Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Oaks

Academic Year 2026-2027

THE OAKS, AMBERLEIGH CARE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL)	Cassandra Melaniphy Certified until Sep 2027	01952 619144 Cassandra.melaniphy@amberleighcare.co.uK
Deputy DSL (DDSL)	Jayne Woodhouse Certified until Sep 2028	01952 619144 Jayne.woodhouse@amberleighcare.co.uK
Safeguarding Team *CPOMS Online reporting / recording system	Kevin Gallagher (Proprietor) Michelle Russell (Director) Simon Roberts (Care Manager) Marie Clutton (Therapeutic Practice Manager)	kevin.gallagher@amberleighcare.co.uk michelle.russell@amberleighcare.co.uk simon.roberts@amberleighcare.co.uk marie.clutton@amberleighcare.co.uk
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Shropshire Council Dedicated Safeguarding Line (FPOC/Compass)	0345 6789021
Channel helpline (PREVENT)		020 7340 7264
Imminent Threat to Safety	Emergency Services	999

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Amberleigh is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

1. Aims, Introduction and Legislation

Amberleigh Care aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues
- Head Teacher is responsible to ensure that all education staff practice is in line with national and local requirements.

Amberleigh recognises its duty under the Education Act 2002, Children Act 1989 & 2004 and Local Government Act 2000 to make arrangements to ensure that tasks are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. As a registered children's home, Amberleigh complies with the Education Regulations for Independent School Standards (2014) and the Residential Special Schools quality standards (2015). The objective of the procedures within this policy are to ensure that appropriate action is taken immediately where it is believed a child may be at risk or it is alleged that a child is suspected of being abused. The prime concern at all times must be the interests and safety of all members of Amberleigh's community including the children, staff and visitors.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Schools and colleges and staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. It is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children' (2026) 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** that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- **PROMOTING** the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- **TAKING ACTION** to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-national-framework*care-national-framework*

For the purpose of clarity, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Although a child may have reached 16 years of age, be living independently or is in further education, in hospital or the secure estate, this does not alter the child's status or entitlements to services or protection.

Working Together to safeguard Children 2026 reflects the importance of a child-centred approach within a whole family focus. This is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child and all practitioners should follow the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. These Acts make clear that the welfare of children is paramount and that they are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless

compulsory intervention in family life is necessary. Children are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system:

Children have said that they need:

- **vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **understanding and action**: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- **stability:** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **respect**: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **information and engagement:** to be informed about, and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments, and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse, exploitation, and discrimination, and the right to special protection and help if a refugee

Amberleigh follows local Safeguarding Partnership policies, procedures, guidance and protocols and the guidance laid out in current DfE/HM Government guidance:

• Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
• Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act (2026)
• What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015)
• Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers (2018)
• Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings Working with Children and Young People (2024)
• Section 5B (11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by Section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015
• The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
• Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
• Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (current version)
• Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)
• Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges (Filtering and Monitoring)
• Allergy Safety in Schools (2026)

This policy applies to all staff (including bank staff, students on placements and volunteers), children and visitors and should be read in combination with the following policies:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – Part one
- Educational Visits Policy
- Preventing Bullying Policy
- Management of Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Compliments Policy

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Amberleigh Handbook: Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- School Health and Safety and First Aid Policy
- Multi-Media and Online Safety Policy
- Amberleigh Handbook: Recruitment and Selection
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Complaints policy. Amberleigh Handbook; Whistle Blowing Procedure

It is Amberleigh's policy that:

- All children placed at Amberleigh will be protected from harm.
- All children grow up in an environment that is consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Amberleigh will work in partnership with all relevant agencies to ensure that children are effectively protected from harm.
- All staff at Amberleigh are made aware of the Safeguarding policy and all associated procedures. The implementation of the procedures can only be effective when supported by good practise, and the exercise of professional skill and judgement, based on thorough assessment, supported by evidence and critical analysis.
- The implementation of effective recruitment (Safer Recruitment) and H.R procedures including checking all staff are safe to work with children.
- All staff are given appropriate and ongoing training/CPD to enable them to do their job effectively.

Key Principles for our children are that they:

- Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, neglect, victimisation and exploitation.
- Have a comprehensive range of learning opportunities.
- Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.
- Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised.

The role of the school is:

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. (Source: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026)

Good Practice Aims

All staff must be alert to the possibility that the child in their care may have, or may in the future, be abused. They must also be aware that abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur in the home, perpetrated by a child or by a member of staff.

The first principle in all situations is that the welfare and protection of the child is paramount. Any suspicions of abuse, neglect and exploitation must be reported in order for decisions to be made regarding a possible investigation. Reporting is a staff responsibility; investigation is the responsibility of the Local Authority of the area in which the home is situated (See Whistle Blowing Policy and Children's Complaints Protocol). Staff must ensure that they are familiar with these procedures.

All allegations must be taken seriously and the correct procedures followed in a timely manner (same working day). Staff have a responsibility to deal with any disclosures sensitively, and listen carefully to a child who discloses abuse, neglect or exploitation, while not asking leading or probing questions which may hamper any subsequent formal investigation. In line with the 6 R's in relation to Safeguarding, staff must not guarantee secrecy and should inform, and reassure the young person that the information will be shared whether disclosure is past or present. Staff may suffer a conflict between a promise to the child and the procedure. An atmosphere of trust must be developed in which the child understands that the staff member will deal with the information in a way which protects their best interests. Clear information must be given to the child as to what will happen as a result of the disclosure however, guarantees can be given of a sensitive and supportive approach.

Investigating a child's abuse, neglect or exploitation is distressing for all concerned. The impact on both the child and staff should not be under-estimated. A support system needs to be identified for all involved at the outset in order that a climate of openness can be established and maintained. Children should have access to independent persons and staff should have access to individuals outside the direct line of management.

Information about helpful organisations and their phone numbers is distributed to young people at Amberleigh through a 'Young Peoples Guide' and staff members should be informed of their duty to speak out if they feel that abuse, neglect or exploitation has taken place.

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. We will comply with all statutory safeguarding, attendance, information-sharing and child welfare duties introduced through the Act and will ensure relevant policies, procedures and staff training are updated as required. The school will work collaboratively with safeguarding partners and other agencies to promote the welfare and safety of children.

2. Recognition and Categories of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues that can place children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplained and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Below are some safeguarding concerns all staff should be aware of.
Additional information on these safeguarding issues and information on other safeguarding issues is included in Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse, neglect or exploit 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 unknown others e.g. via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Both mental and physical health are relevant to safeguarding.

Physical Abuse
Physical abuse 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.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is 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 to 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 the 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 online bullying), 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, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

Neglect is 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 because 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); failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Supporting children at risk of, or experiencing, harm outside the home

Some children experience abuse, neglect and exploitation outside the home. This is often referred to as "extra-familial harm" (Working Together To Safeguard Children, 2026). Harm can occur in a range of extra-familial contexts, including school and other educational settings, peer groups, or within community/public spaces, and/or online. Children may experience this type of harm from other children and/or from adults. Forms of extra-familial harm include exploitation by criminal and organised crime groups and individuals (such as county lines and financial exploitation), serious violence, modern slavery and trafficking, online harm, sexual exploitation, teenage relationship abuse, and the influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation. Children of all ages can experience extrafamilial harm

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE involves exploitative circumstances and relationships where young people receive something in return for engaging in sexual activities (for example food, drugs, mobile phone, alcohol, gifts, accommodation, money or sometimes simply affection). Sexual exploitation can take many forms including 'consensual' relationships where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. The main factor that denotes exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves different degrees of intimidation and coercion including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying, online bullying and grooming. It is important to note that some children and young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Child sexual exploitation may occur without the child being aware of events, or understanding that these constitute abuse.

Child sexual exploitation is never the victims fault, even if there is some form of exchange; all children and young people under the age of 18 years have the right to be safe and should be protected from harm.

Further information can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the DfE publication Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Guide for Practitioners (2017).

Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK

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

Online Exploitation

Online exploitation is a form of child abuse that can occur through the use of technology, including social media, online gaming platforms, messaging services and live-streaming applications. Children and young people may be exploited online through coercion, manipulation, grooming, intimidation or deception.

Online exploitation may involve the sharing of sexual communications, nude or semi-nude images, live-streamed abuse, sexual coercion, financial exploitation, criminal exploitation or other forms of abuse. Perpetrators can contact multiple children simultaneously and may use the perceived anonymity of the internet to target victims.

Where images or videos are shared online, they can be copied, stored and distributed quickly, increasing the risk of ongoing abuse and harm. Children may not recognise that they are being exploited and may believe they are engaging in a genuine relationship or friendship.

Staff should be aware that online abuse can occur alongside abuse in the physical world and that children may experience multiple forms of exploitation at the same time.
It must also be recognised that children can abuse other children. In some cases, a child may be both a victim and a perpetrator of harmful behaviour.

Staff should be aware of emerging online safeguarding risks associated with generative artificial intelligence (AI), including AI-generated content, manipulated images, deepfakes and online impersonation. Such technologies may be used to facilitate bullying, harassment, exploitation, grooming, fraud or the creation and sharing of inappropriate content. Concerns will be responded to in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Further information can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

Trafficking

According to The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (the *Palermo Protocol*) describes trafficking as 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of use of force or other forms of coercions, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation'.

Exploitation may include, but is not limited to:
• Sexual exploitation

• Criminal exploitation, including county lines activity
• Forced labour or domestic servitude
• Modern slavery
• Financial exploitation
• Forced marriage
• Organ harvesting

Children may be trafficked within the UK or across international borders. Any child who has been trafficked is a victim, regardless of whether they appear to have consented to any part of the process.

Staff should be alert to indicators of trafficking and exploitation, including missing episodes, persistent absence, signs of control or coercion, criminal exploitation, unexplained resources or possessions, and concerns regarding relationships with adults or older peers.

Further information can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

Child-on-Child Abuse

All staff are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves through child-on-child abuse.

. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment
- online sexual abuse
- the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
- abuse within intimate personal relationships
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- upskirting
- initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

Child-on-child abuse can affect any child. However, staff should recognise that some forms of abuse may be gendered in nature. For example, girls are more likely to experience sexual violence and sexual harassment, while boys may be more likely to experience initiation or hazing-type violence.

In our school, we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the School’s Behaviour Policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a student, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older student and refers to their behaviour towards a younger student or a more vulnerable student
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other students in the school
- indicates that other students may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEND, and children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their gender may be particularly vulnerable to experiencing child-on-child abuse and may face additional barriers to disclosure.

Guidance includes:

- the importance of explaining to children that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise them
- the importance of understanding intra-familial harms, and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
- the need for schools and colleges to be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners.

Staff follow the guidance contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or children 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Guidance on 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment' between children in schools and colleges is referenced in Keeping Children Safe In Education 2026. This school will treat sexual violence and sexual harassment in line with any other child protection concern and refer onto relevant agencies as stated within our policy.

Sexual Violence refers to criminal acts; rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault, as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Sexual harassment is described as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature'. Importantly, the definition of consent is stated and should help students begin to understand more clearly.

This school accepts that Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may

overlap, it may also include initiation/hazing they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

It is important in our setting that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support in a non-judgemental way and on a case-by case basis. Staff will act in the best interest of the child. In light of this this will consider; - The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- The nature of the alleged incident
- The ages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between children
- Is the incident a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, school and college staff
- Contextual safeguarding issues
- The rights of children to receive an education

This school will have a whole school approach in;

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;

- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and

- Challenging behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be especially vulnerable. Research states that disabled and deaf children are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration;

- The potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs;

- Communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.

- Established research found that children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and children who are questioning their gender can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

- We as a school will ensure that designated school staff understand consent. It will be especially important if a child is making a disclosure that suggests they might have been raped.

It is our school and community ethos to see sexual violence and sexual harassment in the context of developing a community safeguarding culture, where sexual misconduct is unacceptable, and not ‘banter’ or inevitable part of growing up. It is recognised that these issues are likely to occur particularly in our setting, but they are challenged and discussed by education, care and therapy staff immediately and then followed up in community meetings to educate our students on the law and unacceptable behaviour. Our school has developed effective programmes of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships, sex

and health education (RSHE) to support our students in understanding safeguarding issues. This curriculum also supports students in how they can raise a concern they may have about themselves, a friend or peer; and learn to recognise and develop healthy and respectful relationships, avoiding stereotypes and promoting equality. Students are taught that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong.

Sharing Nude and Semi-Nude Images and/or Videos

Sharing Nude and Semi-Nude Images and/or Videos is a significant issue for older teenagers and involves the sharing of indecent images of themselves with others. It may be the intention for the image to be shared only with one person, but invariably these pictures or videos are shared across the internet. Such images can be a part of the early stages of grooming, especially when the potential victim has only 'met' the abuser online.

Although Sharing Nude and Semi-Nude Images and/or Videos is a widespread issue, it is illegal to send or be in possession of indecent images or videos of people under 18 years (Protection of Children Act 1978 and Criminal Justice Act 1988).

The Law

Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 years which is indecent is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18.

Indecent is not definitively defined in law, but images are likely to be considered indecent if they depict:

- a naked young person
- a topless girl
- an image which displays genitals, and
- sex acts including masturbation
- indecent images may also include overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear

Staff should recognise that the sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos may be associated with a range of safeguarding concerns, including:

- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- Grooming
- Coercion or manipulation
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Online abuse
- Peer-on-peer abuse

These laws weren't created to criminalise young people, but to protect them. Although sharing sexual images of themselves is illegal and risky, it is often the result of curiosity and exploration. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NSPCC) is clear that "youth-produced sexual imagery should be primarily treated as a safeguarding issue".

Schools may respond to incidents without involving the police. However, in some circumstances the police must be involved.

Handling Incidents Involving the Sharing of Nude and Semi-Nude Images and/or Videos

The school will respond to incidents in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings Working with Children and Young People.

Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people.

School Process:

- Refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- DSL meets with the young people involved
- **Do not view the image unless it is unavoidable**
- Discuss with care manager, therapist unless there is an issue where that's not possible
  • Any concern the young person is at risk of harm, contact safeguarding and/or the police

Always refer to the police or safeguarding if incident involves:

- an adult
- coercion, blackmail, or grooming
- concerns about capacity to consent
- images show atypical sexual behaviour for the child's developmental stage
- violent acts are depicted
- image shows sex acts and includes a child under 13 years
- a young person at risk of immediate harm as a result of the disclosure (for example, self-harm or suicide)

Voyeurism

The Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) defines 'up skirting' as a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not only confined to victims wearing skirts or dresses and equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks shorts or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders."

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 made upskirting a specific criminal offence. Staff should recognise that upskirting is a form of sexual abuse and may be dealt with as a safeguarding concern and, where appropriate, reported to the police.

The school will respond to incidents of upskirting in line with its safeguarding and child protection procedures and the guidance contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between individuals aged 16 years or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can include, but is not restricted to:

- physical abuse

- psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial abuse
- emotional abuse

Controlling behaviour includes a range of actions designed to make a person inferior and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support and exploiting their capacities for personal gain depriving them of independence and escape by regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim. This can impact on children through seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it through their own intimate relationships.

Children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse occurring within the home and this can have a significant impact on their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

Further information can be found in part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

Homelessness

Our staff understand that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Our designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) are aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. We understand that a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm may still be made to Childrens Services. We are aware that indicators may be:

•household debt
•rent arrears
•domestic abuse
•anti-social behaviour
•the family being asked to leave a property

We recognise in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a level of intervention and support.

Further explanation is found at Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets and KCSIE (2026).

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-bill-policy-factsheets

Honour Based Abuse (FORCED MARRIAGE, FGM AND BREAST IRONING)

Honour-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents and offences committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family, community or other social group. It may include forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing and other harmful practices.

Staff should recognise that victims of honour-based abuse may face additional barriers to seeking help because the abuse often involves a wider network of family or community members and may involve multiple perpetrators.

Any concerns that a child may be at risk of, or has experienced, honour-based abuse must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in England and Wales. It comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

FGM is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. It can cause severe and long-lasting physical and psychological harm.

Teachers have a statutory duty to report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

Any teacher who discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 must report this to the police without delay.

All staff should also immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they have concerns that a child may be at risk of FGM or that FGM may already have taken place. Staff should not examine pupils.

Further information can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation.

FGM is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. This Act introduces a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report ‘known’ cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work, to the police. The Serious Crime Act 2015 has strengthened further the legislation on FGM.

FGM is a form of child abuse and violence against females. FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or nontherapeutic reasons. The practice is exceedingly painful and has serious health consequences both at the time when the mutilation is carried out as well as in later life. The practice is not medically necessary and is not required by any main religion. It is a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as ‘female genital cutting’, ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation’.

If you discover that FGM has taken place or a student is at risk of FGM

Any teacher who discovers, either through a direct disclosure from a student or by observing physical signs, that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of

18 must make an immediate report to the police. This is a statutory duty under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015).
The teacher should also inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible and record the concern in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. Children's social care should be involved as appropriate.
Any other member of staff who becomes aware that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 must immediately report their concerns to the DSL and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

If a student is at risk of FGM

Where staff have concerns that a student may be at risk of FGM, or suspect FGM has taken place but do not have direct disclosure or visual evidence, they must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report their concerns immediately to the DSL.
The mandatory reporting duty for teachers does not apply in these circumstances. Staff should never examine a student to confirm whether FGM has taken place.
Further information can be found in:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (Home Office and Department of Health and Social Care)
- NSPCC guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

3. Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and additional barriers can exist to recognising, reporting or disclosing concerns. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children receive the same level of protection regardless of any barriers they may face. Factors that can increase vulnerability include societal attitudes and assumptions, prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication difficulties, a child's disability or additional needs, family circumstances, and an unwillingness by some adults to recognise that abuse can occur.

Amberleigh ensures that all our children receive equal protection recognising that our children are particularly vulnerable as they are/have:

- Disabilities or special educational needs
- Experienced domestic abuse and violence
- Lived in chaotic and unsupportive home environments
- Been affected by parental substance misuse
- Been taken into care and are or have been looked after by the Local Authority *(see section 5.8)*
- Experienced bullying or have engaged in bullying behaviours
- Lived in temporary accommodation
- Experienced discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability or sexuality
- Been a young carer
- Been involved in child sexual exploitation
- At risk of radicalisation or involvement in extremism
- At risk of being involved in gangs

- At risk of forced marriage
- Speak English as an additional language

This list is not exhaustive and provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups.

Particular vigilance will be given to children who are subject to a child protection plan. Any incidents or concerns involving these children will be reported immediately to the child's social worker.

As a school where some young people have additional learning disabilities or cognitive impairments, there are a wide range of additional considerations and arrangements we make to support positive safeguarding and child protection.

We draw support from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and NSPCC guidance.

The table below outlines a range of the considerations we make for the children and young people we work with and their broad range of needs:

Additional Need/Barrier/Concern	How this is addressed by the school
Communication and Dependence Students who are non-verbal or find it difficult to communicate their needs, feelings, to explain what is happening in their life.	The school has skilled staff that are able to communicate with young people in a broad range of methods. We have SEN/child friendly messages and lessons on safeguarding. Children are in classes where staff form strong bonds and understanding with children with communication difficulties, and are able to 'tune-in' to their needs, emotions and wishes through the intensive social and communication work they do.
Contextual/ Demographic/ and developmental levels. Students not understanding what may be going on in their environment. Students developmentally unable to understanding right, wrong, what is happening to them or others around them. Students witnessing abuse or criminal activity and not able to say or do not understand.	Students are supported by well trained, empathetic and supportive teams of staff. Staff are able to support communication and through strong relationships are able to identify emerging concerns. Staff are also trained to understand the changes in behavioural patterns may signify distress or issues.
	Due to specific needs of our students, information sharing is crucial to ensure that personal information about the individuals communication and behaviours are shared to make sure staff are able to spot signs of communication/ behaviour that may tell us something about what is happening in the individual's life.

Information sharing with all agencies must be consistent and regular, sharing past and present information to ensure no gaps in records - to ensure that no significant information is overlooked.	We have an effective Safeguarding Team and this supports our pastoral system in school in making sure information sharing and communication is well-organised and thorough at every level.
Some students may present with injuries arising from self-harm or behaviours of concern. Whilst staff may be familiar with such presentations, all injuries, marks or unexplained physical indicators will be considered on their individual merits and investigated appropriately.	Accurate record keeping is important to document all behaviours that lead to possible markings. Just as important is keeping accurate behaviour plans. Nevertheless, a marking on a self-harmer is investigated in the same way as those for whom it is not a common occurrence.

We provide pastoral support and attention for all our students, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place. Further information can be found in our Disability and Accessibility Policy and our Strategy Action Plan. Further guidance can also be found from specialist organisations such as:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

- Mencap - Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people

- NSPCC - Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people

The following link contains a range of professional information linked to Safeguarding those with additional needs.

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/deaf-and-disabledhttps://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/deaf-and-disabled-childrenchildren#heading-top

Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning

Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual are not inherently at greater risk of harm. However, they can be targeted by bullying, prejudice or discriminatory behaviour and may therefore require additional support.

The school recognises that children who are questioning their gender may have additional vulnerabilities. Staff will adopt a safeguarding-focused approach, consider the child's individual circumstances, work in partnership with parents/carers where appropriate, and seek advice from relevant professionals where required.

All staff will maintain an environment where children feel safe to discuss concerns and access support.

4. Extremism and radicalisation

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is similar in nature to protection children from other harms including drugs, neglect, sexual exploitation and gangs. Amberleigh is committed to building children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views.

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, or undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights.

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person or persons, causes serious damage to property, or seriously interferes with or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat of such action must be designed to influence the government or intimidate the public and be made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.

Amberleigh acknowledges its duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. At Amberleigh we meet this duty by:

- Teaching a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of children and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

- Assessing the risk of children being drawn into terrorism. This is based on an understanding of the potential risk in the local area and is shared with partners.

- Protecting children from being drawn into terrorism by having robust safeguarding policies in place to identify children at risk and intervene as appropriate. Amberleigh staff will work with the DSL to assess concerns and determine the most appropriate course of action, which may include referral to Channel where appropriate.

- Maintaining clear procedures to ensure that all visiting speakers are appropriately vetted, risk assessed and supervised.

- Ensure the safeguarding arrangements at Amberleigh take into account the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP).

- Arrange staff training that gives individuals the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Through training staff will also know where and how to refer children and young people for further help.

- Ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet at Amberleigh.

Amberleigh will not permit the promotion of extremist views or partisan political views. Staff must present balanced perspectives and encourage respectful discussion of differing viewpoints when addressing sensitive or controversial issues.

Further information can be found in:

• Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education.

• Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (2023)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance.

• The Prevent Duty: Safeguarding Learners Vulnerable to Radicalisation
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.

• Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) Guidance
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance.

Radicalisation should be treated as a safeguarding concern and concerns should be managed in the same way as other forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff (including agency and bank staff) have a responsibility to be aware of the procedures to be followed if they are worried a child is being abused.

5.1 Duty to Refer
It is the duty of all staff to immediately refer any child protection concerns about a child to Cassandra Melaniphy (Designated Safeguarding Lead) as soon as possible. For the role of Designated Safeguarding Persons refer to appendix 1. In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to avoid any unnecessary delays in responding to a child or a young person's needs the Managing Director, Director of Therapy & Care and Deputy Head are additional Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Contact details are:

Cassandra Melaniphy, Acting Head Teacher
Email address: Cassandra.melaniphy@amberleighcare.co.uk

Kevin Gallagher, Managing Director, Proprietor.
Email address: kevin.gallagher@amberleighcare.co.uk

Michelle Russell, Director of Operations
Email address: michelle.russell@amberleighcare.co.uk

Simon Roberts, Care Manager
Email address: simon.roberts@amberleighcare.co.uk

Marie Clutton, Therapeutic Practice Manager
Email address: marie.clutton@amberleighcare.co.uk

Staff are contactable at:

Amberleigh School (The Oaks)
Tel: 01952 619144

Amberleigh School (Golfa)
Tel: 01938 554111

If as a member of staff, you are not satisfied with the Designated Safeguarding Lead's response, e.g. where they decide not to make a referral to Children's Social Care or you are unwilling or unable to make a report to them for whatever reason, you should make a referral yourself to by telephoning:

Shropshire (The Oaks)
Shropshire Safeguarding Partnership First Point of Contact (FPOC) If you think a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of being harmed you must contact the First Point of Contact (FPOC), Children's Services and tell them your concerns. It might be you that's being harmed. Don't delay, please contact us straight away - we're here to help you. **Please report your concerns to FPOC on 0345 678 9021.** If you need to report concerns out of office hours then please contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0345 6789040. https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/forms/safeguarding-concern/

You can also speak to:

Protecting Vulnerable People (West Mercia Police): 0300 333 3000

NSPCC: 0800 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

If a child is in immediate danger, call the emergency services on 999.

Other possible contact points include:

- Any member of Amberleigh's Safeguarding Committee;
- Directors of Amberleigh Care Ltd;
- A police officer;
- An inspector for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI Ofsted);
- An officer of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

If you have concerns about extremism
If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the safeguarding team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate. Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include *Channel*, the government's programme for identifying and supporting vulnerable individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 0370 000 2288, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a student. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

If you have a mental health concern

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.

Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action. If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

We are currently aware that negative experiences and distressing life events associated to Covid 19 can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers, we are well prepared to provide the right help at the right time.

Refer to the Department for Education guidance on *mental health and behaviour in schools* for more information https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-andhttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2behaviour-in-schools--2

5.2 Recognising and responding to concerns

It is important to remember that children rarely talk about their own abuse, for many reasons, and staff need to be vigilant to physical, emotional, sexual, and behavioural signs which may suggest abuse. If a child chooses to confide in you, disclosing any form of abuse, **the most important thing to do is to listen attentively without asking any leading questions, otherwise later investigation can be compromised.** The child must tell their own story in their own time. Even what seems to be an unbelievable story must be listened to and acted upon. If you make any notes, you must only use the child's own actual words, or the words in which anyone else reports to you. **You must not interrogate anyone or conduct your own investigation or make assumptions based on hearsay**.

RESPONDING TO A CONCERN – THE "6 R's RESPONSE"

RECEIVE

- If a child wants to talk to you, never ask them to come back later. Ask them what they want to talk to you about and, if you are concerned about their welfare, give them the time to speak to you.
- Never promise confidentiality, inform the child that you are happy to talk to them but if they tell you anything that you believe may be putting them at harm that you will have to talk to someone.
- Listen carefully to the child. Do not stop a child who is freely recalling information.
- Where a child is visibly upset or has an obvious injury, it is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how an injury was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you to help clarify vague concerns and result in the right action being taken.

REASSURE

- Ensure that the child is aware that they have done the right thing in talking to you and that they have not done anything wrong.
- If you have any concerns that the child has been, or is at risk of harm, you must tell them that you will speak to someone to get help.

REACT

- If you need to clarify information ask open-ended questions e.g.*" Is there anything you'd like to tell me?", "Can you explain to me…", Can you describe to me…."*
- **Never** ask leading or suggestive questions e.g. '*Did he/she do anything that they shouldn't have done?'*
- **Never** ask 'accusing' questions e.g.*" Why didn't you tell someone earlier?"*
- **Never** criticise the alleged perpetrator, it may be someone that they will continue to live with.
- **Never** ask the student to repeat their disclosure for any other member of staff, it is your responsibility to share the information
- These four factors may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by children's social care or Police.

RECORD

- Make notes as soon as possible afterwards using the words that the child has used.
- Do not record your assumptions and interpretations, just what you heard and saw.
- Do not destroy original notes even if you later write things up more neatly and fully.
- Record the date, time and place of the disclosure.
- Sign any written records and identify your position in the school setting.
- Do not ask a child to write and account or sign any of your documentation as this may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by children's social care or Police.

REFER

- Immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Person for child protection (Cassandra Melaniphy) or in their absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person for child protection who will be responsible for following the appropriate procedures. In the absence of anyone being available in school, contact the Local Authority

REFLECT

- Ask yourself if you have done everything you can within your role.
- Refer any remaining concerns to the designated teacher, e.g. any knowledge of siblings in the school, or previous contact with parents.

- Dealing with disclosures can be difficult and disturbing; you should seek support for yourself via the support within your school or an alternative source but be aware of principles of confidentiality

5.3 Recording of disclosures/concerns

If note-taking is inappropriate, or not possible at the time, the member of staff involved should immediately afterwards note any key points using the child's own words and phrases, if possible, the record sheet should be *marked '***Child Protection – Strictly Confidential'. These notes must be kept as originals, timed, dated and signed, as they could be used as evidence in court.** As soon as possible the member of staff must seek out a Designated Safeguarding Person. **Disclosed information from a child cannot be discussed with any member of staff, other than a Designated Person.** Following consideration, the Designated Person may decide to make a referral to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP).

5.4 Physical Evidence

If any physical injuries or bruising are noticed it is appropriate, as a caring adult, to ask the child how they sustained the bruise, graze scratch, bite or other mark on their body. All such marks or injuries, howsoever caused, must be recorded on as a body map diagram and handed to the Designated Safeguarding Person, with the child's explanation attached. The child must not be examined beneath their clothing. Further investigations must not be conducted and the child should not be asked any leading questions.

5.5 Issues of Confidentiality

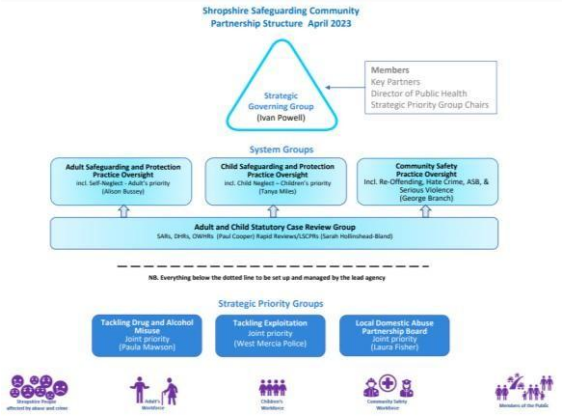
If a child requests confidentiality, they must be told that this cannot be promised and it should be explained that staff have a responsibility to share information with those adults who will be able to help protect them from harm. The child should be reassured that only staff who need to know about it will be told. This could result in the child not continuing the conversation, in which case your enquiries should not be pursued but concerns recorded on the record sheet and handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff should take care not to discuss information given in confidence outside the appropriate professional contexts. All documentation regarding the disclosure should be treated with the strictest of confidence and should only be shared with others on a need to know basis.

It is important that governing bodies and proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not and should not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information

5.6 Staff Concerns about Practice

If staff have any concerns about practices in the school or children's home which they feel may put children at risk of abuse or serious harm they should raise these first with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If they are not satisfied with the way in which Amberleigh is dealing with the situation they can speak directly to the Social Services Manager responsible for Child Protection:

Shropshire (The Oaks)
https://www.shropshiresafeguardingcommunitypartnership.co.uk/ 

Also staff may contact:

For Shropshire, England (The Oaks)
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk 0300 123 1231

5.7 Making a Referral

When a Designated Safeguarding Person has been informed of a case of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation or of a child who may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation they must decide whether or not to make a referral to Children's Social Care. Children's Social Care can be contacted for support in relation to this decision making, either using anonymised information or passing on identifying details of a case. Referrals should be made to:

Shropshire (The Oaks)	
Initial Contact Team (office hours) Telephone: 0345 678 9021	Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) Telephone: 0345 6789040.

All referrals should be made or confirmed using the appropriate pro-forma.

All referrals to Children's Social Care should be screened and a decision made regarding the next course of action within one working day. Where there is to be no further action, feedback should be provided to the Designated Safeguarding Lead about the decision and the reasons for making it in writing within 48 hours.

Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will always bring relevant issues to the notice of the parents/carers, referring authority, children's social care in the child's home area and will make referrals to Ofsted if appropriate.

5.8 Working with Parents and Carers

Designated Safeguarding Leads and other professionals should aim to work in partnership with parents/carers by attempting to discuss any concerns they have with them where possible. Permission should be sought by the Designated Safeguarding Lead from the person holding parental responsibility for the child before discussing a referral about them with other agencies, unless this process may in itself place a child at risk of significant harm or prejudice a criminal investigation.

Social care advice may be sought on the issue, as appropriate.

Looked after and previously looked after children

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads

The Acting Head Teacher, Cassandra Melaniphy, to take the lead on promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

As part of their role, they will:

- Work closely with teachers to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children

Students with a social worker

Students may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a student has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the student's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

The virtual school head for each young person includes a non-statutory responsibility for oversight of the attendance, attainment and progress of all our young people and will work closely with Amberleigh and other professionals to improve outcomes.

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register.

Contextual Safeguarding

The DSL will have due regard to safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours that can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the

school. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding leads 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 should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors, so our school will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse, neglect or exploitation. Additional information regarding contextual safeguarding is available here;

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2019/october/what-is-contextual-safeguarding

5.9 Support for Young People following a Referral

The child can choose an adult to accompany him or her, if she so wishes, to any interview, which may take place as a result of a Child Protection assessment, to offer support. However, the wishes and feelings of the child should be respected should they want to be on their own. If a child requires support from staff this will normally be granted in discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Interviews with children are undertaken by social workers and specially trained police, and these can be undertaken at the Oaks or Golfa, or at an agreed location or at a special video interview suite, whichever is appropriate.

5.10 Multi-Agency Partnership

As a school and children's home, we work in partnership with Children's Social Care in both our locality and the home authorities of the children and young people placed with us. Any conflicts between locally agreed procedures and those of placing authorities will be discussed and resolved as appropriate.

In accordance with local procedures, we are required to liaise with the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP) in all cases of actual or suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation that have arisen on site. This multi-agency approach enhances the effectiveness of identifying, responding to and preventing safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding Partner arrangements are established under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and bring together the local authority, integrated care board and chief officer of police with joint and equal responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.

The statutory safeguarding partners for Shropshire are Shropshire Council, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care Board (ICB) and West Mercia Police. These agencies work together through the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP) provides strategic leadership and oversight of safeguarding arrangements across Shropshire. The partnership works with a wide range of agencies, including education, health, probation, fire and rescue services, and other safeguarding partners to improve outcomes for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Amberleigh staff attend relevant safeguarding training and briefings provided through the SSCP and other recognised safeguarding organisations to ensure safeguarding practice remains current and effective.

6. General Strategies

6.1 Regulating and Vetting Visitors

All visitors to Amberleigh must sign the Visitors' Book on arrival at Reception and sign out on departure and wear a visitors' badge at all times. Arrangements for visiting young people are agreed in advance by the Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, Registered Manager or the Deputy Manager in consultation with the placing authority and parents/carers, as appropriate.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that visitors are carefully monitored, in a manner appropriate to the individual circumstances. Under no circumstances, should any visitors ever have unsupervised access to the children. All Staff are expected to challenge anyone on the site if they are unsure of their identity, or do not display a visitors badge.

6.2 Vetting of Staff & Safer Recruitment

There is always careful selection and vetting of all staff to prevent children from being exposed to potential abusers and nobody commences work unless all checks have been completed. Recruitment of all staff who work with young people at Amberleigh, is in line with 'Safer Recruitment' guidelines. At least one person on every interview panel must have completed 'Safer Recruitment' training.

The following statement is included in all job advertisements, recruitment websites, and candidate information packs. *Amberleigh Care is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced disclosure from the DBS.*

'Safer Recruitment' guidance includes checks on staff suitability with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (formerly Criminal Records Bureau). These checks are carried out on every member of staff and a record to verify the authenticity of identity, qualifications, and satisfactory DBS check is held centrally for each staff member. Alongside of these checks there are robust interview processes, checks for gaps in employment and reference checks. A CV will only be accepted alongside a full application form and is not sufficient on its own to support safer recruitment. Where agency staff are employed, Amberleigh will seek written confirmation from the relevant agency that all appropriate checks have been carried out and are satisfactory. All agency staff are subject to appropriate identity checks on their arrival.

The recruitment process is robust in seeking to establish the commitment of candidates to support Amberleigh Care's measures to safeguard children and to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. As part of the recruitment process we will access the new Teacher Services system as part of safer recruitment. This is a database that can be used prior to appointing a teacher to check for prohibitions, sanctions and restrictions that might prevent the individual from taking part in certain activities or working in specific positions. In addition, as part of the shortlisting process we complete online checks for new staff as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This helps identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

The relevant checks which are completed before commencement of any new staff member are:

- an identity check;
- a barred list check;
- an enhanced DBS check;
- a prohibition from teaching check (NB This is **not** the same as a barred list check)
- a prohibition check must be made for anyone undertaking 'teaching work' (with or without Qualified Teacher Status)

- further checks on people living or working outside UK, including any restrictions placed on teachers from the European Economic Area (EEA*); (*EEA is all countries, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway)
- a check of professional qualifications;
- sufficient, appropriate and verified references from previous employers that involved working with young people.
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
- a section 128 prohibition check for people in management positions.

All these checks will be entered into the SCR and evidenced by the person making the checks.

All staff members also receive induction training to include appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

6.3 Induction of Staff

All new employees are sent a copy of Amberleigh's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy' prior to starting their employment. The new member of staff must meet with a member of senior staff on their first day as part of their induction programme. This meeting covers a wide range of safeguarding issues including health and safety, security, fire procedures and safeguarding procedures.

All staff will receive an induction pack that contains the following:

- Staff code of conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
- Behaviour Policy
- Trigger Plans for Children Missing from care/education

Amberleigh recognises the importance of relationships between staff and children and that relationships are based on mutual respect and understanding and the need for clear boundaries in relation to acceptable behaviour, on both sides.

6.4 Personal, Social, Health Education, Therapy and Preventative Education

Staff work hard to establish positive and trusting relationships with children, in order for them to seek help when they are worried or have concerns about their own or others' safety. Issues surrounding social awareness, health education and sex education are discussed with children in link worker sessions and taught to all young people during PSHE, life skills lessons, and therapy (both group and individual therapy).

Within PSHE the new curriculum for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education is covered extensively which includes online safety whereby students are taught what positive, healthy and respectful online relationships look like. This curriculum supports the guidance from KCSIE 2026. School will continue to remain compliant with Government Relationships, Sex and health Education (RSHE).

Schools play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny, misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment.

The Oaks has a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These are underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in

regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum and therapeutic community. This programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate and will tackle issues such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries and consent
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour • the concepts of, and laws relating to- sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based abuse such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.

6.5 Children's Rights

We recognise that children are our primary concern and must be given a voice in matters relating to their care and education. Children's opinions are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect them; their privacy and dignity are respected, as far as is consistent with good parenting and their need for protection; and all matters related to child protection concerns are kept confidential, with access only to those who need it for the child's protection. Children are informed of how to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living at Amberleigh, so that they can feel confident that any complaint will be addressed seriously and without delay. Complaints are reviewed at least once a month by the Deputy Head teacher and/or Registered Care Manager, and issues raised are addressed. It is understood that being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, may breach children's rights, as set out in the Human Rights Act.

6.6 Anti-Bullying Policy

Amberleigh has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which young people and staff are familiar. Children who are bullied are supported, and those who may bully others are also subject to a risk assessment. Each child will have a plan outlining actions to address and support issues identified. Amberleigh recognises the fact that bullying is the form of abuse most children fear. The Deputy Head teacher and the Registered Care Manager review records of bullying incidents at least once a month in order to take action where feasible to reduce or counteract the risk of bullying.

6.7 Missing Children

Amberleigh has a rigorous approach to monitoring absences quickly with appropriate follow up to ensure that children's attendance in education is maintained in accordance with our high expectations. Amberleigh also has comprehensive procedures to be followed when a child goes missing from care. These procedures are known to staff, children, parents/carers and referring authorities and ensure that children are protected as quickly as reasonably possible.

It is always important to try to establish why a child went missing in order to identify and address any potential difficulties the child may be experiencing. If abuse, neglect or exploitation is cited, this should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The child should also be offered the opportunity to contact an Independent Person e.g. advocate, should it be considered appropriate.

6.8 Use of Mobile Phones and other Multi-Media Devices

Given the potential for misuse, Amberleigh provides comprehensive guidance for staff and children on the use of mobile phones, laptops and other multi-media devices. This guidance includes policies, training, specific lessons and discussions regarding safety responsibilities.

6.9 Internet Use and Multi-Media Policy
Amberleigh has a written policy on the acceptable use of its internet and email facilities, which is made clear to staff, children, parents/carers and referring authorities. All staff are aware of, and follow in practice, the school's policy to protect staff and children from harm via the world wide web.

The Proprietor and the Head Teacher will regularly review the effectiveness of school filters and monitoring systems with the Facilities Manager to ensure that relevant staff are:
• aware of and understand the systems in place
• manage them effectively
• know how to escalate concerns when identified.

As a service, we will continue to communicate and monitor the importance of young people being safe online. We will share information with relevant professionals about:
• what systems are in place to filter and monitor online use
• what we are asking young people to do online, including the sites they will asked to access
• who from the school or college (if anyone) their young person is going to be interacting with online.
• Discuss individual risk assessments, supervision arrangements and informative education about online safety involving our young people.

As a school, we will also block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.

6.10 Support
Child: There is a paragraph written in the Children's Guide to ensure that young people know who to approach at Amberleigh if they have any worries about keeping themselves safe. The numbers for Childline, Ofsted, NSPCC Child Protection Helpline and Shropshire Safeguarding are also available for young people.

Staff: All staff have individual supervision meetings with a member of senior staff. Children's Social Care may offer support to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other Designated Safeguarding persons who could be involved in a child protection investigation.

Family: Summary information regarding child protection is contained in the Statement of Purpose.

Advocacy: is available to all children.

Parents/carers can request to see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if they would like to find out more information about our procedures. Children's Social Care advise us about giving appropriate support to families who may be involved in a child protection investigation or protection plan.

<u>Equality legislation</u>

The significance of the Equality Act 2010 to school safeguarding is important, including that schools and colleges:
• must not unlawfully discriminate against students because of their protected characteristics
• must consider how they are supporting students with protected characteristics

- must take positive action, where proportionate, to deal with the disadvantages these students face. For example, by making reasonable adjustments for disabled children and considering any additional barriers that may be faced by pupils with protected characteristics, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning.

This includes a need to be conscious that pupils with protected characteristics may be more at risk of harm and integrate this into safeguarding policies and procedures. It is important to ensure young people have a safe space to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

6.11 Safeguarding Committee

Amberleigh has a Safeguarding Committee, the members of the committee are communicated to all staff as well as details being displayed in the house and school. The Safeguarding Committee consists of the following individuals:

- Managing Director, Proprietor; Kevin Gallagher
- Director of Operations, Michelle Russell
- Registered Care Manager (Oaks), Simon Roberts
- Acting Head-Teacher (Oaks), Cassandra Melaniphy
- Registered Care Manager (Golfa), Anthony Parry
- Head-Teacher (Golfa), Sioned Davies
- Therapeutic Practice Manager, Marie Clutton

The role of the Safeguarding Committee is to:

- Review, on an annual basis, the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and supporting the implementation of any action plan arising from that review;
- Meet on a monthly basis as part of the management meeting, or more often if required, in order to ensure the welfare of children;
- Oversee and monitor all safeguarding concerns;
- Provide an opportunity to share and ensure best practice across Amberleigh Schools with regard to safeguarding.

In addition, the Managing Director (Kevin Gallagher) must be informed of all safeguarding concerns made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, as soon as reasonably possible, and in any event within 24 hours of the concern being reported.

6.12 Staff Training

Amberleigh operates best practice with regard to safer recruitment. The Chair of every appointment panel must have successfully completed safer recruitment training.

All Designated Safeguarding Leads (and other Designated Safeguarding Persons) are required to undertake multi-agency safeguarding training and will attend refresher courses and monthly updates in accordance with the recommended timescales or following changes to legislation and or government guidance and in any event within two years. This will always include the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Proprietor.

All staff are required to complete a Safeguarding Module on The Childrens Home Training Hub as part of their induction. We also provide level 1 Raising Awareness of Safeguarding Children and Young People facilitated by Shropshire to all staff conducted by in-house trainers. This is refreshed annually for education staff and biennial to other staff. Advanced training is made available to those with specific roles e.g. team leaders, DSL's.

All staff are required to complete basic online Prevent awareness training and for one designated safeguarding lead in each school/house to complete the WRAP (workshop to raise awareness of prevent) training.

All staff receive high quality support, advice and individual supervision meetings with a member of senior staff.

7. Concerns involving a member of staff

The school promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working with children are identified and addressed promptly and appropriately.

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 an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work;
- does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO); and/or
- may indicate that the adult is not suitable to work with children.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- being over-familiar with a child;
- having favourites;
- engaging in inappropriate social media contact;
- using inappropriate language;
- breaching professional boundaries.
-

All low-level concerns should be reported promptly to the Headteacher (or Proprietor where the concern relates to the Headteacher).

The school will:

- record all low-level concerns in writing;
- review concerns to identify patterns of behaviour;
- maintain records securely and confidentially;
- take appropriate action where concerns indicate a potential safeguarding risk or pattern of behaviour;
- ensure that staff understand how to share concerns without fear of reprisal.

Where a concern meets the harm threshold, it will be managed in accordance with the procedures for allegations against staff, including referral to the LADO where appropriate.

Whistleblowing is a mechanism for staff to report concerns about the behaviour or conduct of colleagues, managers or the organisation. Staff should raise concerns where they believe that an individual is acting unlawfully, unethically, or in a way that may place a child at risk of harm. Concerns should be raised in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Further guidance is available at: https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing.

In the event of the allegation being directly or indirectly made about the Directors, Head teacher and/or the Registered Care Manager, the staff member should promptly report the allegation to the LADO at Social Services in Shropshire and/or to the Police:

Shropshire (Oaks)
Shropshire Council's LADO Telephone: 03456 789021 Police dealing with the Protection of Vulnerable People in Shropshire (West Mercia Police) Telephone: 0300 333 3000

Allegations and complaints against staff are minimised by Amberleigh Care by having:

- Safer Recruitment strategies in place
- Appropriate induction and training
- Open and transparent safeguarding ethos
- Professional code of conduct as set out in Staff Handbook
- Regular briefing and discussion of safeguarding issues
- Ensuring that all young people are aware of safeguarding issues through the curriculum, e.g. PSHE and ICT, covering the topics of the new curriculum for Relationships and Sex Education and also Online safety etc.

8. Support for staff subject to allegations

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform any member of staff who is subject to an allegation about that allegation as soon as possible. However, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will have to follow directions from Children's Social Care and/or the police as to what can be shared and when.

It is recognised that any allegation of abuse will cause the member of staff anxiety and advice will be given as to possible avenues of support from, for example, their union, professional association or the Leadership Team.

Any member of staff subject to an allegation will be given a copy of the leaflet "A guide for staff and volunteers who work with children and are faced with an allegation of abuse".
The staff member will be kept advised as to the progress of the investigation as far as possible.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (Part Four: Allegations made against, and concerns raised in relation to, teachers, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors)
Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership procedures on managing allegations against staff and volunteers.

9. General Guidance to Staff

9.1 Working with Children

Staff must be aware of the potential problems associated with making physical contact with children, especially with children of the opposite sex. Contact must always be appropriate to the relationship of a professional with a client. Many of our children may have been damaged by inappropriate contact and they may be very sensitive or unable to process personal contact appropriately. As a staff team we should always be alert and ready to advise our colleagues, if anything might be seen as improper. There may be times when it is appropriate for staff to

spend one to one time with a child, for example during 1:1 teaching sessions, key worker meetings. Staff should always ensure that proper safeguards are in place for the protection of both themselves and the child, e.g. making sure that other staff are aware of the teaching session/meeting and will occasionally check that everything is okay. Regard should always be given to the potential additional problems of teaching or caring for children of the opposite sex. Advice should be taken from senior staff regarding what is acceptable or unacceptable risk taking in this area.

9.2 Giving and Receiving Gifts

Amberleigh accepts that the giving of gifts and presents by staff to children will at times be quite appropriate, e.g. teaching staff giving children rewards for positive behaviour or good work. To safeguard all involved, all gifts given are to be given open and publicly, e.g. in the community meetings, awards celebrations, during a birthday meal etc. Monitoring of gifts given takes place on a regular basis by senior staff. The receiving of small gifts by staff from children is viewed and treated in the same way.

9.3 Film Classifications and Computer Games

When showing films for young people in school, staff should satisfy themselves that the classification of the film, e.g. 'U', 'PG', '12a', '12' or '15' is appropriate for the age of the young people, even if only one child is in the "wrong" category. Under no circumstances are young people allowed to watch a film where the age classification is above the individual's age. The above conditions also apply to Computer Games.

9.4 Safe Working Practice

All Amberleigh' staff should take normal precautions not to place themselves in a vulnerable position in relation to child protection.

See also; Work Experience Policy, Whistleblowing Policy,

Failure to report actual or reasonably suspected physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of a child is a disciplinary offence.

10. Consultation

Where indications of abuse are not clear, or where there may be other possible explanations, advice can be sought at an early stage to assist in deciding whether a referral should be made for the protection of the child.

Any member of Amberleigh personnel suspecting the possibility of abuse, neglect or exploitation should consult with their line manager. The initial concerns should be discussed in order to assess whether a formal referral to the Social Services Department will be available for consultation and will not necessarily request that the child be identified to them. The Social Services Department will record the details of the consultation and any advice given, without recording the name of the child.

A copy of the record will be sent to the individual initiating the consultation to ensure agreement and clarity of advice given. Informal consultation with other agencies may be suggested. When consultation with colleagues or other agencies gives rise to a 'critical threshold of concern', a formal child protection referral should be made to either the Social Services Department or the Police. Additionally, Ofsted must be notified.

The purpose of the consultation is to enable the enquirer to assess his or her concerns and to decide if a formal child protection referral should be made.

SOCIAL WORKERS ACTING AS APPROPRIATE ADULTS UNDER THE POLICE AND CRIMINAL EVIDENCE ACT – 1984

- The rights of the detainee: the appropriate adult is there to advise him of their rights and to ensure that the interview is conducted fairly and properly.
- To facilitate communication with the person being interviewed.
- The role is in addition to, and is different from, the solicitor's role.
- Not just an observer but to advise the person being questioned and to observe whether or not the interview is being conducted properly and fairly, and to "facilitate communication with the person being interviewed.

10.1 Who is an "appropriate adult?" For a juvenile, in order of preference:

a) His parent or guardian (if in care, care authority or voluntary organisation)
b) A social worker
c) Failing either of the above, another responsible adult over the age of 18 who is not a police officer; or employed by the police.

On being contacted by police, the social worker should attempt to secure parent or guardian's attendance, with a briefing on the role of the appropriate adult.

On arrival at the police station, identify the custody officer and make a note of their name, as well as that of the interviewing officer.

Ensure the detainee is again advised, even if told already, of their rights to a free solicitor, at any time and the caution, which emphasises they do not need to answer questions. Also the right to consult the Codes at any time. The appropriate adult must countersign copy of document saying rights have been read.

The right to a solicitor or the detainee being told immediately can only be held up for specific reasons. The detainee must be dealt with quickly and released as soon as the need for detention ceases to apply, be given written details of the offence, with the constable's name and reference number for the case. In the case of a juvenile, or a person with learning disabilities this information will be given to the appropriate adult. All children regardless of age placed at Amberleigh will be provided with an appropriate adult. They will be available and present during any police interviews.

As an appropriate adult, they should see the client alone, or with the solicitor, explain their role, who they are, etc. Can see the detainee on their own at any time during the detention. Can also call a solicitor as the appropriate adult on behalf of the detainee. The detainee must be informed of the reason for the detention and their rights, in the presence of the appropriate adult. The officer may not try to obtain a statement by way of oppression.

There is a special Code for tape recording of evidence; it is good practice to keep notes during the interview, be it taped or not. These Codes are to ensure no matters can take place relevant to questioning with reference to the alleged offence which is not recorded and therefore open to scrutiny to the detainee, her solicitor, courts or CPS later. DO not be put off ensuring you carry out your role properly because of a "shyness" in front of the taped recording equipment and "ceremonies" which can be intimidating.

Detainee and appropriate adult will be shown any written statement made and be asked to sign it as a true record. If you object to this or any other aspect of the detention at any time, ask to record this on the custody record, which appropriate adult's now have a right to receive a copy. The custody officer must investigate any such complaint. If the appropriate adult refuses to sign it as a true record, this will be recorded in the custody record.

An appropriate adult can intervene to ensure the detainee understands the question put or line of questioning, and to help him clarify an answer if this seems unclear.
The detainee may not be kept longer than (approximately) 24 hours – depending when the "custody clock" starts to run – without being charged, unless a superintendent or above agrees to the maximum limit of 36 hours. Any detention after this must be agreed by the Court and then no longer than 96 hours (but the Prevention of Terrorism Act is not subject to this). NB: a juvenile can be further detained if the custody officer believes this is in his best interest.

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.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-12-to-17-year-olds
The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service.

10.2 Record Keeping
Accurate, concise and clear record keeping in straight forward language is an essential part of an individual employee and professional's accountability towards good child protection practice.
Records should:

- Use clear, straightforward language
- Be signed dated and timed
- Be concise, legible and comply with professional, national and local agency standards and requirements
- Be accurate in fact and distinguish between fact, option, judgment and hypothesis
- Be organised and comprise detailed recording and chronologies and summarise using all contacts
- Be comprehensive
- Clearly record judgements that are made and action decisions taken
- Clarify where decisions have been jointly across agencies or endorsed by a manager
- Record both formal and informal supervision discussion

10.3 Supervision
All members of staff at Amberleigh involved in child protection require appropriate supervision. In line with the supervision procedure all involved will receive adequate supervision and support. This is to ensure that good practice within Amberleigh is soundly based and consistent with all Child Protection Procedures.

11. Storage, transfer and retention of child protection records

Amberleigh follow the principles of record keeping contained within the Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services.

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

11.1 Storage of child protection records

All child protection records are kept in individual files, away from the child's own school/care records and stored securely in a locked cabinet with access clearly defined and restricted. The school file will also be labelled to indicate that additional child protection information is held separately.

11.2 Transfer of child protection records

When a young person transfers to another school, college or social care establishment, their child protection records must be transferred to the new setting without delay and, in any event, within five days for an in-year transfer and within the first five days of the start of a new term where the transfer takes place during school holidays

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding records are transferred securely and confidentially.

Where the receiving school uses CPOMS, safeguarding records should be transferred electronically through the CPOMS transfer system. The DSL must ensure that the transfer has been completed successfully and retain evidence of the transfer.

Where the receiving school does not use CPOMS, safeguarding records should be transferred securely by an agreed method, such as encrypted electronic transfer, secure courier, or recorded delivery in accordance with data protection requirements and local safeguarding procedures.

A record of the transfer, including the date, receiving establishment and confirmation of receipt, should be retained by the school in accordance with the school's records retention schedule.

Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the transfer process and records must only be accessible to those with a legitimate safeguarding need to know.

11.3 Retention of child protection records

Amberleigh will retain the child protection records of any young person for as long as they will remain on the school roll and if they are the last school the young person attends and transfer them in accordance with the process outlined above, where appropriate. If Amberleigh is the last school, the young person attends then the records are kept until the young person has their 26th birthday and then securely disposed of.

Appendix 1

All Designated Safeguarding Leads have undertaken multi-agency safeguarding training and will attend refresher courses in accordance with the recommended timescale or following changes to legislation and/or DfE guidance and in any event within two years. The role of the DSL is also detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to:

- Maintain a working knowledge of relevant national guidance in respect of all specific safeguarding issues highlighted in DfE guidance *Keeping children safe in education* (2026) and Safeguarding Partnership policies, procedures, guidance and protocols.

- Ensure that child protection procedures and a written policy are in place and updated as appropriate;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and follow both the Local Safeguarding Partnership policies, procedures, guidance and protocols and Amberleigh's policy;
- Raise awareness of safeguarding and ensure staff training, knowledge and skills is effective.
- Create an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
- Be available to provide advice/support to staff and for confidential discussions about concerns;
- Be available to provide support to young people;
- Encourage of culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings;
- Create an environment where staff feel able to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding issue, raise concerns which they have about their own safety or the wellbeing of others and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
- Ensure that records of any concerns/suspected cases of abuse/referrals are kept on the young person in a file that is kept separate to the main student file and stored securely;
- Liaise with the person responsible for Training and Development to ensure that all staff receive appropriate Safeguarding training in accordance with their roles and responsibilities;
- Ensure policies relating to site safety and health & safety are in place with explanation as to what this should include;
- Ensure ICT filtering and monitoring systems are flagging safeguarding concerns;
- Liaise with Amberleigh's Safeguarding and Compliance (Managing Director) about all safeguarding concerns, as soon as possible but in any event within 24 hours of the concern being reported;
- Undertake a review of all child protection referrals made to assess and share any lessons to be learned;
- Act as a case manager in the management of allegations concerning members of staff;
- Participate in local safeguarding arrangements overseen by the Safeguarding Partnership.
- Recording, hold, use and share information effectively. Understanding the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners. Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions

and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.

Where a decision is made to remove an individual because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, Teaching Regulation Authority and Leadership and/or Society for Education and Training, as required.

Working to safeguard vulnerable children and young people is demanding and can be stressful and distressing. Amberleigh is committed to ensuring that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other Designated Safeguarding Leads have sufficient authority, time, funding, resources, training, supervision and support to carry out their responsibilities safely and effectively. The Head of Safeguarding and Compliance (Managing Director) for Amberleigh Schools provides supervision and support for the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Appendix 2

Amberleigh Care Safeguarding

Flow Chart for Reporting Safeguarding concerns- incident witnessed, disclosure or allegation made.

If there is immediate danger or concern – take immediate action to safeguard anyone at risk of harm, including involving other professionals, such as the police, or medical assistance.

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Safeguarding incident is witnessed or observed. There are concerns regarding wellbeing of young person.

The staff member should intervene immediately if required – ensuring all parties are free from harm and safe. Staff should listen to the young person and ensure reassurance is provided. Do **NOT** question the young person directly – listen to what they have to say. Make sure the young person is safe and supported. Do not allow the young person to discard any evidence (if applicable). Do not agree with the child that you will keep the information confidential.

Inform a Designated Safeguarding Lead of concerns immediately and on the same working day.

If the DSL and DDSL are implicated, you must speak to another senior manager, do **NOT**

discuss the matter with anyone else as this information is confidential.

Start a 'live' safeguarding log within school (CPOMS). Document what the young person has said and include any observations you made e.g. young person cried, pointed to a particular part of their body, showed anger (how) etc on a school incident report. You must include time, date and where the discussion took place. This must be signed and print your name next to your signature. Safeguarding Lead will decide if any of this information requires sharing as a significant incident i.e. interactions

Amberleigh Care Safeguarding

between students, behaviours to monitor. Otherwise this information should be kept CONFIDENTIAL and not shared with anyone other than the DSL. Other documents may be completed alongside – body map, CCTV log.

Place the notes in an envelope, seal securely and mark as confidential. Pass to or the Deputy Head.

Referral may not be required. School takes relevant action possibly including pastoral support and/or action plan in liaison with care and/or social worker. Risk assessments updated. Ongoing monitoring.

Concerns of peer on peer: Referral made to FPOC (First Point of Contact) - 0345 678 9021 and relevant social workers. MARF may require to be completed and forwarded to Shropshire Safeguarding Team. Compass referral may be made for additional support from various agencies.

Concerns of adult/staff on young person: Referral made to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) at FPOC (First Point of Contact) - 0345 678 9021. MARF may require to be completed and forwarded to Shropshire Safeguarding Team. Internal or external disciplinary procedures may take place.

Ensure safeguarding log is kept up to date with all actions & signed by contributors – conversations or events witnessed on incident reports, emails sent, risk assessments updated, professionals contacted, staff communication and environmental actions. Ensure Proprietor of school (Kevin Gallagher) is informed. Log in safeguarding File with relevant paperwork.

Points to Note

- Documentation regarding any safeguarding issues may subsequently be used further as evidence for either side.
- When recording information about safeguarding issues avoid making any judgements, simply record the facts.
- Interviewing of suspected abuse victims is a specialised procedure which must be completed by individuals trained in such techniques (Police Officers, Social Workers). You must not the young person ask any leading questions otherwise later investigation may be compromised.
- You cannot promise a young person that the matter will be kept confidential (between yourself and the young person). It should be explained to the young person that staff have a responsibility to share information with those adults who will be able to protect them from harm.
- All documentation must be treated with the strictest confidence and will only be shared with others on a need to know basis.
- Referrals should be made immediately and on the same working day.

Staff Concerns about Practice

If staff have any concerns about practices in the school or home which they feel may put any young person at risk they should raise these first with a member of the Senior Management Team. If staff are not satisfied with the response they can contact:

If you think a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of being harmed you must contact the First Point of Contact (FPOC), Children's Services and tell them your concerns. It might be you that's being harmed. Don't delay, please contact us straight away - we're here to help you.

Please report your concerns to FPOC on 0345 678 9021.

If you need to report concerns out of office hours, then please contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0345 6789040.

http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk/reporting-concerns/

Appendix 3

Safe Working Practice

Amberleigh is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children therefore staff must act in the best interests of our young people at all times. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that young people are cared for appropriately and safeguarded from any harm, and their duty of care to promote the health, safety and welfare of all members of our community.

The following is, therefore, a code of appropriate conduct for all adults working in or on behalf of Amberleigh, including those involved in contact visits or any off-site activities. Adherence to this code should ensure that both children and adults are safe from misconduct or unfounded allegations of misconduct.

You must always:

- Follow Amberleigh's policies and procedures, all of which are specifically written with safeguarding in mind.

- Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner at all times.

- Provide a good example and 'positive role model' to the children.

- Observe other people's right to confidentiality (unless you need to report something to the Designated Safeguarding Lead e.g. concerns about a child protection issue).

- Treat all children equally; never build 'special relationships' with individual young people or bestow favour on particular children.

- For avoidance of doubt for care managers/carers and the whole school community there are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in school to use "reasonable force" to safeguard children and young people. The term "reasonable force" covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be retrained to prevent violence or injury. For avoidance of doubt, reasonable force will only be used where de-escalation processes have failed.

  When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, this school will consider the risks carefully recognising the additional vulnerability of these groups. This school will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 where we make reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty. This school will by planning positive and proactive behaviour support through individualised student risk assessments and staff training in the form of 'Team Teach'. By doing this, this school will as far as is possible reduce and minimise the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.

  "Reasonable" in these circumstances means, "using no more force than is needed". The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between student's or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of the classroom. The Department for Education believes that the adoption of a "no contact" policy at a school can leave staff unable to fully support

and protect those in their care. The decision on whether or not to use reasonable force to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned and should always depend on individual circumstances (see link below)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools

- Report to a member of the Leadership Team (as soon as reasonably possible):

  Any difficulties that you are experiencing, for example, coping with an unruly child; situations where you anticipate that you may not be sufficiently qualified, trained or experienced to deal with or handle appropriately;

  Any behaviours of another person at Amberleigh which give you cause for concern or breach this code of conduct or other policies and procedures;

  Any behaviour or situation, which may give rise to complaint, misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

Appendix 4

Allegations of abuse made against staff

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher or volunteer, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- 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

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded**: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the head teacher (or proprietor where the head teacher is the subject of the allegation) – the 'case manager' – will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate. Other support available to individuals who they can turn to for advice include union representatives, a colleague or workplace initiative for welfare counselling or medical advice]
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice

- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the Proprietor will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as supply staff provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop using a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our local authority designated officer to determine a suitable outcome
- The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation
- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the local authority designated officer as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

Timescales

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days

Specific actions Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. If they think that the individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child, or if they think the person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child, they must make a referral to the DBS.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the head teacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the head teacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the student(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a student.

Next Review Due: September 2027