



Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

2025-2026

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Our Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, the Board of Governors, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, temporary or agency staff, students on placements or anyone working on behalf of MidKent College and are consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

The Purpose of this Policy

- To protect children and young people who receive MidKent College's services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

MidKent College recognise our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and all those directly connected (staff, volunteers, governors, leaders, parents, families, and students) are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children and have an essential role to play in making this community safe and secure.

MidKent College believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the College and/or can occur between children outside of the College. All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead, should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children and young people should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in the child or young person's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

MidKent College recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment that will help children to be safe and feel safe. In our college, children are respected and encouraged to talk openly. All children (defined as those up to the age of 18) and vulnerable adults (such as those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) 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, have equal rights to protection.

Our college acknowledges the need to treat everyone with equity, fairness, dignity and respect. We recognise that unconscious bias may impact upon our perceptions and expectations of children, particularly those from minority groups and that this may influence the safeguarding actions we take. We seek to educate and challenge all members of the College community to address equality of access and opportunity for all children, by highlighting inequalities and increasing awareness.

Staff challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour. They are vigilant to sexualised/aggressive touching/grabbing. We recognise that groups at particular risk include girls, students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,

Transgender Queer+ (LGBTQ+), or are perceived by peers to be LGBTQ+, and students with SEND. We recognise that these children can be targeted by other children and acknowledge the importance of a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. Students are protected from up-skirting, bullying (including cyberbullying), homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents. Staff have familiarity with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Human Rights Act 1998 and recent reforms to the Act, and how they apply to safeguarding.

This policy applies where there are any child protection concerns regarding children at the college, but may also apply to other children connected to the college, for example, siblings, younger members of staff (under 18) or children on student / work placements.

Through their day-to-day contact with students and their direct work with families, all staff and volunteers in the college have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect at an early stage. Our college may be the only secure, stable, and predictable element in their lives. All staff are familiar with the categories or abuse outlined in **Appendix 1**.

MidKent College recognises the need for a trauma-informed approach to safeguarding, considering the root causes and possible underlying trauma behind children's behaviour.

MidKent College will endeavour to support the welfare and safety of all students through:

- Ensuring the child's welfare is of paramount importance.
- Training all staff to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and to know the college's procedures and lines of communication.
- Ensuring children's mental and physical health or development is not impaired.
- Providing children a balanced curriculum, including PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) to help students stay safe, recognise when they don't feel safe and identify who they might/can talk to.
- Working with parents to ensure they understand the College's legal responsibility to safeguard and ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations.
- Keeping confidential records that are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals.
- Ensuring the voice of the child is evident in individual case files and informs the college's policy developments.
- Ensuring the College practices safer recruitment processes in checking the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors.
- Informing parents/carers about expected behaviour.

MidKent College expects that if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they will act immediately.

This policy is implemented in accordance with our compliance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 (KCSiE), which requires colleges to have an effective child protection policy.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including Governors, temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers, and are consistent with those outlined within KCSiE 2025.

The welfare and safety of children is the responsibility of all staff in school. ANY concern for a pupil's welfare MUST be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All members of staff have a responsibility to:

- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn and promote the child's welfare.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and to always act in the best interests of the child.
- be alert to any issues of concern in a child's life at home or elsewhere including the online world.
- Understand the early help process and their role in it.
- Be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, so they can identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.
- Understand that children may not feel ready to or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited, or neglected and/or that they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. They may feel embarrassed, humiliated or be being threatened. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns any about a child.
- Consider wider environmental factors in a child's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare.
- Be aware of the process of making referrals to children's social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
- Build trusting relationships which facilitate communication with children and young people.
- Know what to do if a child tells them that he or she is being abused, neglected or exploited and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child.
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Understand and comply with this policy and understand other safeguarding policies and systems.
- To undertake and engage with regular and appropriate training, that is regularly updated.

- Be aware of, and take appropriate action to raise concerns, about poor or unsafe practice, or potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. (This may include accessing the school whistleblowing policy).
- act in line with our staff code of conduct/behaviour policy
- act in line with the [Teachers' Standards](#) which state that teachers (including headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

Children and young people (pupils/students) have a right to:

- Report abuse confidently, knowing concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be listened to, and that effective action will be taken.
- Seek help from a trusted adult and feel listened to.
- Learn how to keep themselves safe by recognising when they are themselves at risk and how to get help when they need it, including online.

Parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- Work in partnership with the college to safeguard and promote the welfare of child/ren and understand MidKent College's statutory responsibilities in this area.
- Read and adhere to the relevant college policies and procedures.
- Talk to their children about safeguarding issues and support the school in their safeguarding approaches.
- Identify behaviours which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm, including online
- Follow the procedure for lodging complaints to address issues and guarantee MidKent College prompt response.
- Seek help and support from the college, or other appropriate agencies.
- We are committed to working with parents/ carers positively, openly, and honestly. We ensure that all parents/ carers are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents'/ carers' rights to privacy and confidentiality, and will not share sensitive information, unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so to protect a child/children.

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 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.
- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and is defined as activity undertaken to protect specific children from significant harm. This includes harm inside or outside the home or online.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (KCSiE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (WTSC)
- Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework 2024
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures
- The Education (Independent College Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Non-Maintained Special Colleges (England) Regulations 2015
- The Education Act 2011
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1990
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015
- Prevent Duty Guidance: England & Wales (2023)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years January 2015
Statutory Guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.
- Police Act 1997 (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) Regulations 2013
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2019
- Information Sharing July 2018
Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.

[Sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002](#) require school governing bodies, proprietors, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children who are pupils or students at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age. Such arrangements will have to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

- Student Engagement Policy
- Student Mental Health Policy
- Access, Visitors and Speakers Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Whistleblowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- PREVENT Policy
- Admissions Policy
- ICT Policy
- Remote Learning Safeguarding Policy
- Lockdown Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Staff Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedure. For more information, please refer to Facilities.
- Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children and young people is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Acts 1989 and 2006.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children and young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, guardians, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting them.
- Actively promoting an inclusive student culture where students feel safe to report concerns, have a clear awareness of safeguarding risks (including online safety and peer-on-peer abuse issues), and understand how to report concerns.
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for children and young people, Designated Safeguarding staff and a Lead Governor for safeguarding.
- Adopting and publishing child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures.
- Promoting Safer recruitment practices and recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks and due diligence are carried out prior to

employment.

- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, young people, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, and one-to-one discussions.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help effectively deal with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Presenting and promoting the policy, practices and procedures to all stakeholders, including the employers of apprentices, students and employers supporting industry placements.
- Ensuring that the policy is accessible to all, including public access via the College website.
- Promoting the policy, safeguarding processes and responsibilities as part of staff, contractor, volunteer and apprentice employer induction, including access to training and how to raise concerns.
- Ensuring staff complete regular comprehensive mandatory training, including promoting and implementing the policy and procedures, and that they fully understand their responsibilities and those of stakeholders.
- Ensuring all students, apprentices and their employers remain engaged with the policy and safeguarding processes, including regular workplace reviews with apprentices and employers which includes continued focus on wellbeing.
- Maintaining accurate and detailed records of all safeguarding incidents and concerns.
- Ensuring robust governance of the safeguarding policy, procedures and practices is in place and effectively monitored by the Safeguarding Committee.

The College works closely with the three safeguarding partnerships: Health, the Police and Social Services. The College undertakes to refer concerns that a child or adult might be at risk of significant harm to the appropriate agencies as agreed with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP).

The College will notify appropriate agencies if there is an unexplained absence of a child who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan. The College will also notify agencies if any young person under the age of 18 is missing from education. This also applies to adults if there is a significant concern for their safety and wellbeing.

The College will work collaboratively with relevant agencies in their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at case conferences and core groups.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

Recognising Indicators of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

As a college, we are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely individual events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. This is outlined locally within the [Medway Threshold Guidance](#), and [Kent Support Levels Guidance](#).

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy).

All staff in the College are aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect. There are four categories of abuse:

<p>Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.</p>
<p>Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.</p>
<p>Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.</p>
<p>Neglect: 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.</p>

Staff should also refer to [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2018](#).

Specific Safeguarding Issues

MidKent College is aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understands safeguarding in the wider context.

MidKent College staff are mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (such as a Child in Need or Child Protection, Plan).

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug-taking, alcohol abuse, unexplainable absences from education, and sharing nudes or semi-nude images (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger. The categories/issues that follow are by no means an exhaustive list but give an indication of the current themes in safeguarding and protecting children.

Responding to Allegations of Child-on-Child Abuse

MidKent College recognises that children can abuse other children and that it can happen both inside and outside of the college and online. This is referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be responded to using the procedure outlined in the Student Engagement Policy.

MidKent College believes and understands the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Staff understand that abuse is abuse, and it will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.

MidKent College recognise that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Physical abuse, which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- 'Up-skirting', which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- Nude or semi-nude image sharing (also known as 'sexting' or youth produced/involved sexual imagery).
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Staff and leadership recognise that some child-on-child abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved e.g. for gender-based abuse, girls

are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable, and all reports will be taken seriously.

In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, we will take a zero-tolerance approach and promote healthy relationships and interactions through the Group Tutorial curriculum. We also offer a range of reporting mechanisms, including an online safeguarding self reporting form that is monitored by the Safeguarding team.

MidKent College will not tolerate, dismiss or minimise any harmful behaviours in College and will take swift action to intervene when this occurs. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated college policies.

Alleged victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse may be supported by every member of staff taking reports seriously, listening carefully, avoiding victim blaming, providing appropriate pastoral support, referrals to the welfare and Additional Learning support teams, working with parents / carers, and in cases of sexual assault, informing the police.

Child-on-Child Sexual Violence or Harassment

MidKent College will follow the guidance outlined in part five of KCSiE 2025.

If Designated Safeguarding Leads are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

MidKent College recognises sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children and can occur online and/or face-to-face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable.

MidKent College recognises that staff must be vigilant and recognise that information may come from overheard conversations or observed behaviour changes. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the College will not be dismissed or downplayed and will be treated as serious and in line with relevant policies/procedures, for example the Student Engagement Policy and Online Safety procedures.

It is essential that all victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment or be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Immediate consideration will be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted).

When there has been a report of sexual violence or harassment, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim

(especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other children, adult students, and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.

Where possible, KCSiE 202 5 recommends that two members of staff manage reports of sexual violence and harassment.

Reports will initially be managed internally by MidKent College and, where necessary, will be referred to Children's Services and/or the Police.

The decision-making and required action taken will vary on a case-by-case basis, but will be informed by the wishes of the victim, the nature of the alleged incident (including whether a crime may have been committed), the ages and developmental stages of the children involved, any power imbalance between the children, if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse, if there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or MidKent College staff, and any other related issues or wider context.

We will reassure and teach our students to understand that the law is in place to protect children and young people, rather than criminalise them.

MidKent College will regularly review decisions and actions to update and improve policies and practice.

The College will consider the physical and mental health implications for both the victim and perpetrator. It is identified that both individuals will need additional support and provision of further information about harmful sexual behaviours and may need signposting to further sources of support.

All alleged incidents will be followed up in line with procedures outlined in the Student Engagement Policy.

Nude and/or Semi-Nude Image Sharing by Children

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) will respond to concerns as set out in the non-statutory UKCIS guidance: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) (updated March 2024).

The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' is used to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams of/by young people under the age of 18. Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under 18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal which makes responding to incidents complex.

When made aware of concerns involving nude or semi-nude image taking/sharing involving children, staff are advised to:

- Report any concerns involving nude or semi-nude image sharing involving children to the DSL immediately.
- Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it. This may be illegal. If staff have already viewed the

imagery by accident e.g. if a child has shown it to them, this must be immediately reported to the DSL.

- Not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- Not say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved.
- Explain to the child(ren) involved that they will report the issue to the DSL and reassure them that they will receive appropriate support and help.
- Not ask the child(ren) involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery and not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the child(ren) involved or their, or other, parents and/or carers. This is the responsibility of the DSL.

MidKent College recognises that nude and semi-nude image sharing (also known as youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “sexting”) is a safeguarding issue This also includes AI produced sexual imagery. All concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL (or deputy):

- The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff and will speak with the children involved, if appropriate.
- Parents and carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process of supporting their children, unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put a child at risk of harm.
- A referral will be made to Children’s Services and/or the Police immediately if:
 - the incident involves an adult (over 18).
 - there is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent e.g. age or SEND.
 - the image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of 13.
 - depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child’s developmental stage.
 - are violent.
 - a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
- All decisions will be recorded in line with our child protection procedures and will be based on the consideration of the best interests of any child involved. The DSL may choose to involve other agencies at any time, if further information/concerns are disclosed.

If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from Children Services.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

MidKent College recognises both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity.

MidKent College recognises that children can become trapped in CCE as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals

(particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can also be very different to that of boys. We also recognise boys and girls being criminally exploited may be a higher risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

MidKent College recognises that CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities and includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

CSE can be difficult to spot and sometimes mistaken for "normal" teenage behaviour. Knowing the signs can help protect children and help them when they've no one else to turn to. To support in identifying the signs of child sexual exploitation, please refer to the Kent and Medway [Exploitation Identification Tool](#) and the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership Risk Assessment tool for sexually active young people, found on their [website](#). More information available in the document [Kent & Medway Working with Children and Young People who are sexually active or displaying harmful sexual behaviour](#).

If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of CSE or CCE, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of the indicators that may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

MidKent College recognises that certain factors may increase a child's vulnerability to involvement in serious violence. These include being male, frequent absence or permanent exclusion from college, experiences of child maltreatment, and involvement in criminal activity such as theft or robbery. Additionally, the risk of serious violence may be heightened during times when students are travelling to and from college, particularly just before or after the college day.

Further advice for colleges is provided in:

- [Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and its [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance](#).
- [County Lines Toolkit for Professionals](#) from The Children's Society in

partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council.

MidKent College will make referrals to Children's Services and the Police if we have reason to believe a student has become involved in these types of activity.

This is for Child Exploitation specifically. General vulnerability concerns still need to be reported directly to the police (101 or 999)

Mental Health

MidKent College will ensure that all staff have an awareness of mental health problems and be aware that in some cases they can be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff are aware of how children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACES), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is important that staff are aware of how these experiences can impact on children's mental health, behaviour, and education.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are 'well placed' to identify behaviour indicating a mental health problem or being at risk of developing one.

If staff have a concern about a child's mental health which is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken following the reporting procedures in this policy.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it in their own intimate relationships, can have a serious, long-lasting, impact upon children and is a form of child abuse.

MidKent College recognises that domestic abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

MidKent College is an Operation Encompass College. This is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership, to support children who witness and experience Domestic Abuse.

Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our college about all police attended Domestic Abuse incidents involving any of our children, where possible, PRIOR to the start of the next college day.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory procedures and where appropriate, a referral to the First Response will be made if there are any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where the college is unsure of how to respond to a notification, advice may be sought from the First Response, or the Operation Encompass helpline which is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990.

So-called "Honour-Based Abuse (HBA)

So-called "honour-based" abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed in the belief that they protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community. These abuses may include female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All staff need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered HBA.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students.

The duty does not apply in relation to 'at risk of' or suspected cases (i.e., where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence). In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty [FGM Fact Sheet](#).

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's or college's Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Forced Marriage

MidKent College recognise that since February 2023 it has been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if no violence, threats or another form of coercion are used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well

as legal marriages. (see page 163 of KCSiE 25) ([Legal age increases to 18](#))

Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can be found at [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage](#). Guidance for schools can be found in Section 8. School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fm@fcdo.gov.uk.

Staff at MidKent College will use the college's concern reporting system (MyConcern) if they have any reason to believe that a child may be at risk of being taken out of the country for the purposes of a forced marriage.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Statutory Guidance: [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims](#).

If there are concerns that any member of the community is a victim or involved with modern slavery, concerns should be shared with a DSL or deputy and responded to in line with this policy.

Preventing Radicalisation

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a duty on specified authorities, which includes schools, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the PREVENT duty). The school's work in promoting life in modern Britain and promoting Fundamental British Values (democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith) through the curriculum and pastoral programs underpins this strategy.

Staff should be aware that there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).

The department has published advice for schools on the [Prevent duty](#). The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

Every member of staff at MidKent College recognises that protecting children exposed to radicalisation and extremism is the same as safeguarding against any other vulnerability and should be approached in the same way.

All staff and governors should complete a Prevent online Awareness training College

use an internal package which includes guidance on how to identify people who may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism, and how to refer them into the Channel process.

Staff will be supported to use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and will act proportionately; staff will report concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who, where appropriate, will follow the [local procedures](#) in regard to making a Prevent referral.

If there is an immediate threat to safety, the police will be contacted via 999.

Where a child is receiving support regarding concerns relating to preventing radicalisation, for example, through the 'Channel' programme, the DSL will consider if it would be appropriate to share any information if/when a child leaves to attend any new schools/colleges, so support can be put in place in place for when the child arrives. Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel guidance](#) and [Channel training from the Home Office](#).

Online Safety

Please see separate Online Safety procedures.

It is recognised by MidKent College that the use of technology presents challenges and risks to children and adults both inside and outside of college.

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. For example, technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm in cases of child exploitation, radicalisation, sexual predation, and bullying.

MidKent College will empower, protect and educate the whole college community in the use of technology and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The DSL has overall responsibility for online safeguarding within the college but will liaise, as necessary, with other members of staff.

The DSL, leadership team and Governing Body have read, understood and acted upon all guidance regarding online safety within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.

MidKent College identifies the breadth of issues within online safety can be considerable, but they can be broadly categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (including consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

MidKent College recognises the specific risks posed by mobile phones, wearable technology and cameras, and, in accordance with KCSiE 2025, has appropriate policies in place that are shared and understood by all members of the college community:

- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

MidKent College uses a wide range of technology. This includes computers, laptops, tablets and other digital devices, the internet, our learning platforms, intranet and email systems.

All college owned devices and systems will be used in accordance with our acceptable use policies and with appropriate safety and security measures in place.

All members of staff have access to appropriate, regular and up-to-date online safety information as part of their safeguarding training.

MidKent College ensures that all staff receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to our filtering and monitoring systems and processes.

MidKent College ensures that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on college equipment and systems used by students and staff, including college devices used by students at home. See additional information here to understand broader responsibilities: [Filtering and Monitoring Standards for Schools and Colleges](#)

Filtering and monitoring are an important part of college's online safety responsibilities, but they are only one part of our approach to online safety. Students and adults may have access to systems external to the college control, such as mobile phones and other internet enabled devices and technology. Where concerns are identified, appropriate action will be taken.

MidKent College recognises that many students and parents will have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phones and other enabled devices, this is external to the college's control. Where concerns are identified appropriate action will be taken.

MidKent College will ensure a comprehensive whole college approach is developed and in place to enable and equip all students with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world and manage the risks effectively.

The DSL will respond to online safety concerns in line with this and the Student Engagement Policy.

Disciplinary action and/or support will be implemented as appropriate.

Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with our policies and procedures.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

MidKent College recognises the potential benefits of generative AI tools in supporting teaching, learning, and reducing staff workload—when used safely, responsibly, and with appropriate infrastructure. However, we also acknowledge the safeguarding, ethical, legal, and educational risks associated with AI, including exposure to harmful content, data breaches, academic dishonesty, and misinformation.

To manage these risks, only AI tools approved by the senior leadership team, following appropriate risk and data protection assessments may be used for educational or work purposes. A list of approved tools will be maintained and reviewed regularly.

Staff and students will be informed of the benefits, risks, and expectations around AI use through training, policies (such as acceptable use and AI-specific policies), and curriculum content where appropriate.

Any misuse of AI will be addressed in line with existing policies, including behaviour, safeguarding, data protection, and complaints procedures. Serious concerns, such as AI-generated child sexual abuse material or deepfake abuse, will be handled in accordance with local safeguarding procedures and national guidance, including from the IWF, NCA-CEOP, and UKCIS.

Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

Children who are Absent from Education

All staff should be aware that children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods and/or for unexplained reasons, can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation (CCE). It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

MidKent College recognises that when a child is not in college, they may be susceptible to, or exposed to, other risks, so we work with parents/ carers and other partners to keep children in college whenever possible.

Children Attending Alternative Provision

When MidKent College places a student with an alternative provision provider, it retains overall responsibility for the safeguarding and well-being of that child. This includes:

- maintaining accurate records of the provider's address, any subcontracted provision, and satellite sites the child may attend.
- The college will regularly review placements—at least half-termly—to ensure the child is attending, the provision remains safe, and it continues to meet their needs.
- Prior to placement, appropriate checks will be carried out to confirm the provider can meet the pupil's needs, including written confirmation that all necessary safeguarding checks have been completed for staff working at the provision.

If safeguarding concerns arise, the placement will be reviewed immediately and, if necessary, suspended or terminated until those concerns are resolved.

Elective Home Education

MidKent College currently supports a cohort of 14-16 year olds who are electively home educated and attend online learning with the College.

Further information can be found here: [Elective Home Education Guidance for Professionals](#).

Care Experienced Children (Looked after Children, Previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers)

MidKent College acknowledge and understands the common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation, and a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable.

The College has a 'designated member of staff' (Helen Hook, Student Support and Care-Experienced Coordinator) who works with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered students who are looked after or who have been previously looked after, including those in [kinship care](#).

The Student Support and Care-Experienced Coordinator will work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.

MidKent College understands their responsibility to inform the Local Authority when they believe that a child is being cared for as part of a private fostering arrangement (When a child under 16, or 18 if they are disabled, is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a close relative for 28 days or more).

Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Gender Questioning

Please note: the DfE expects to publish the revised guidance on gender questioning children this summer. The policy may need to be reviewed when this document is made available.

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, other children can sometimes target them. MidKent College recognises children who are LGBTQ+ or are thought to be LGBTQ+ by other children, can be singled out by their peers or other individuals in the community.

When supporting a gender questioning child, colleges should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Colleges should refer to the DfE guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children when deciding how to proceed.

Children may face greater risks where they do not have reliable adults around them that they feel they can trust and be open with.

LGBT education is part of our curriculum for Relationships Education/Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education, and our staff will work to eliminate extra obstacles and create a safe environment that encourages children to voice their concerns.

Safeguarding Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities

- MidKent College understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities face additional safeguarding challenges. These children may have an impaired capacity to understand, resist, or avoid abuse. The DSL will work closely with the Director of Additional Learning Support to plan learning opportunities and support, as required.
- All staff will ensure that children with SEN and disabilities are able to overcome the barriers that exist for this group of children and specifically ensure that those with communication difficulties are supported to be able to express their voice and that it is listened to and acted upon.
- It is important that all staff are aware that children with SEN and disabilities may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse and that some children can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying and exploitation without explicitly showing signs.

Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Members of Staff, including agency staff, contractors and volunteers

MidKent College recognises that allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that there is a risk in all educational institutions that a member of staff may seek to deliberately seek to harm or abuse

children and/or vulnerable adults.

All staff, contractors and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

MidKent College understands the duty to refer to the LADO where it is alleged that anyone working in the school has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

In-depth information regarding staff allegations can be found within our Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the college's safeguarding regime. The leadership team at MidKent College will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers/supply staff/visitors) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

- Allegations should be referred immediately to the Director of Safeguarding (Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead) or the Group Director of People who will act to deal with any immediate risk and report the allegation to the Executive Director of Student Experience or Principal at the earliest opportunity.
- The Executive Director of Student Experience, Principal and/or Senior DSL and/or Group Director of People should make an initial assessment to decide whether the allegation warrants further investigation or disciplinary action. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter should be reported immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member.
- Please refer to the Medway [LADO Leaflet](#) if you need further information.
- Where further investigation is required, the Director of People will work with the Senior DSL to appoint an investigating officer. Suspension of staff should not be automatic, but reasonable precaution should be taken to ensure the safety of all students as a priority. Any action against a member of staff (including suspension without prejudice pending investigation) should be undertaken in consultation with the Director of People directly.

- In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Principal / Director of Safeguarding or Director of People then staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the Chair of Governors who will contact the LADO in the first instance.
- Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with those highlighted above or Chair of Governors should contact **the LADO directly on 01634 331065. (Medway) or 03000 419191 (Kent)**
- We will seek advice from the LADO within 24 hours of the alleged incident. No member of staff or the Governing Body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

Where Senior Staff outlined above are unsure how to respond, for example if the college is unsure if a concern meets the harm 'thresholds', advice will be sought via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Enquiry Line and/or the Education Safeguarding Service.

MidKent College has a legal duty to refer to the [Disclosure and Barring](#) Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.

If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our college, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or the People Team.

Concerns that do not Meet the 'Harms Threshold'

MidKent College's Staff Code of Conduct explains what a low-level concern is and the importance of sharing concerns. We have clear reporting procedures for students, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice. We also acknowledge that low-level concerns can arise in several ways from various sources e.g. suspicion, complaint or a disclosure. Procedures are in place for confidentially sharing, recording and handling of low-level concerns. Staff can now report concerns using the following Microsoft form which is accessible to The Director of Safeguarding and the Director of the People Team and their deputies.

[Report a concern about a member of staff.](#)

A low-level concern is any concern (no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt') that a member of staff has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is not considered serious enough to refer to the LADO.

Low-level concerns can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent and thoughtless, through to behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.

Where low-level concerns are reported, the Senior DSL should liaise with the LADO Service on 01634 331065 (Medway) and 03000 410888 (Kent).

Criminal Investigation

Whether involving students or staff, in instances where the concern is serious enough to warrant Police involvement, either by liaison with the College or otherwise, the College will not undertake independent investigations of any allegations of criminal activity or form any judgements until after the conclusion of any Police or criminal investigations, unless with the explicit agreement of the Police.

Whistleblowing Procedure

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice, and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the leadership team. All members of staff are made aware of the College's Whistleblowing Policy. It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.

Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

Contact Details

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Emma Mernagh
emma.mernagh@midkent.ac.uk
- Student Support and Care-Experienced Coordinator (DDSL): Helen Hook
helen.hook@midkent.ac.uk
- Student Support Coordinator (DDSL) (Medway): Michelle McDonnell
michelle.mcdonnell@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Medway): Cherrie Bunch
Cherrie.Bunch@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Medway): Heather Viggers
Heather.Viggers@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Medway): Jemma Jerrett
Jemma.Jerrett@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Maidstone): Rosie Foreman
Rosie.Foreman@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Maidstone): Sarah Mount
Sarah.Mount@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Medway): Paige Collins
Paige.Collins@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Medway): Natasha Smith
Natasha.Smith2@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Medway): Samantha Anderson
Samantha.Anderson@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Maidstone): Mia Franklin
Mia.Franklin@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Medway – Enhance Provision): Jennie Bowes
Jennie.Bowes@midkent.ac.uk
- Welfare Officer (Medway – Enhance Provision): Kirstie Bottiglieri
Kirstie.Bottiglieri@midkent.ac.uk
- Safeguarding Governor: Sarah Lancaster
Sarah.Lancaster@midkent.ac.uk

Safeguarding Email: safeguarding@midkent.ac.uk

Safeguarding Hotline: 01634 383567

External Agencies

All members of staff at MidKent College are made aware of local support available.

First Response & Single Point of Access (Medway)	For urgent child protection concerns in Medway	01634 334466 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm)
First Response/ Family Solutions (Medway)	To request non-urgent support	Portal
Kent County Council Front Door	For urgent child protection concerns in Kent.	Portal Frontdoor@kent.gov.uk 03000 411111
Out of Hours – Emergency Duty Team	For urgent child protection concerns	03000 419 191 (Medway) 03000 411 111 (Kent)

Kent Police	Emergency situations	999 for urgent matters
Local Authority Designated Officer (Medway)	Allegations against adults in schools/colleges	01634 331065 LADO referral
Local Authority Designated Officer (Kent)	Allegations against adults in school/colleges	03000 410888 kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk
Education Safeguarding Service	Advice/Training/ Reviews	01634 331464 or 01634 331017 educsafeguarding@medway.gov.uk Safeguarding Service Manager Maisie Adkins 01634 331065 maisie.adkins@medway.gov.uk Education Safeguarding Officer: Kate Barry 01634 331017 kate.barry@medway.gov.uk Fiona Veitch 01634 331464 Fiona.veitch@medway.gov.uk Education Lead in MASH – For MASH Related Enquiries only Harriet Obrien 01634 331025 harriet.obrien@medway.gov.uk Helen Brown 01634 331004 helen.brown@medway.gov.uk
Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP)	Links to key Medway safeguarding documents, training and processes	01634 336 329 mscp@medway.gov.uk
Prevent Education Officer (Kent & Medway)	Prevent advice & training	Sally.Green2@kent.gov.uk
National Contacts		
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline	Free advice and support to professionals about how CP issues are being handled in their own or other organisation.	0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk

Concerns Raised Out of Hours

If a child may be at risk of **imminent harm**, you should call **Children's Services First Response Team** on **01634 334466** and/or the **Police** on **999**.

**Please also record this action on MyConcern
(internal safeguarding reporting tool)**

What to do if you have a Concern about a Child at MidKent College

Why are you concerned?

For example:

- Allegation/child shares a concern or worry.
- Indicators of abuse or neglect.

Immediately record your concerns

Follow the Safeguarding Procedure

- Reassure the child
- Clarify concerns if necessary (**T**ED: **T**ell, **E**xplain, **D**escribe)
- Use child's own words/ use facts
- Record your concern on MyConcern or sign and date any notes
- Seek support for yourself if required from DSL

Inform a Designated Safeguarding Lead using MyConcern

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Consider whether the child has suffered, or is at immediate risk of harm e.g. unsafe to go home.
- If the child is at imminent risk of harm, make a telephone report to First Response (01634 334466), Out of Hours on 03000 419191, and/or call 999.
- If your concern is high, but the child is NOT at imminent risk, or for Family Solutions referrals, use the portal ([Kent](#) and [Medway](#)).
- For early help, consider if internal support or referral to other agencies is appropriate.
- Access the MSCP [Threshold Guidance](#) for further guidance.
- If unsure, consult with the No Name consultation line between 9:30 – 12:30 term time (01634 331662) for advice or non-urgent queries only.

If you are unhappy with the response

Staff:

- Follow [MSCP escalation procedures](#)
- Follow Whistleblowing procedures

Students and Parents:

- Follow college complaints procedures

Record decision making and action taken in the student's Child Protection/safeguarding file

Monitor - Be clear about:

- What **ACTION** you have taken at the time of reporting the concerns, and why.
- What you are monitoring e.g. behaviour trends, appearance etc.
- How long you will monitor.
- Who is responsible.
- Where, how and to whom you will feedback and how you will record.

Review and request further support (if necessary)

At all stages, the child's circumstances will be kept under review.
The DSL/staff will request further support if required to ensure **the child's safety is paramount.**

APPENDIX 1: Definitions of Forms of Abuse/Specific Safeguarding Issues

Definitions of Forms of Abuse

All college and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

- **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.
- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Please click on the hyperlink for further information, advice and guidance: [NSPCC Physical Abuse](#)

- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Please click on the hyperlink for further information, advice and guidance: [NSPCC Emotional Abuse](#)

- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Please click on the hyperlink for further information, advice and guidance: [NSPCC Sexual Abuse](#)

- **Neglect:** 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
 - provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
 - protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
 - ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
 - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Please click on the hyperlink for further information, advice and guidance: [NSPCC Neglect](#)

Support Links

Support for Staff

- Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline

Support for Students

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- The Mix: www.themix.org.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Fearless: www.fearless.org
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children [5-11-year olds](#) and [12-17 year olds](#).

Support for Adults

- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): napac.org.uk
- MOSAC: www.mosac.org.uk
- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org

Mental Health

- The Department for Education has published advice and guidance on [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#), and [Mental Health and Behaviour in Colleges](#).

In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support college tutors to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance '[promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#)'. Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See [Rise Above](#) for links to all materials and lesson plans.

- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- Moodspark: <https://moodspark.org.uk>
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Every mind matters <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/>

The department is providing funding to support costs of a significant training programme for senior mental health leads and the national rollout of the [Link Programme](#). Training for senior mental health leads will be available to all state-funded colleges and colleges by 2025 to help introduce or develop their college approach to mental health.

Support for Learning Disabilities

- Respond: www.respond.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

Domestic Abuse

- Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk
- Domestic abuse services: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
- Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line: www.mensadviceline.org.uk
- Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Respect Phonenumber: <https://respectphonenumber.org.uk>

Honour-based Violence (FGM and Breast Ironing)

- Forced Marriage Unit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>
- Information and resources <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/female-genital-mutilation>
- FGM Factsheet: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496415/6_1639_HO_SP_FGM_mandatory_reporting_Factsheet_Web.pdf
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information: www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
- National FGM Centre <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/fgm/>

Contextual Safeguarding, Child-on-Child abuse, Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation

- Contextual Safeguarding Network: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk>
- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights: www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights
- [Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse - CSA Centre](#)

Substance Misuse

- Drugs advice for Colleges: [Gov.uk Drugs advice for colleges](#)
- Talk to Frank <https://www.talktofrank.com/>
- We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/

Online Safety

- CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Report Harmful Content: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
- Parents Info: www.parentinfo.org
- Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- NSPCC/ Net Aware: www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety and www.net-aware.org.uk
- Get safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org
- Stop it Now!: www.stopitnow.org.uk
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- [Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes](#) - this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support.
- LGFL '[Undressed](#)' provided colleges advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.

Radicalisation and Hate

- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk