding leads are:

- ✓ **To act as a source of support, advice and expertise** to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- ✓ **To manage referrals** and refer all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care team and to the Police (cases where a crime may have been committed).
- ✓ **Ensuring their own knowledge of safeguarding issues and procedures are up-to-date.**
- ✓ Attends annual training through the GSCB DSL Forums. Multi-agency training is also undertaken every two years in order to carry out this role.

**In addition**, the Virtual School designated safeguarding lead is a member of the GSCE Education sub group, and the CSE Missing Sub Group within GCC.

### **Section 3: Raising Awareness and encouraging ongoing vigilance**

All members of the Virtual School must be familiar with, and constantly mindful of, the content of the following documents:

Virtual School Child Protection Policy and procedures (this document)

'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff' (DfE September 2016)

'Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people'

Other useful information, including the Safeguarding Children Handbook published by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board (GSCB), can be found online

at [www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk). Staff should be aware of this website. At the Virtual School it is recognised that it is EVERYONE's responsibility for safeguarding.

**All staff are also expected to:**

- ✓ Undertake and engage with regular training on Child Protection and safeguarding by the GSCB child protection training every three years,
- ✓ Be able to identify signs and symptoms of abuse.
- ✓ Understand the role of the DSL.
- ✓ Be able to identify children in need of extra help or at risk of significant harm.
- ✓ Be able to support social workers in making decisions.
- ✓ Report concerns (including concerns about other staff/professionals) to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or other senior staff members as appropriate.
- ✓ Know how to make referrals to the children's helpdesk (if/when appropriate)
- ✓ Be aware of procedures and guidelines for safeguarding.
- ✓ Monitor and report as required on the welfare, attendance and progress of all pupils
- ✓ Keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of any child protection concerns and share these with the DSL/Senior SLT staff and Social Care.
- ✓ Respond appropriately to disclosures from children and young people (stay calm, reassure without making unrealistic promises, listen, avoid leading questions, avoid being judgemental and keep records).
- ✓ The Virtual School staff are required to attend whole team CP/safeguarding updates every 3 years as well as participate in GSCB DSL Forums. Multi-agency training

#### **Section 4: The Child Protection Referral Process**

All staff recognises that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The DSL or Senior SLT will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff or other professionals directly responsible for the child.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

The Virtual School will co-operate as required with enquiries from relevant agencies regarding child protection.

#### **Section 5: Safer Recruitment**

Safer recruitment is a vital aspect of child protection. The Virtual School adheres to Gloucestershire County Council safer recruitment procedures which follows

guidance from The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). References are taken up before interviews and safer recruitment practice is followed in full.

In line with government guidance at least one NCSL accredited recruiter is on all interview panels and involved in the complete selection process. No member of staff or volunteer in a regulated activity will be left alone with children until the DBS check has been completed

### **Section 6: Safer Working Practices**

The guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings can be found on the GSCB website in the safeguarding in education section.

### **Section 7: Allegations against staff (Allegations Management) & Whistle-blowing**

All staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction. Ongoing training and discussion at team meetings and in supervision meeting with line-managers help to support staff.

We understand that a pupil, carer / parent or other professional may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Head Teacher, who on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and the Head of Service within GCC.

## **Section 8: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantages of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

The new working together advice (Feb 2017) from the DfE on CSE and the new definition can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>

Further information about CSE can be found on the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board (GSCB) website [www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk) :

### ***CSE screening tool***

This should be completed if CSE suspected.

CSE can apply to GIRLS and BOYS.

### ***CSE Protocol, CSE strategy and links to CSE e-e-learning and multi-agency CSE training***

Clear information about Warning signs, the screening tool and Gloucestershire's multi-agency protocol for safeguarding children at risk of CSE are at 01242 276846

All referrals to go to the Central Referral Unit 01242 247999

**Further information:** National Working Group (Network tackling Child Sexual Exploitation) [www.nationalworkinggroup.org](http://www.nationalworkinggroup.org) and PACE UK (Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation) [www.paceuk.info](http://www.paceuk.info)

[www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk) Referrals should be made to Gloucestershire social care and the Gloucestershire Police.

### ***Gloucestershire Police CSE Team:***

The CSE team sits within the Public Protection Bureau

Single agency team (Police)

DS Nigel Hatten/ DI Bob Heywood.

PC Christina Pfister (Missing persons Coordinator)