



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (2023/24)

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A Introduction

The Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST) operates with proper regard to the need to safeguard the welfare of all children and adults in their schools and all those who work directly for the Trust in either employed or volunteer capacities. Our ethos statement states that *“Methodist Schools are inclusive and welcoming communities where individuals are valued, good order is respected, relationships cherished, and where excellence in its widest sense (academic, extra- curricular, lifestyle) is pursued. Methodist Schools encourage a sense of belonging, seek to improve lives, and boldly expect the impossible. In Methodist Schools, educational experiences and activities bring mind and heart, intellect, and passion together”*. We aim to operate at the highest possible standard and for our schools to be known, among other things, where the safeguarding culture is excellent.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children¹ is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding includes: protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's physical and mental health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The welfare of the child is paramount, no child or group of children must be treated less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs. All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

MIST is committed to the safer recruitment, selection and vetting of all Trustees and staff working for the Trust and within each of our schools.

This policy applies to all Trustees, employees, workers and volunteers at the Trust. All references in this document to “trustee” or “staff” should be interpreted as relating to the unless otherwise stated. Updates to the policy are provided by the CEO of MIST in consultation with the safeguarding Trustee; the policy is reviewed annually by MIST Trustees.

¹ A child is anyone that has not yet reached their 18th birthday. ‘Child’ and ‘children’ therefore means child, young person, student, pupil and learner.



B Governance of Safeguarding

1. Governance Structure

Trust Schools: The ten Trust Schools (below) are separate elements within MIST. MIST Trustees have the ultimate legal responsibility for these Schools. In order to exercise these duties effectively, MIST makes extensive delegation to the School Governing Bodies. But MIST does not divest itself of legal responsibility for any action taken arising from this delegated authority.

MIST, together with the ten Schools within it, is a single legal entity. School Governors, therefore, govern their Schools in effect as sub-committees of the MIST Trustees. The Schools are, however, separately registered with the Department for Education (with MIST as their Registered Proprietor).

- Culford School (www.culford.co.uk)
- Farringtons School (www.farringtons.org.uk)
- Kent College, Canterbury (www.kentcollege.com)
- Kent College, Pembury (www.kent-college.co.uk)
- Lorenden School (www.lorenden.org.uk)
- Moorlands School (www.moorlands-school.co.uk)
- Queen's College, Taunton (www.queenscollege.org.uk)
- Shebbear College (www.shebbearcollege.co.uk)
- Truro School (www.truroschoo.com)
- Woodhouse Grove School (www.woodhousegrove.co.uk)

MIST delegates to the School Governors of each school practical responsibility for child protection and safeguarding, which includes discharging the responsibilities set out below and contained within KCSiE (see below). This is consistent with the Department of Education (DfE) and the Independent Schools Inspectorate's (ISI) understanding of arrangements, for inspection purposes.

2. Guidance on Safeguarding

2.1 The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, against which MIST Schools (like all others) are inspected, include a requirement for "Proprietors" to have regard to DfE Guidance on safeguarding (currently KCSiE 2023). This guidance is set out below:

- For independent schools (including charitable independent schools), the principal sources of guidance on safeguarding, to which schools (and thus Governors) must have regard, is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (September 2023) (KCSiE)
- The multi-agency guidance document [Working together to safeguard children](#) (July 2018 updated December 2020) [a new Working Together is expected to be published in Spring 2024]
- The Charity Commission has published its own guidance: [Strategy for dealing with](#)



safeguarding vulnerable groups including children issues in charities: [Commission's Safeguarding Strategy](#). Policy paper on Safeguarding children and young people (July 2014 updated 2017): *Commission's Safeguarding Policy*

- The Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) safeguarding procedures and protocols can be accessed here: [Safeguarding Children & Thresholds - Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership CSCP](#) (The Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures are relevant for Methodist Church House)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice Feb 2022: [Guidance](#)

3. Proprietors' Legal Responsibilities

3.1 Trustees' charity law duties in relation to safeguarding

3.1.1 The Charity Commission describes the overriding duty of Charity Trustees in this context as follows: **Charity Trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity are not harmed in any way through contact with it. They have a legal duty to act prudently and this means that they must take all reasonable steps within their powers to ensure that this does not happen.** Taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm requires compliance with KCSiE and with the principles and values contained within it.

3.1.2 The Commission wants to see that Charity Trustees have:

- assessed the safeguarding risks that might arise from their charity's activities and operations;
- overseen the development and introduction of suitable policies and procedures;
- prepared procedures for the purpose of monitoring these policies so as to ensure effective implementation;
- discussed and approved key policies and procedures at meetings with Charity Trustees;
- properly evaluated risk assessment and management of risk.

3.2 Proprietors' duties as set out in KCSiE

3.2.1 KCSiE sets out a number of specific duties for Proprietors (these have been delegated to School Governors and are monitored by MIST Trustees as described in section 4):

3.2.2 To ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place so that appropriate action can be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare. To ensure that policies, procedures and training in their school are effective and comply with the law (this should include a child protection policy (including early help and peer on peer abuse), procedures for managing allegations against or low-level concerns about staff, whistleblowing procedures, a policy to manage children who go missing from education, and a staff code of conduct);

3.2.3 To prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to relevant statutory responsibilities for safer recruitment including all pre-employment checks, ensuring these are properly recorded in the Single Central Record and emphasising school's good



safeguarding culture in all aspects of the appointment, induction, training and appraisal of staff;

- 3.2.4 To ensure that all policies are provided to staff (including agency or supply staff and volunteers) on induction;
- 3.2.5 To ensure that all staff members (including agency staff) and volunteers undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. All staff should continue to receive regular refresher training at least annually, to ensure they are aware of any relevant safeguarding and child protection developments including the Prevent duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation;
- 3.2.6 To ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(July 2018\)](#) [\[or WT 2024 when published\]](#);
- 3.2.7 To ensure that each school familiarises itself with its local authority child protection arrangements and with relevant contacts at their multi-agency partnership, and that safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority of each school as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by the relevant statutory partners;
- 3.2.8 To ensure that relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles which allow them to share, and withhold, personal information as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR UK, for the purpose of safeguarding children and individuals at risk;
- 3.2.9 To ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place for all off-site activities including school trips, work placement programmes and student exchanges;
- 3.2.10 To ensure that the appointment of a Governor is always subject to the Governor receiving an acceptable enhanced DBS disclosure and section 128 check (i.e., that the person is not prohibited or restricted from taking part in the management (and governance) of an independent school).
- 3.2.11 Safeguarding is a responsibility of the whole Governing Body, but schools should also ensure that a named Governor (usually the Chair or Safeguarding Governor) takes the lead for safeguarding, liaises with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), liaises with the local authority and/or partner agencies on issues of child protection and in the event of allegations made against the Head or a member of the Governing Body;

In addition, each governing body will identify a governor to lead on Prevent. This may be the same person as the designated safeguarding governor.
- 3.2.12 To appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and at least one deputy DSL who should be trained at the same level and available when the DSL is absent. The responsibilities of the DSL or DDSL (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be explicit in the role-holder's job description. The Governors should ensure the DSL has appropriate authority and is given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to others;
- 3.2.13 To ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including abuse, relationships,



radicalisation and on-line safety;

- 3.2.14 To ensure there are procedures in place to handle allegations against all staff and volunteers, and to make suitable referrals to the DBS and TRA or other professional agencies (e.g. NMC / HCPC / BACP for school nurses, other health professionals, school counsellors) as appropriate;
- 3.2.15 To ensure that there is appropriate support provided for staff and volunteers subject to allegations of abuse;
- 3.2.16 To ensure that there is a procedure for reporting, recording and responding to low level concerns about staff behaviour, aligned to the staff code of conduct / behaviour policy and the national Guidance for Safer Working Practice (2022) and that all staff are aware of this;
- 3.2.17 To ensure there are procedures in place to handle allegations of child-on-child abuse which are fully compliant with KCSiE part 5 and these procedures are easily understood by staff, pupils and parents. The school has a carefully planned curriculum (formal and informal) and pastoral arrangements that minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse including the risks associated with sharing nudes and semi-nudes and any additional issues that may present within boarding provision;
- 3.2.18 To ensure that children are listened to, and that children's wishes are taken into account when considering appropriate action, but also to ensure that confidentiality is not agreed with children. The staff member(s) should always act in the best interest of the child;
- 3.2.19 To support staff when they are dealing with difficult cases; for example, by providing access to supervision as appropriate;
- 3.2.20 To ensure there are appropriate safeguarding procedures in place for responding to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. These procedures should help to identify the risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future;
- 3.2.21 To identify and provide appropriate support to children who have, or are at risk of developing, mental health concerns
- 3.2.22 To ensure that there is a clear policy on the use of computer networks and mobile technology in the school and in boarding provision for the purpose of promoting online safety and preventing radicalisation. This requires appropriate filters and monitoring of school IT networks so that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material whilst taking care to ensure that "over-blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions;
- 3.2.23 To ensure that all staff understand that filtering & monitoring systems are in place but have limitations and are made aware (at induction and in regular staff training) of their individual responsibility to ensure children are safe online;
- 3.2.23 To ensure staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after children (and those who were previously looked after) safe;
- 3.2.24 To safeguard and promote the welfare of children who need a social worker, for example by providing additional pastoral and / or academic support;



3.2.25 To ensure their safeguarding and child protection policies reflect the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children living away from home, from overseas or with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities;

3.2.26 To ensure that all staff in schools are familiar with different types of abuse, including extra-familial safeguarding risks, and are trained in recognising the different indicators of harm.

4. Implementation of Proprietors' Responsibilities

4.1 MIST discharges its legal responsibilities and seeks to ensure the safety and welfare of the children in our schools by:

4.2 Providing support to our schools' governing bodies, senior management teams and staff in safeguarding;

4.3 Delegating to the Governing Body of each school the practical responsibility for child protection and safeguarding, which includes discharging the proprietor's duties set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) (September 2023) and the welfare requirements of the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (NMS Sep 2022);

4.4 Scrutinising and challenging the Governing Body to ensure that they are discharging these responsibilities and promoting best practice in our schools;

4.5 Leading by example, adopting a child-centred approach and strong safeguarding principles and values in our work.

In particular:

4.6 MIST Trustees require each school to report on safeguarding annually through the Annual School Report (ASR). The ASR includes reporting on governance arrangements, training, and referrals to statutory authorities.

4.7 MIST Trustees require all schools to have a detailed policy for child protection and safeguarding that is accessible on their websites. This policy and any associated policies (e.g., whistleblowing, staff code of conduct, low level concerns policy, online safety / digital security, pupil behaviour policy, child on child abuse, sexual violence & harassment) are updated by the school and reviewed by the Governing Body at least annually.

MIST instigates its own audits of safeguarding arrangements in schools (e.g., SSRA 2016, which reviewed safeguarding policies and practice in all the schools).

MIST has a responsibility to intervene in any school where there are reasonable grounds to consider the governors and/or management of the school are not undertaking their safeguarding responsibilities appropriately. MIST Trustees reserve the right to implement an annual audit of safeguarding in the schools.

4.8 MIST Trustees appoint a designated officer with responsibility for safeguarding in the Trust (currently the CEO) and a Safeguarding Trustee with specific responsibility for monitoring and



advising on safeguarding arrangements.

- 4.9 MIST, through its designated officer and Trustee, liaises as required with the Trust's legal advisers (Farrer & Co) and the Methodist Church's safeguarding advisory team (currently led by Tim Carter).
- 4.10 The appointment of a MIST Trustee is always subject to the Trustee receiving a suitable enhanced DBS disclosure and section 128 check (i.e., that the person is not prohibited or restricted from taking part in the management (and governance) of an independent school). The MIST Office keeps a Central Staff Register with records of checks as required on the appointment of MIST Office staff and MIST Trustees and shares this with the schools as appropriate.
- 4.11 MIST Trustees receives copies of all Inspection reports of its schools and may require the school to produce an action plan in addition to that which is required by the relevant inspection authorities.
- 4.12 MIST arranges training of Trustees in matters of safeguarding. This includes updating Trustees annually on any new legislative requirements, making relevant guidance documents available (e.g. KCSiE etc.) The Trust may also provide training opportunities for Heads and school DSLs to meet and share good safeguarding practice and knowledge.
- 4.13 MIST is responsible for making Serious Incident Reports to the Charity Commission in respect of any serious breach of any school's or MIST's own safeguarding (or other) arrangements.
- 4.14 While MIST is ultimately responsible for safeguarding, it delegates operational responsibility to the Governing Body and senior management team of each school. By scrutinising carefully the work of these bodies, and by providing support to them where needed, MIST oversees the safeguarding procedures and governance in each school and ensures that they comply with the relevant statutory guidance and that as far as possible they ensure the safety and welfare of the children in each school.

5. Handling Live Incidents

5.1 Concerns about an adult working with children

- 5.1.1 All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by the individual schools, their governing bodies and by MIST and responded to appropriately. This may require a referral to children's social care, the designated officer of the local authority for allegations against staff, trustees and other volunteers, and in emergencies, the police.
- 5.1.2 KCSiE makes it clear that it is not the role of the Governors to deal at an operational level with incidents as they arise. The Charity Commission accepts this and accepts that it is typically the case that for concerns about an adult working with children, the Head will liaise with a nominated governor (usually the Chair) as such cases emerge and need to be dealt with. In the case of concerns about the Head, such concerns will be brought directly to the Chair of Governors.
- 5.1.3 MIST expects the Head and / or Chair of Governors to inform MIST via the CEO (a copy of this notice should be sent to the nominated Safeguarding Trustee) of such live situations and



advise the CEO of outcomes/actions.

- 5.1.4 In the event of an allegation or safeguarding concern relating to a MIST employee or Trustee, the CEO will liaise in the first instance with the designated officer for the Camden multi-agency partnership, unless the allegation relates to the CEO. In this case, the Methodist Church safeguarding advisory team will be involved.
- 5.1.5 The CEO and / or Methodist Church safeguarding advisory team will follow the NPCC guidance on [when to call the police](#) .
- 5.1.6 In the event of an allegation of non-recent abuse the CEO will act in accordance with guidance of KCSiE, any relevant local authority guidance and the Trust's guidance note to schools in respect of non-recent allegations.

5.2 Concerns about a child or children

- 5.2.1 In the case of concerns about a child, the DSL will liaise with children's social care and other statutory agencies as appropriate. The Governing Body will not normally become involved in individual concerns about a child but will monitor the effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling such concerns.
- 5.2.2 In cases where the DSL believes it is necessary to escalate their concern in line with the published procedure of the relevant multi-agency partnership, the Headteacher and safeguarding governor will be informed.

5.3 Concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including low level concerns

- 5.3.1 MIST Trustees, the governing bodies and school leaders are responsible for creating an open and transparent culture where all concerns about adults (including low level concerns which do not meet the threshold for referral to the LADO) are shared responsibly, recorded and responded to.
- 5.3.2 The Schools are responsible for developing a low-level concerns policy which is incorporated in their staff code of conduct and safeguarding policy, as required by KCSiE 2023 part 4.2; low level concerns should be reported to the Head and / or a named individual in the School. The named individual will inform the Head of all low level concerns.
- 5.3.3 A low level concern is **any** concern that an adult who works in or on behalf of a school may have behaved in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including behaviour outside of work, and the concern does not meet the threshold for referral to the LADO.
- 5.3.4 MIST will continue to share guidance to schools to assist their adoption of a low-level concerns policy.
- 5.3.5 In the case of concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, the Head (if it relates to a school) or the CEO (if it relates to MIST) will act as the co-ordinator to follow up the concern, ensuring it is properly logged and the complainant advised of the process the Head/CEO will take and with whom s/he will consult. Such consultation may include relevant designated staff in the school, legal advisers, and if required, the safeguarding advisory team in Methodist



Church House and the LADO in the Local Authority in which the school is located. The Head/CEO will seek to identify and remedy any poor or unsafe practice.

5.4 Whistleblowing concerns

- 5.4.1 In the case of whistleblowing concerns relating to safeguarding, MIST's safeguarding lead and independent safeguarding advisor will liaise with each other and carry out an investigation in accordance with the Whistleblowing (confidential reporting) policy, referring to external agencies where appropriate.

5.5 Complaints to the Trust

In the event of a complaint or safeguarding concern referred to the Trust by a parent, the CEO will act as the co-ordinator to follow up the concern, ensuring it is properly logged and the complainant advised of the process the CEO will take and with whom he will consult. Such consultation may include relevant designated staff in the school, legal advisers, and if required, the safeguarding advisory team in Methodist Church House and the LADO in the Local Authority in which the school is located.

6. Record Keeping

- 6.1 It is critical to have a good paper trail, and accurate minutes, demonstrating how both Trustees and School Governors have acted, both with regard to live incidents and to safeguarding governance and oversight generally. This must take into account the restrictions under the section 141F of the Education Act 2002 that prohibit the publication of material that might lead to the identification of individual teachers who have had safeguarding allegations laid against them.
- 6.2 Data protection issues should never put child safety at risk, nor take precedence over the general prevention and processing of safeguarding claims. However, this does not mean that the existing laws of data protection and confidentiality are suspended. Schools are still liable to data breach implications and fines if legislation is not adhered to. With regards to data protection matters relating to safeguarding and/or child protection MIST will seek advice from the appropriate experts.

7. Reporting serious incidents (SIR)

- 7.1 The Charity Commission places considerable significance on Trustees' duty to report serious incidents to it. It has produced guidance on what constitutes a serious incident and how charities should go about reporting such an incident ([Charity Commission's Guidance on Reporting Serious Incidents](#)). The Commission considers a failure to submit a prompt report of a serious incident as an indication of mismanagement or maladministration. Any failure to report can lead to the Commission taking regulatory action. Furthermore, the Commission includes in its Annual Return a statement, which Charity Trustees must make, confirming that there have been no serious incidents in the relevant period that have not been reported previously. It can constitute an offence to make a false statement in this document. MIST has developed a Serious Incident Reports Guidance (2020) note for Schools. The guidance is available on the Methodist Schools [website](#).

C MIST Staff and Trustees



8. Contact with Children

8.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil that responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

8.2 Staff and Trustees of MIST are not based in schools and do not usually come into contact with pupils on a daily or regular basis but it is still possible that they may encounter safeguarding concerns that arise from:

- Visits to schools
- Pupil or parental complaint
- School employee or volunteer complaint or referral
- Allegations of non-recent abuse by a former pupil, employee or parent

9. What to do if you have a safeguarding concern

The safety and wellbeing of children in our schools is dependent on the vigilance of all our trustees and staff and their prompt communication to the relevant DSL, Head or MIST CEO of any safeguarding concerns, no matter how small.

All Trustees, staff and volunteers in MIST and our schools have a duty to report all safeguarding concerns. In particular, they must comply with KCSiE (2023) which includes reporting concerns about (a) children; (b) adults working with children (including low level concerns); and (c) poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the schools' or MIST's safeguarding procedures.

9.1 What to do if you have a concern about a child

9.1.1 All Trustees and staff should understand what to do if they are worried that a child may be being abused ([What to do - guidance](#)). Trustees and staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. For further information about the signs of abuse and neglect, please see Appendix 2 and <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>.

9.1.2 When visiting a school or in contact with a pupil or pupils, Trustees and staff should be alert to signs of distress, abuse or neglect amongst children and should report any such concerns to the School's DSL in accordance with the relevant school's safeguarding policy. **If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. The DSL will ordinarily make external referrals, but anyone can make a referral directly.**

9.1.3 If the staff member or Trustee thinks that their concern is not being dealt with appropriately, s/he should press for reconsideration with the DSL and/or the head teacher as appropriate. If the Trustee or staff member is still not satisfied s/he should escalate their concern as set out in section 2(d) below, which is in accordance with MIST's whistleblowing policy (see appendix



4)

9.2 What to do if you have a concern about an adult

9.2.1 In the event that staff or a Trustee has a concern that an adult may have:

- 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, the Trustee or staff member should report their concern to the Head in accordance with the school's child protection policy if the concern relates to an adult working in a school, or to the Chair of Governors if the concern relates to the Head, or to the CEO if the concern relates to an adult working or volunteering for MIST.

9.2.2 If the staff member or Trustee thinks that their concern is not being dealt with appropriately, s/he should escalate their concern as set out in section 9.4 (below) which is in accordance with MIST's whistleblowing policy.

9.2.3 If a staff member or Trustee has a low-level concern about an adult's conduct in school, or finds themselves in a situation which they feel could be misconstrued or cause concern to others, they should report this to the Head without delay, even if the incident does not meet the thresholds set out in 9.2.1 above. MIST provides guidance to schools and Trustees to assist their adoption of a low-level concerns policy.

9.3 What to do if you have a concern about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice

9.3.1 All staff and Trustees have a responsibility to report any concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including in relation to safeguarding.

9.3.2 A concern about poor or unsafe practice includes where an individual thinks that the safeguarding procedures are not being adequately followed or that the procedures themselves are defective. It could include (but is not limited to) serious breaches of safeguarding procedures, poor or unsafe practice in relation to the recording and/or handling of safeguarding concerns and/or working with external agencies.

9.3.3 In the event that a member of staff or a Trustee has such a concern s/he should in the first instance report their concern to:

- The CEO if the concern relates to MIST's practices; or
- The School's Head or DSL if the concern relates to the practices of an individual MIST school;

If the staff member or Trustee thinks that their concern is not being dealt with appropriately, s/he should escalate their concern as set out in section 2(d) below, which is in accordance with MIST's whistleblowing policy.

9.4 How to escalate your concerns in accordance with MIST's whistleblowing policy



9.4.1 Where a staff member or Trustee feels that his/her concern is not being addressed, s/he should follow MIST's whistleblowing policy. This requires staff to escalate their concerns to:

- The CEO (ceo@methodistschools.org.uk)
- The MIST Safeguarding Trustee (fmynors.trustee@methodistschools.org.uk); or
- The Trust's independent safeguarding consultant (carolyn.eyre@btinternet.com)

9.5 NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

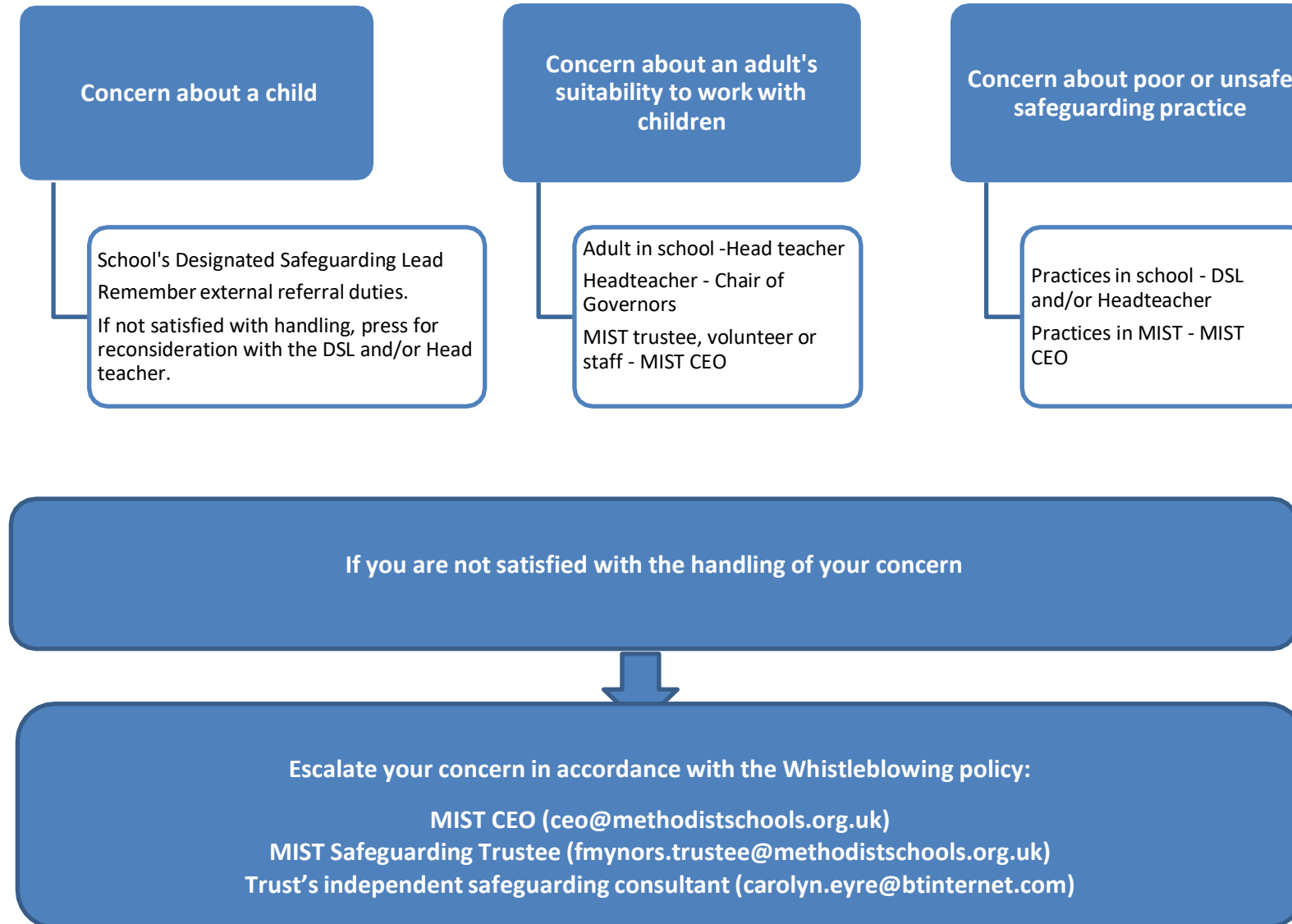
9.5.1 If a staff member or Trustee is concerned about the way in which a safeguarding concern is being handled, s/he may contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line at anytime:

Call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday
or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Guidance on whistleblowing can be found at - [Whistleblowing for employees - GOV.UK](#)

What to do if you have a safeguarding concern

Autumn 2023



**NSPCC
Whistleblowing
Advice Line**

Call 0800 028 0285

**Email
help@nspcc.org.uk**

If you are concerned about the way in which a safeguarding concern is being handled internally, you can contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line at any time



10. Code of Conduct for Trustees and Staff

- 10.1 Trustees should never behave in a way that compromises their responsibilities or reputation as a Trustee.
- 10.2 All Trustees and staff who come into contact with pupils set examples of behaviour and conduct which may be used as a model by other staff and by pupils. All trustees and staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct and use professional common sense and good judgement when working with children. In the event that you observe or hear something that causes you (as Trustee) to be concerned for the safety or well-being of a pupil, please report this immediately to the DSL or the Head as a matter of urgency.
- 10.3 If a child or young person chooses to confide in you, be sympathetic and supportive. Never promise to keep the information confidential or “secret”. Confidentiality is not an option when children are considered to possibly be at risk of harm. Please do not offer advice or give practical support yourself. If what they have said gives you cause for concern about their welfare or well-being, or that of someone else, you should report it immediately to the DSL or Head as a matter of urgency. If you are unsure, please mention it. The DSL and Head are experienced in distinguishing what requires an urgent response and what does not but your concern adds to the overall understanding of an individual child’s life and experience.
- 10.4 When a Trustee visits a school, they do so as a visitor and should ensure they report to the school reception, be able to show evidence of personal ID if requested and familiarise themselves with the school’s published safeguarding procedures for visitors.
- 10.5 Trustees in schools are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their dealings with children and employees of the schools they visit. Trustees should avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted or might make them vulnerable to allegation or accusation of improper behaviour. It is not appropriate for a Trustee to have contact with pupils after visits, no matter how well intended, unless agreed specifically beforehand with the Head. If a pupil should contact you after the visit please speak to the Head before responding.
- 10.6 Trustees and MIST office employees must inform the CEO immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police inquiry, charged with an offence or any other such situation which could mean that they would not be judged a fit and proper person to exercise governance or management responsibility in a school.
- 10.7 In addition, Trustees and MIST employees should inform the CEO of any personal relationship or association (real or online) that may have implications for MIST’s ability to safeguard children.
- 10.8 If a Trustee has a concern for the behaviour of another Trustee or the CEO, he/she should report that concern to the Chair of the Trust. If a safeguarding concern needs raising about the Chair of the Trust the concern shall be raised with the Trustee with specific responsibility for safeguarding.



Appendix One: Inquiries and Relevant legislation:

The UK has seen many inquiry reports, legislation and guidance documents over the years but those of most relevance are illustrated in the following table: -

CHILDREN ACT 1989	Introduced comprehensive changes to legislation in England and Wales.
CHILDREN ACT 2004	Result of Lord Laming's report into the death of Victoria Climbié.
CHILDREN AND SOCIAL CARE ACT 2017	Replaces LSCBs with Multi-agency Partnerships (MAPs), also referred to in statutory guidance as 'the three partners'
BICHARD INQUIRY 2004	Inquiry into the Soham murders resulting in a registration scheme for those working with vulnerable groups and applied safer recruitment principles across the voluntary and statutory sectors.
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN WHOM ILLNESS IS FABRICATED OR INDUCED	Non-statutory guidance from the NHS on protecting children where carers or parents fabricate or induce illness in a child.
SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE GROUPS ACT 2006	Independent Safeguarding Authority established (later to become Disclosure and Barring Service).
PROTECTION OF FREEDOMS ACT 2012	Made significant changes to the SVG Act 2006 in relation to safer recruitment and regulated activity
DISQUALIFICATION UNDER THE CHILDCARE ACT 2006 (2018 REGS)	The 2009 Regulations were replaced on 31 st August 2018
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN FROM ABUSE LINKED TO A BELIEF IN SPIRIT POSSESSION 2007	Non-statutory good practice guidance intended to help practitioners and line managers apply Working Together (see end of table) to the particular needs of children who are abused or neglected because of a belief in spirit possession.
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM EXPLOITATION 2017	Non-statutory guidance outlining how organisations and individuals should work together to protect young people from sexual exploitation.
MUNRO REVIEW IN CHILD PROTECTION IN ENGLAND 2011	Focus on child central system.
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WHO MAY HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKED 2011	Practice guidance.
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014	Gives greater protection to vulnerable children.
KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 2023	Statutory guidance for schools and colleges.



National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022	Statutory framework
WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED 2015	Guidance to help practitioners identify the signs of child abuse and neglect and understand what action to take.
WORKING TOGETHER 2018	Updated guidance for interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Names Faith Organisations as needing to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. [NB – this is expected to be updated in Spring 2024]
PREVENT Duty Guidance July 2015	Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on their duty under in the Counter-Terrorism Act 2015 to have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding practitioners – Publications – Gov.UK 2018	Guidance for Governors and Trustees about information sharing and especially about dealing with confidential information. [NB – a new Information sharing document is expected in Spring 2024]
Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Legislation that, for the first time, identifies children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right; this has led to an updated definition of ‘harm’

Child safeguarding practice reviews (previously referred to as Serious Case Reviews) can be used as a source of information to assist schools to develop procedures to improve practice e.g. the serious case review into Southbank International School. In this case there was confusion as to which body (the proprietor or the governing body) was responsible for safeguarding. The serious case review found that this confusion meant that safeguarding oversight was weak and that concerns about a member of staff were missed. By complementing rather than duplicating the work of the governing bodies, and by having a clear division of responsibilities and governance structure, MIST seeks to ensure that the monitoring, oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding procedures in each of our schools is as robust as possible.

The Methodist Church published its Past Cases Review (PCR) in May 2015. [“Courage, Cost and Hope”](#)



Appendix Two: Definitions and Terminology

This section provides guidance on some of the key definitions and terminology used for safeguarding children and which are used throughout the procedures. It is not an exhaustive list and if you are unsure what something means you should always check with a safeguarding professional. KCSiE 2023 states that “staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label”.

Children	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18 th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection. <i>Taken from Working Together 2018</i>
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children	Defined for the purposes of this guidance as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting children from maltreatment; • preventing impairment of children’s health or development; • ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and • taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances. <i>Taken from Working Together 2018</i>
Child protection	Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. <i>Taken from Working Together 2018</i>
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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. <i>Taken from KCSiE 2023)</i>
Physical abuse	A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, downing, 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. <i>Taken from Working Together 2018</i>
Emotional abuse	The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent 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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the



	<p>exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.</p> <p><i>Taken from Working Together 2018</i></p>
Sexual abuse	<p>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, 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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males.</p> <p>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 and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.</p> <p><i>Taken from KCSiE 2023</i></p>
Neglect	<p>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 as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 care-givers); or • ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. <p>It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.</p> <p><i>Taken from Working Together 2018</i></p>
Domestic Abuse	<p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).</p> <p>Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.</p>



	<p>All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.</p> <p>Taken from KCSiE 2023</p>
Harm and significant harm	<p>‘Harm’ means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development. ‘Significant harm’ is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the children and is based on comparing the child’s health and development to that which could be reasonably expected of a child of a similar age.</p> <p>Taken from Children Act 1989 and Adoption and Children Act 2002</p>
Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation	<p>Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both 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 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and / or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.</p> <p>Taken from KCSiE 2023</p>
Mental Health	<p>All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.</p> <p>Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.</p> <p>Taken from KCSiE 2023</p>
Abuse using social media	<p>Online abuse and any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones, children and young people may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.</p> <p>NSPCC Website. Online abuse definition accessed June 2016</p>



Appendix 3 – SSRA 2016

In March 2016, MIST launched its Schools Safeguarding Review and Audit (SSRA). This was partly in response to the Methodist Church’s Past Cases Review (PCR) and the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) but also to provide support to and scrutiny of the schools’ safeguarding procedures and records.

The SSRA has two elements:

1. Review of known records of non-recent abuse in order to ensure lessons from such incidents had been learned, appropriate reports made and records kept.
2. Audit of current safeguarding arrangements in the schools. For this element school self-audit tool was designed and the audit team used this to assess each school and report back to the school accordingly.

The SSRA Audit Team reported to an independently chaired SSRA project board. The Board was responsible for identifying issues of common concern and making recommendations for future actions in Methodist Schools to further improve and share best practice.

Three pilot schools were audited in May 2016. The other schools were audited between June and October 2016.

The SSRA project board presented its initial report to MIST in December 2016 and the findings were shared with all MIST schools in February 2017. A report was submitted to Methodist Conference in April 2017.

The MIST office will make an annual (or as new cases arise) request to schools for an updated non-recent abuse log and an updated SEF audit. Copies are to be held at each school and at MIST Head Office.

[SSRA 2016/17 Report – Methodist Schools website](#)