

Child on Child and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

2025-2027

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SLT Lead:	Vice Principal
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Waltham Forest College



1. Overview

Waltham Forest College recognises its moral and statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of all learners, including children and vulnerable adults, who access education and training through the College. Every learner has the right to feel safe, respected, and supported, free from abuse, harassment, or any form of harmful sexual behaviour.

This policy aligns with the safeguarding requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025), particularly Part 5, which addresses how schools and colleges must manage reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment. It also references the updated guidance on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2023/2025).

The purpose of this policy provides a clear framework for staff, learners and stakeholders regarding the recognition, reporting, and management of harmful sexual behaviours, peer-on-peer abuse, bullying (including cyberbullying and LGBTQI+ targeted bullying), and sexual harassment. Early intervention and consistent action help prevent the normalisation of inappropriate behaviour and reduce the risk of escalating harm.

While the terminology used throughout this policy refers to child-on-child incidents, it applies to all vulnerable learners. A separate Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy is in place for Higher Education students.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners, staff, visitors, contractors, and volunteers at Waltham Forest College. It covers:

- Child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Harmful sexual behaviours, including sexual banter, sharing of sexual images, and coercion
- Abuse or harassment linked to protected characteristics (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity, disability)

It is applicable in all settings where learners interact, including:

- College premises
- Off-site educational visits and placements
- Online or virtual learning environments

3. Principles

Waltham Forest College is committed to:

- Zero tolerance of sexual violence and sexual harassment in any form
- Inclusive safeguarding that recognises and protects learners from all backgrounds, abilities, and identities
- Prompt and proportionate response to allegations of peer-on-peer abuse
- Supportive intervention for both victims and alleged perpetrators, recognising that children displaying harmful sexual behaviours may also need safeguarding
- Education and prevention, ensuring learners understand healthy relationships, consent, and boundaries

4. Definition and Terminology

Term	Definition
Child-on-child abuse	Abuse that occurs between learners under the age of 18. This includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse and all forms of bullying.
Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)	Sexual behaviours displayed by children or young people that are inappropriate, harmful, or abusive towards others. These may range from inappropriate sexualised language to coercive or violent sexual acts.
Sexual harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a learner's dignity, makes them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated, or creates a hostile environment. This can include sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or sharing of sexual images.
Sexual violence	Sexual offences under the <i>Sexual Offences Act 2003</i> , including rape, assault by penetration, and sexual assault.
Upskirting	A specific criminal offence under the <i>Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019</i> . It involves taking a photograph or video under a person's clothing without their consent, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear), for the purpose of sexual gratification or to cause humiliation, distress, or alarm. Upskirting is a form of sexual harassment and can be highly distressing for victims.
Peer-on-peer abuse	Any form of abuse perpetrated by a learner against another learner, including physical abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or harmful sexual behaviour.
Cyberbullying	Abuse or harassment conducted online or via digital platforms, such as social media, messaging apps, or gaming sites. This may include the sharing of explicit or sexual images without consent.

5. Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children and young people's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from developmentally expected and consensual behaviour to inappropriate, problematic, abusive, or violent behaviour. Inappropriate, problematic, abusive, or violent behaviour are developmentally inappropriate and may cause significant harm or developmental damage to those involved. The term Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) is used as an umbrella term to describe sexual behaviours that are abusive, coercive, or exploitative in nature. Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online, face to face, or simultaneously across both environments.

Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in a range of ways, including but not limited to:

- Inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Up-skirting - taking a photograph or video under a person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) for the purpose of sexual gratification, humiliation, distress, or alarm
- Pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude **or semi-nude** images (commonly referred to as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Sharing sexual or intimate images of a person without their consent
- Bullying of a sexual nature including sexualised, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or misogynistic language or behaviour, whether online or offline

Staff should be aware that any incident of harmful sexual behaviour must be taken seriously, never dismissed as “banter” or “part of growing up”. All such behaviours should be responded to in line with the College’s safeguarding and reporting procedure

6. What does consent mean?

Consent means having the freedom and capacity to to make a clear, informed, and voluntary choice about engaging in sexual activity#. Consent must always be **freely given**, it cannot be assumed, implied, or forced. Consent may be given for one type of sexual activity but not another, and it can be **withdrawn at any time**, even if sexual activity has already begun..

Key principles of consent

- The age of consent in England is 16 years old
- Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault or rape
- Consent cannot be given if someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, asleep, unconscious, intimidated, coerced, or does not fully understand what is happening
- Consent must be ongoing and affirmative – silence, passivity, or lack of resistance do not equal consent

7. Context of Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Young people can experience harmful sexual behaviour in a variety of settings, including:

- Within college premises (e.g., classrooms, corridors, toilets, changing areas, common rooms, and outdoor spaces), whether supervised or unsupervised
- Online environments, including social media and messaging platforms
- At home, or in other domestic or community settings
- Public spaces, such as parks, transport hubs, or shopping areas

Safeguarding staff must remain vigilant to the **contexts in which abuse can occur**, including those less visible or informal environments where supervision may be limited.

The following model (Hackett, S, 2010) is used to explain the continuum of sexual behaviours presented by young people from normal to violent. The table is used as a guide for staff to help them better understand when to respond to sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours.

8. The Hackett Continuum of Sexual Behaviours (2010)

Waltham Forest College uses the **Hackett Model (2010)** to help staff recognise, understand, and respond appropriately to sexual behaviours displayed by young people. This continuum categorises behaviours as:

- **Normal** – developmentally expected, socially acceptable, consensual, and mutual
- **Inappropriate** – socially or developmentally unsuitable, single instances without elements of coercion
- **Problematic** – behaviour that is concerning, repeated, or involves an imbalance of power
- **Abusive** – coercive, non-consensual, exploitative, or aggressive behaviour
- **Violent** – physically abusive, threatening, or extremely harmful behaviour causing trauma or fear

This model serves as a **guide for staff** to determine when to intervene, report, or seek specialist advice to safeguard all learners involved.

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
• Developmentally expected • Socially acceptable • Consensual, mutual, reciprocal • Shared decision making	• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour • Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group • Context for behaviour may be inappropriate • Generally consensual and reciprocal	• Problematic and concerning behaviour • Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected • No overt elements of victimisation • Consent issues may be unclear • May lack reciprocity or equal power • May include levels of complicity	• Victimising intent or outcome • Includes misuse of power • Coercion and force to ensure compliance • Intrusive • Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given • May include elements of expressive violence	• Physically violent sexual abuse • Highly intrusive • Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the child responsible for the behaviour • Sadism

9. Minimise the Risk of Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Waltham Forest College is committed to creating and maintaining a culture of zero tolerance towards all forms of sexual harassment, and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). Our principal aim is to foster a learning environment where all learners can thrive, feel safe, and develop the confidence to report concerns without fear of stigma or reprisal. The voice of learners is central approach. We encourage and empower all learners to share their experiences and concerns openly, knowing that they will be listened to, taken seriously, and supported appropriately. Sexual harassment and normalised “banter” can create a culture that, if not challenged, allows inappropriate behaviours to escalate and potentially lead to harmful sexual behaviour or violence. Therefore, the College actively promotes respectful relationships, clear boundaries, and mutual understanding through education, awareness, and consistent challenge of inappropriate conduct.

Waltham Forest College recognises that for some learners, the College may be the only stable, safe, and secure environment in their lives. Learners who are at risk of or who have experienced abuse may present with a range of behaviours — including being withdrawn, anxious, defiant, or even displaying abusive behaviour towards others. Such behaviours are understood within a safeguarding framework, not as isolated disciplinary issues.

The College acknowledges that child-on-child abuse can manifest in multiple ways, including:

- Bullying (including **cyberbullying**)
- Physical abuse
- Sexual harassment or sexual violence
- Harmful sexual behaviour (including upskirting, sexting, or coercion)
- Initiation, hazing-type rituals, or degrading treatment

All incidents of child-on-child abuse will be **treated as safeguarding concerns** and managed in accordance with the College’s **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

Incidents will follow the same procedures as other child protection matters, and advice or intervention from external agencies such as Children's Social Care, the Police, or health professionals will be sought where appropriate.

The College adopts a zero-tolerance approach to all harmful and abusive behaviours. Reports and disclosures of sexual abuse or sexual violence will always be taken seriously, recorded accurately, and responded to promptly.

Each case will be managed sensitively and individually, taking into account:

- The needs and wishes of the victim, including their right to confidentiality and safety
- Any necessary disciplinary actions for the alleged perpetrator
- Multi-agency liaison with the local authority and, where relevant, family members
- A risk assessment and safety plan to ensure ongoing protection for all involved

Where possible, support for the victim and disciplinary action will be implemented concurrently to ensure fairness and safety. All decisions will be informed by professional judgement, statutory guidance, and collaboration with safeguarding partners.

10. Training and Development

Waltham Forest College is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and Governors are confident, competent, and equipped to recognise, respond to, and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB).

Staff and Governor Training

- All staff and Governors will complete annual safeguarding training, which will include specific content on sexual harassment, sexual violence, and harmful sexual behaviours.
- New staff members will receive a comprehensive safeguarding induction delivered by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL (DDSL). This induction will cover:
 - The College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - This Child-on-Child and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy
 - Procedures for reporting concerns or disclosures
 - The importance of maintaining a culture of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment and abuse
- Staff will receive regular updates, briefings, and refresher sessions throughout the year to maintain awareness of emerging trends, legislation changes, and local safeguarding priorities.

11. Learner Education and Awareness

Waltham Forest College integrates safeguarding and respect into its tutorial and curriculum framework, underpinned by Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) principles. This supports learners in understanding, in an age-appropriate and inclusive way, what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour and how to respond.

Learners are taught the knowledge and skills to:

- **Recognise** what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour and understand that it is never acceptable

- **Understand** that abuse, coercion, or sexual harassment is never the fault of the victim
- **Explore** the underlying causes or vulnerabilities that may lead to harmful behaviour in others
- **Respond safely** when they feel uncomfortable, are targeted, or witness concerning behaviour
- **Report concerns confidently**, knowing they will be taken seriously and supported appropriately

The College reinforces messages around respect, consent, digital responsibility, and personal boundaries through tutorials, workshops, campaigns, and enrichment activities.

12. Learner Voice and Support

Waltham Forest College recognises that some learners may find it difficult to speak to adults about experiences of child-on-child sexual abuse or harassment.

To address this, the College promotes multiple trusted avenues for disclosure, including:

- Designated Safeguarding Leads and Student Support Officers
- Anonymous reporting mechanisms
- Pastoral or wellbeing drop-in sessions
- Peer advocates or safeguarding champions

Staff are trained to listen respectfully, respond sensitively, and ensure that learners feel heard, believed, and supported.

13. Safeguarding Oversight and Continuous Improvement

The College Safeguarding Team meets weekly to:

- Discuss ongoing safeguarding cases
- Review and analyse incident data to identify patterns, trends, or emerging risks
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Share best practice and learning to strengthen the College's proactive safeguarding culture

Findings from these reviews will inform future staff training, policy development, and preventative education to ensure that safeguarding practice remains dynamic, evidence-informed, and responsive to learners' needs.

14. Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

The victim may ask the college not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider the following responses and actions:

- Be led by the full guidance in the Keeping Children Safe in Education documents.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider referring learners and their parents/carers to other agencies where appropriate. This may include referral for counselling, social services and to the Police
- Where possible managing reports with two members of the safeguarding team present (one including DSL or Deputy DSL)
- All allegations/incidents must be treated seriously and recorded onto CPOMs and learners involved and told what is being recorded, in what context, and why. Learners will be informed of what will happen as a result of a disclosure and what the next course of action is likely to be. Notes and any learner records could be used in further investigations and assessments made by Social Services and The Police
- Considerations should be made as to when to inform the alleged perpetrator, normally external partners would be contacted first, however this will not stop the College from taking immediate action to safeguarding their learners where required
- Appropriate safeguarding and welfare support should be given to both victim and alleged perpetrator while any disciplinary, investigations or legal actions are taking place
- Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk. The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child or young person is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or Police
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made (including historic), this should be referred to the police. The Police will undertake a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases
- A risk assessment should be carried out immediately to ensure the victim and other potential people are protected and supported
- DSL and Deputy DSL will conduct professional and supportive sessions to college employees who have been affected by disclosures of sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours and will inform HR so staff can be referred to the Employer Assistance Programme

15. All Staff

The following actions must be taken by all staff:

- All staff to maintain an attitude and mindset of 'it could happen here' so to be vigilant and open to noticing when harmful behaviours occur.
- All staff to respect and understand that the learner has put them in a position of trust in the disclosing their concern and that they will want and need to know what happens next as a result of their disclosure.
- All staff must respond and treat seriously all reports and concerns from a learner including those reports outside of the college and or online.

- All staff and learners have a responsibility to work together to ensure that abuse does not occur, or where it is found, robust action is undertaken
- All staff should maintain a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, including stopping 'banter' and inappropriate touching
- Staff must ensure learners are made aware of the importance of adhering to Learner Code of Conduct
- Course Tutors for under 18s, and those under the age of 25 in receipt of an EHCP and/or high needs funding, must ensure learners understand how to stay safe from abuse through the mandatory tutorial programmes
- Staff members receiving reports of abuse, including incidents that take place off college premises, must make a record and take appropriate action to follow up all allegations/incidents and trigger an investigation which will be managed in line with the Learner Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy for reporting safeguarding concerns. Sanctions against alleged perpetrators may include suspension whilst an investigation takes place and possible permanent withdrawal.
- Staff member should not view or forward illegal images of children and young people as it may be more appropriate to confiscate the device and preserve the evidence for the Police. Further advice can be sought from the DSL.
- All staff involved in a disclosure and case must carefully consider the potential impact of the abuse on both the alleged perpetrator/s and the victim/s and refer those involved for additional support to the safeguarding Team as appropriate.
- Staff must ensure the Safeguarding Team are notified immediately and forward notes or records

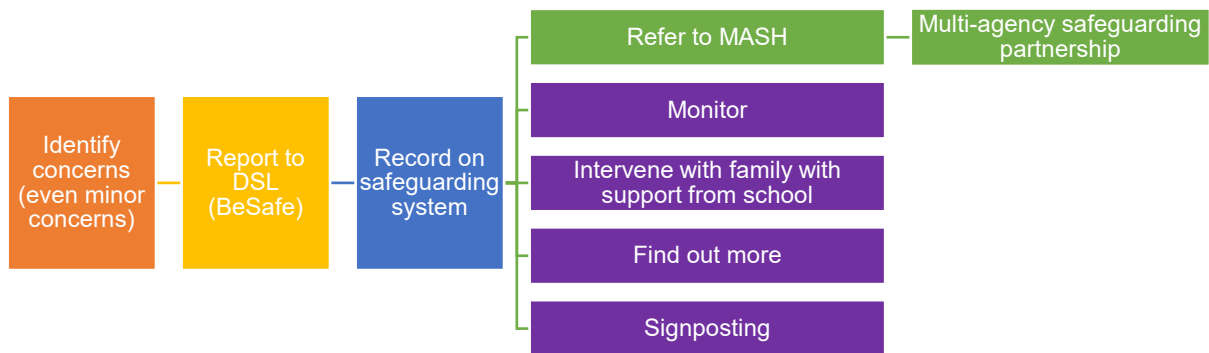
16. Safeguarding Reporting Procedure

Any young person reporting a concern will be treated respectfully. We will reassure them that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe; no young person will be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any forms of abuse or made to feel ashamed. Our staff will never promise confidentiality to the young person as the concern will need to be shared further.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to be informed as soon as possible of any incident and the details may also need to be shared with Children's Social Care / the Police and other specialist agencies. The safeguarding team will explain next steps to the young person so they understand what will happen, including who will be informed. Where the young person already has Social Care involvement we will inform the young person's Social Worker and work in partnership with them as appropriate.

Whilst we establish the facts of the case and start the process of liaising with other agencies, as appropriate, we will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on the college premises, and where applicable, on transport to and from the college. Where an incident includes an online element, we will always work in accordance with appropriate guidance, taking advice from other partners as necessary. Our staff will not view an indecent image of a young person unless absolutely necessary, nor forward it for any reason.

Actions where there are concerns about a child or vulnerable adult:



All members of staff must develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and their responsibility for reporting any concerns in a timely manner. All staff are expected to do the following:

- **LISTEN** carefully, stay calm; do not express shock or embarrassment
- **DO NOT** guarantee confidentiality, but be clear that you will act sensitively and explain what will happen next
- **GIVE REASSURANCE** that you are taking the information seriously
- **DO NOT** ask leading questions
- **DO NOT** examine any physical injuries
- **DO NOT** attempt to investigate the allegations yourself
- **NEVER JUDGE** even if the allegation is against a colleague
- **RECORD** what was said, also time, date and place.
- **CONTACT** a member of the BeSafe team as soon as reasonably possible

If any staff member suspects that the young person is in immediate danger, they must contact the Police straight away by dialling 999. All incidents and actions taken need to be reported back to the BeSafe Team in a timely manner.

17. Contextual Safeguarding

Waltham Forest College recognises that safeguarding incidents and behaviours may occur beyond the College environment and can be influenced by a range of external factors in a young person's life. These influences may include their peer group, neighbourhood, community spaces, online activity, or public environments, and they can have a significant impact on a learner's safety and wellbeing.

All staff are expected to be aware of contextual safeguarding and to consider the wider environmental and social factors that may contribute to risk. Understanding the context in which harm occurs is essential to providing effective support and intervention for learners.

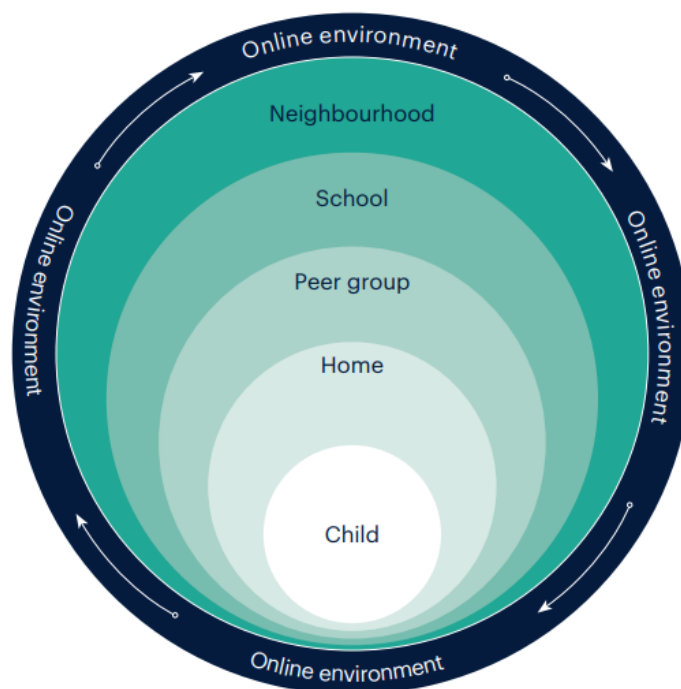
When assessing risk to a child or young person, Waltham Forest College will:

- Consider contextual factors such as peer relationships, social media activity, community or gang-related influences, or unsafe locations in the local area
- Gather and share relevant information with safeguarding partners to build a holistic understanding of the learner's circumstances
- Collaborate with external agencies to reduce risks in the environments where harm may occur, rather than focusing solely on the individual
- Promote multi-agency working in line with local safeguarding arrangements, including the Waltham Forest Safeguarding Children Partnership

This approach encapsulates the principles of Contextual Safeguarding, which seeks to:

- Adapt child protection systems to address risks that occur outside the home
- Encourage professionals to work alongside, rather than simply refer into, statutory social care services
- Support the creation of safe spaces in schools, colleges, and communities where young people may have encountered or been at risk of child-on-child abuse or exploitation

By adopting a contextual safeguarding approach, Waltham Forest College aims to ensure that interventions address both individual and environmental factors contributing to harm. This holistic view supports more effective safeguarding outcomes and promotes safer, more protective environments for all learners.



18. Risk Assessment

Following any report or disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, or sexual violence, Waltham Forest College will undertake an immediate and proportionate risk assessment.

The purpose of this assessment is to:

- Safeguard and protect the victim(s), other learners, and staff.
- Identify and manage any ongoing risks or vulnerabilities.
- Support the wellbeing and continued access to education for all those involved.

Initial Risk Assessment

- The safeguarding team will lead the assessment in consultation with relevant staff and, where appropriate, external safeguarding partners (e.g., Children's Social Care or the Police)
- The assessment will consider the nature of the allegation, the ages and developmental stages of those involved, and any power imbalances (such as gender, SEND, social status, or friendship groups)
- Consideration will also be given to the context in which the incident occurred, including online, on transport, or in the community

Protective Measures

Where there is a serious sexual abuse or harassment allegation, it may be necessary and proportionate to implement immediate protective actions, which could include:

- Separating the alleged perpetrator and the victim, including placement in different classes or, if appropriate, on different campuses
- Considering alternative timetabling or flexible travel arrangements if both parties use the same public transport routes or attend overlapping sessions
- Implementing increased supervision or monitoring in identified areas of risk
- Providing supportive measures such as counselling, wellbeing checks, or learning adjustments for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator

Any such measures will be implemented in a way that **minimises disruption to learning** and ensures both parties are treated **fairly, respectfully, and without prejudice**.

Ongoing Review

- If an alleged perpetrator is convicted, cautioned, or subject to police investigation, the Safeguarding Team will immediately review and update the risk assessment, making any necessary amendments to ensure continued safety
- Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and after any new information, change in circumstances, or further incident
- The assessment will remain dynamic and responsive, ensuring that actions remain relevant, proportionate, and fit for purpose

All risk assessments and resulting safety plans will be documented securely and shared on a need-to-know basis with relevant staff and agencies to support coordinated safeguarding practice.

19. Notifying Parents or Carers

Waltham Forest College recognises the vital role that parents and carers play in supporting the safety, wellbeing, and development of their children. It is important that parents and carers understand what is meant by harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) and can reinforce the College's safeguarding messages at home. The College is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to promote safe, respectful relationships and to help them keep their child/ren safe both online and offline.

20. Communication and Sensitivity

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team will normally seek to discuss any safeguarding concern, suspicion, or disclosure with the learner's parent(s) or carer(s) at the earliest appropriate opportunity
- These discussions will be handled sensitively, ensuring that information is shared in a way that promotes understanding and does not place the young person at further risk
- Parents and carers will be offered guidance and signposted to relevant support services, such as the NSPCC or the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, which provide resources on recognising and responding to harmful sexual behaviour

21. Exceptional Circumstances

In some cases, the College may determine that notifying a parent or carer could increase the risk of harm to the learner or exacerbate the concern. For example, this might apply where:

- The young person may be at risk of further abuse or coercion within the home;
- There are concerns about potential parental reactions, such as blame or punitive responses; or
- External agencies (e.g., Children's Social Care or the Police) advise against contact at that stage of the investigation.

In these situations, the **safeguarding team** will make a **professional judgement**, in consultation with statutory partners as appropriate, and record the **rationale for the decision** clearly in the safeguarding record. The **safety and wellbeing of the learner** will remain the **primary consideration** at all times.

22. Supporting Parents and Carers

To help parents and carers understand and respond to harmful sexual behaviour, Waltham Forest College will share information and resources, including but not limited to:

- **NSPCC** – information on child-on-child abuse, online safety, and preventing harmful sexual behaviour: www.nspcc.org.uk
- **Lucy Faithfull Foundation** – specialist advice and resources for parents, carers, and professionals: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- **Stop It Now!** – confidential helpline and online resources for anyone concerned about a child's sexual behaviour: www.stopitnow.org.uk

By maintaining open, honest, and respectful communication with parents and carers, the College aims to strengthen collaborative safeguarding and ensure consistent messages of safety, respect, and consent are reinforced across home and college environments.

23. Working with external partners and agencies

Waltham Forest College recognises that effective safeguarding often requires collaboration with external agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of learners and the wider College community. The College is committed to timely, proportionate, and secure information sharing with partners, while adhering to statutory guidance and data protection legislation.

By fostering strong working relationships with external agencies, Waltham Forest College ensures that all learners are protected, supported, and educated within a safe and accountable environment, while also meeting statutory safeguarding requirements.

24. Reporting to the Police

Waltham Forest College recognises that certain forms of sexual violence, including rape, assault by penetration, and sexual assault, must be reported to the Police, including historic allegations. Prompt reporting is essential to ensure the safety of the learner and to support the statutory investigation process.

Parental/Carer Notification

- The College will generally inform parents or carers of a report of sexual abuse.
- However, if notifying parents or carers could increase the risk to the learner, exacerbate harm, or compromise a statutory investigation, the College may withhold this information temporarily.
- In these cases, advice will be sought from relevant partners, including Children's Social Care or other specialist agencies.
- The College will ensure that the learner is supported in any decisions regarding parental or carer notification, prioritising their safety, wellbeing, and autonomy.

Coordination with Police

- When a report is made to the Police, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will liaise with them to determine what information can be shared with staff, learners, and parents, including the alleged perpetrator and their carers.
- The College will work with the Police to protect the victim's identity, maintain confidentiality, and safeguard all learners involved, including potential witnesses.
- Any internal actions, such as disciplinary measures, will be coordinated to ensure that they do not compromise or prejudice the Police investigation.

Post-Investigation Support

- If the Police decide that no further action is required, the College will continue to work with external agencies to provide ongoing support for the learner, ensuring their safety, wellbeing, and access to education
- The College remains responsible for safeguarding all learners, regardless of the outcome of a criminal investigation, and will implement appropriate measures to manage risks and support all parties involved

By ensuring close collaboration with statutory partners and careful management of information, Waltham Forest College promotes a safe, supportive, and legally compliant environment for learners experiencing or affected by sexual violence.

25. Confidentiality and anonymity

Staff members taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is very likely that it will be in the interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance and external specialist support. In the event of a learner requesting that the College do not pass on any details to the Police or Social Services then the DSL should be contacted immediately.

The DSL will consider if the information is to be passed on and will consider if the information is in the public interest and to protect other children or young people from further harm. If the DSL feels there is risk to other people outside of the College, then the Police and Social Services will be contacted. The College will ensure they can reasonably protect the anonymity of any learner involved in a report of sexual abuse or sexual harassment. This will include the DSL deciding on who is made aware of the disclosure and only share information on a need-to-know basis.

26. Learner Voice

Waltham Forest College recognises that learner voice is central to creating a safe and supportive learning environment. Learners must feel heard, respected, and empowered to report concerns about their own safety or that of others.

Gathering Learner Feedback

- The College will conduct termly learner surveys that include questions about:
 - How safe learners feel on College premises and in College-related activities
 - Whether learners feel listened to and supported by staff
 - Their experience of peer relationships, bullying, harassment, or harmful sexual behaviour
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will hold focus groups and campus mapping sessions with learners to identify areas of concern, including:
 - Physical “hot spots” on or around College campuses
 - Locations or situations where learners feel uneasy, unsafe, or at risk

Responding to Feedback

- Information gathered from surveys, focus groups, and campus mapping will be used to:
 - Implement preventative and protective measures
 - Improve supervision, monitoring, and safety protocols
 - Address environmental and contextual factors that may contribute to risk
- Findings will be shared with relevant staff and incorporated into risk assessments, safeguarding plans, and ongoing safety reviews

Empowering Learners

- The College ensures that learners understand how to report concerns, feel confident in doing so, and know that their input will be taken seriously.
- By actively listening to learners and responding to their concerns, Waltham Forest College strengthens its culture of safety, respect, and accountability, and ensures that safeguarding measures are responsive and learner-centered.

27. Review

Waltham Forest College is committed to ensuring that all child protection concerns are monitored and reviewed regularly to safeguard the welfare of learners and ensure that any required actions have been fully implemented.

APPENDIX A: USEFUL CONTACTS IN WALTHAM FOREST

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Single point of referral for Early Help, Child Protection and Adults' Safeguarding in Waltham Forest	Phone: 020 8496 2310 Mon-Thurs, 9am-5.15pm and Fri, 9am-5pm Out of Hours: 020 8496 3000 Email: MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk N.B.: If you cannot get through by phone, send an email with your contact details, and you will get a same-day phone response during normal business hours
LADO Team Allegations against staff and volunteers (ASV)	Phone: 020 8496 3646 Email: lado@walthamforest.gov.uk N.B.: If you cannot get through by phone, send an email with your contact details, and you will get a same-day phone response during normal business hours
Safeguarding in Education Team Consultations / Training / Support (traded service)	Phone: 020 8496 3646 Email: safeguardingineducation@walthamforest.gov.uk N.B.: If you cannot get through by phone, send an email with your contact details, and you will get a phone response within 24 hours during normal business hours
Early Help	Phone: 020 8496 1517 Email: earlyhelp@walthamforest.gov.uk
Virtual School	Phone: 020 8496 1741 Email: virtual.school@walthamforest.gov.uk Head of Virtual School: fay.blyth@walthamforestgov.uk
Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Service	Phone: 020 8496 6503 Email: senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk
Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Local Safeguarding Partners (LSPs)	Email: Strategicpartnerships@walthamforest.gov.uk
Adolescent Safeguarding Lead Children's Social Care	Refer via MASH . Email: Reanne.Turner@walthamforest.gov.uk
Harmful Sexual Behaviour Lead Children's Social Care	Refer via MASH . Email: tracey.goddard@walthamforest.gov.uk Tel: 020 8496 5027 Mob: 0797 476 8433
MARAC / DRM queries	Refer via MASH . laura.butterworth@walthamforest.gov.uk
Mental Health First Aid / Public Health	Catherine.Hutchinson@walthamforest.gov.uk
Violence against women and girls (VAWG) & Domestic Abuse one-stop-shop	Refer via MASH . Email: vawg@walthamforest.gov.uk ; domesticabuseadvice@walthamforest.gov.uk

Other useful contacts and resources

- NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000 NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Rape Crisis
- The UK Safer Internet Centre
- Internet Watch Foundation
- UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi nudes advice
- ThinkUknow
- NICE guidance
- The Lucy Faithful Foundation
- Contextual Safeguarding Network
- Stopitnow
- Anti-Bullying Alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org
- Bullying UK www.bullyinguk.org.uk
- Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool