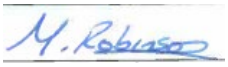
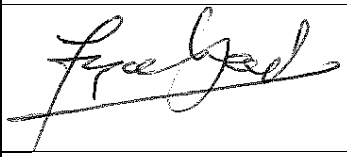
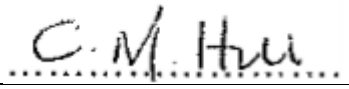
Student Safeguarding Policy – 2026/2027

Approved by Safeguarding Committee **Date: 06/10/26**

Approved by Safeguarding Governor **Date: 08/09/26**

Formally Approved by:

Role	Name	Signature
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	Matthew Robinson	
Principal and Chief Executive:	Dr Fazal Dad CBE	
Safeguarding Governor:	Catherine Hill OBE	

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The Policy

1. PURPOSE

At Blackburn College, we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students, apprentices and learners. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment where every learner is respected, valued and supported to achieve their full potential. We remain vigilant to the signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm and take timely, appropriate action to protect those who may be at risk.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide all employees, governors, volunteers, agency staff, contractors, partners and other stakeholders with a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, including child protection and the safeguarding of adults at risk. It explains the College's processes and procedures for identifying, responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns and allegations.

Blackburn College is committed to fostering a culture of vigilance where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, learners' welfare is paramount, and concerns are acted upon promptly and appropriately. We recognise that learners are not always ready or able to disclose abuse, neglect or exploitation and may not recognise that they are experiencing harm. All staff are therefore expected to maintain professional curiosity by being professionally brave enough to ask questions, seek further information and challenge assumptions where they have concerns about a learner's welfare. Staff should respond

to concerns sensitively and follow the College's safeguarding procedures without delay.

1.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

- **Child** – A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody does not change their status as a child.
- **Adult at Risk** – In line with the Care Act 2014, an adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met), is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and, because of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from the abuse, neglect or the risk of it.

Throughout this Policy, the term **learner** refers to all students, apprentices and other individuals engaged in learning or training at Blackburn College, regardless of age or mode of study.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to:

Blackburn College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students apprentices and learners. We recognise our statutory responsibilities under the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), the Care Act 2014, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (including the Prevent Duty Guidance 2023), the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and all other relevant safeguarding and welfare legislation and statutory guidance.

The College also has due regard to national guidance, including What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners (2015) and Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers (2024). These documents underpin our approach to identifying concerns, sharing information lawfully and proportionately, and working collaboratively with safeguarding partners to protect children and adults at risk.

The College believes that every student has the right to learn, develop and achieve in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and harm. Safeguarding is fundamental to the College's values and culture and is everyone's responsibility.

This policy sets out Blackburn College's commitment to creating and maintaining a culture of vigilance, prevention, early intervention and effective safeguarding practice. It provides employees, governors, volunteers, contractors, partners and visitors with a clear framework for recognising safeguarding concerns, responding appropriately and fulfilling their individual safeguarding responsibilities.

The College recognises that abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur in many forms and may take place within or outside the home, including online. We acknowledge that students may not always recognise that they are experiencing abuse, may be unable to communicate what is happening to them, or may be reluctant to disclose concerns. Staff are therefore expected to remain professionally curious, recognise indicators of harm and act without delay where concerns arise.

Blackburn College is committed to:

- safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk;
- maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment where students feel valued, listened to and supported;
- identifying safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity through effective pastoral support, attendance monitoring, professional curiosity and multi-agency working;
- responding promptly, proportionately and effectively to all safeguarding concerns, allegations and disclosures;
- ensuring safeguarding arrangements are child-centred and that the wishes, views and lived experiences of students are considered when decisions are made;
- promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring safeguarding arrangements are accessible to all students regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or socio-economic background;
- protecting students from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, serious violence, online harm and criminal or sexual exploitation;
- maintaining robust safer recruitment, staff training, governance and quality assurance arrangements;
- working collaboratively with parents, carers, employers, local authorities, safeguarding partners, the Police, health services and other agencies to promote positive outcomes for students.

The College recognises that safeguarding extends beyond child protection and includes the promotion of students' physical health, emotional wellbeing, mental health, online safety, personal development and wider welfare. Safeguarding arrangements apply equally to learning undertaken on College premises, online, in the workplace, during work experience, apprenticeships, educational visits, international mobility programmes and any activity delivered on behalf of Blackburn College.

Safeguarding is embedded throughout the College and is underpinned by the principle that the welfare of the student is paramount. All members of the College community are expected to contribute to maintaining a safe environment in which students can learn, develop and achieve.

This policy aims to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of all students and apprentices;
- ensure all staff understand their statutory safeguarding responsibilities;
- provide clear procedures for identifying, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns;
- support early help and early `intervention where concerns are identified;
- promote effective information sharing and multi-agency working;
- ensure appropriate action is taken where concerns relate to abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation or other safeguarding risks;
- establish clear procedures for managing allegations against adults working with children and adults at risk;
- promote a culture where students feel safe, are listened to and know how to seek help;
- ensure safeguarding practice is regularly monitored, reviewed and continuously improved.

2. SCOPE

2.1 Application of this Policy

This policy applies to all Blackburn College activities and to everyone working on behalf of, or representing, the College, including:

- Members of the Corporation Board and Governors;
- All employees, regardless of role or contract type;
- Agency, temporary and supply staff;

- Volunteers and student ambassadors;
- Trainee teachers;
- Contractors and commissioned service providers;
- Apprenticeship assessors and workplace coaches;
- Employers providing apprenticeships or work placements;
- Subcontractors and partner organisations delivering education or training on behalf of the College;
- Visiting speakers, external professionals and consultants;
- Individuals supporting educational visits, residentials, international mobility programmes and enrichment activities.

The policy applies to all students and apprentices regardless of age, level of study, mode of attendance or location, including:

- Students under the age of 18;
- Adults at risk;
- Apprentices;
- Higher Education students;
- Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- Students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs);
- Students studying with subcontractors or partner organisations;
- Students undertaking work placements, industry placements or apprenticeships;
- Students participating in educational visits, residentials, overseas mobility programmes and employer-based learning.

Safeguarding responsibilities apply equally whether learning takes place:

- on College premises;
- online or through blended learning;
- within the workplace;
- at partner organisations;
- during educational visits;
- whilst travelling on College business or activities organised by the College.

2.2 Safeguarding Principles

Blackburn College is committed to maintaining a safeguarding culture built upon the following principles:

- The welfare of the student is paramount.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Every student has the right to feel safe, respected, listened to and supported.
- Safeguarding practice must be inclusive, proportionate and centred on the needs of the individual.
- Early identification, early help and timely intervention produce better outcomes.
- Students' wishes, views and lived experiences will be sought and considered when safeguarding decisions are made.
- Effective safeguarding depends upon professional curiosity, information sharing and strong multi-agency working.
- Safeguarding extends beyond protection from abuse and includes promoting wellbeing, mental health, attendance, online safety and positive personal development.
- Safeguarding arrangements will continually evolve to respond to emerging risks including technological developments, Artificial Intelligence and online exploitation.

2.3 Blackburn College's Commitment

The College will:

- maintain a safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environment;
- promote a culture where students are encouraged to speak openly and know how to seek help;
- ensure all safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and responded to promptly;
- provide accessible safeguarding support for all students;
- work collaboratively with parents, carers, employers and partner agencies;
- promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- deliver a curriculum that helps students understand risk, stay safe and develop resilience;
- maintain effective safeguarding governance, quality assurance and continuous improvement arrangements;
- ensure safer recruitment practices are embedded throughout the organisation;
- maintain robust online safety arrangements including filtering, monitoring and cyber security.

2.4 Early Help and Prevention

Blackburn College recognises that safeguarding is most effective when concerns are identified early.

The College will work proactively with students, families, employers and partner agencies to identify emerging concerns and provide appropriate support before issues escalate.

Where appropriate, the College will contribute to Early Help Assessments, Team Around the Family (TAF) arrangements, Child in Need plans, Child Protection plans, Education Health and Care Plans, Adult Safeguarding arrangements and other multi-agency interventions.

2.5 Students Who May Be More Vulnerable

While safeguarding applies to every student, some individuals may require additional support due to increased vulnerability.

Staff should be particularly alert to safeguarding concerns involving students who:

- are disabled or have additional needs;
- have SEND or an EHCP;
- have mental health needs;
- are young carers;
- are care experienced, looked after or previously looked after;
- have a social worker;
- are missing education or demonstrate persistent absence;
- are at risk of child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation or county lines;
- are experiencing domestic abuse;
- are affected by parental substance misuse, mental ill health or offending;
- are at risk of radicalisation or extremism;
- are at risk of forced marriage, honour-based abuse or female genital mutilation;
- are victims of serious violence;
- are vulnerable to online exploitation, sextortion, image-based abuse or AI-enabled exploitation;
- identify as LGBTQ+ and may require additional safeguarding support, whilst recognising that being LGBTQ+ is not itself a safeguarding concern;
- are questioning their gender and may require careful, individualised safeguarding consideration in accordance with statutory guidance;
- are privately fostered;
- are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- are refugees, asylum seekers or unaccompanied asylum-seeking children;
- are at risk of modern slavery or human trafficking.

The presence of one or more vulnerability factors does not in itself indicate abuse. However, staff must remain professionally curious and consider whether additional support or safeguarding intervention may be required.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every member of the Blackburn College community has a role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

All staff are expected to maintain a culture of vigilance, recognise indicators of abuse or neglect, respond appropriately to concerns and contribute to creating a safe learning environment in which every student can achieve their full potential.

Every member of staff, regardless of role or employment status, has a responsibility to safeguard students.

3.1 All staff must:

- Read and understand **Part One** of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)* and confirm annually that they have done so.
- Complete mandatory safeguarding, Prevent, online safety and child sexual exploitation training during induction and participate in annual refresher training.
- Receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the academic year.
- Maintain an awareness of local safeguarding arrangements and College procedures.
- Understand their individual safeguarding responsibilities and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Be able to identify indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and emerging safeguarding risks.
- Maintain professional curiosity where concerns arise and never assume somebody else will act.
- Report all safeguarding concerns immediately using the College's safeguarding reporting procedures.
- Understand that anyone can make a referral to Children's Social Care if they believe a child is at immediate risk of harm.
- Record safeguarding concerns accurately, factually and promptly.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.
- Promote a culture where students feel safe, respected and listened to.
- Contribute to early help and multi-agency working where appropriate.
- Understand the importance of attendance, engagement and wellbeing as safeguarding indicators.
- Promote safe use of technology and support students to develop digital resilience.
- All staff should understand that safeguarding concerns may present through:
- changes in behaviour;
- attendance concerns;
- mental health or emotional wellbeing;
- online activity;
- disclosures;
- injuries;
- peer relationships;
- professional observations;
- concerns raised by parents, employers or partner agencies.

No member of staff should assume that another colleague has taken action.

3.2 The Corporation Board will ensure that:

The Corporation Board has strategic responsibility for ensuring Blackburn College fulfils its statutory safeguarding duties.

The Corporation Board will ensure that:

- safeguarding remains a strategic priority across the College;
- effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and reviewed annually;
- this policy is approved annually and published on the College website;
- an appropriately trained Designated Safeguarding Lead is appointed from the Executive Leadership Team;
- sufficient resources are provided to enable safeguarding arrangements to operate effectively;
- safeguarding receives regular scrutiny through reports to Corporation and the Strategic Safeguarding Committee;
- annual safeguarding assurance is received from the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- safeguarding risks are appropriately reflected within the College Risk Register;
- safer recruitment procedures comply with statutory guidance;
- all governors undertake safeguarding training at induction and receive annual safeguarding updates thereafter;
- filtering and monitoring arrangements are reviewed annually and remain effective;
- safeguarding arrangements reflect current legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding partnership arrangements;
- students receive effective education regarding safeguarding, healthy relationships, online safety, Prevent and personal safety through the curriculum.
- The Corporation Board recognises that safeguarding extends beyond compliance and forms part of the College's wider commitment to student welfare, inclusion and educational excellence.

3.3 The College Principal and Chief Executive:

The Principal has overall accountability for safeguarding within Blackburn College.

The Principal will:

- ensure safeguarding remains a strategic priority across the organisation;
- ensure this policy is implemented consistently across all College provision;
- support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in fulfilling statutory responsibilities;
- allocate sufficient staffing and financial resources to safeguarding;
- promote a culture where safeguarding is embedded within all College activity;
- ensure staff understand that safeguarding concerns will always be taken seriously;
- ensure whistleblowing arrangements are effective;
- receive regular safeguarding reports from the DSL;
- ensure safeguarding forms part of organisational quality assurance and continuous improvement.

3.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): (As set out in Annex C: Keeping Children Safe in Education)

The College Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a member of the Executive Leadership Team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across Blackburn College.

The DSL will:

- provide strategic leadership for safeguarding across the College;

- act as the principal source of safeguarding advice for staff;
- ensure safeguarding procedures comply with statutory guidance;
- receive and manage safeguarding concerns;
- make referrals to Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Police, Prevent, Channel and other agencies where appropriate;
- liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- oversee safeguarding investigations and interventions;
- ensure safeguarding records are accurate, secure and appropriately maintained;
- monitor safeguarding trends and emerging risks;
- provide safeguarding reports to the Strategic Safeguarding Committee and Corporation Board;
- oversee safeguarding audits and quality assurance;
- ensure safeguarding training is delivered and evaluated;
- oversee safeguarding within subcontracted, apprenticeship and partnership provision;
- lead the College response to serious safeguarding incidents;
- promote effective multi-agency working;
- ensure safeguarding arrangements remain compliant with statutory guidance.

The DSL will also ensure that safeguarding practice reflects emerging risks including:
- Artificial Intelligence;
- online exploitation;
- deepfakes;
- image-based abuse;
- serious violence;
- contextual safeguarding;
- child criminal exploitation;
- county lines;
- mental health;
- children questioning their gender in accordance with statutory guidance.

3.5 Working with others

The **Deputy** Designated Safeguarding Leads are expected to:

Deputy DSLs will support the DSL in delivering the statutory safeguarding responsibilities above.

Deputies will:
- act with delegated authority in the absence of the DSL;
- receive safeguarding referrals;
- provide safeguarding advice to staff;
- attend strategy meetings and multi-agency meetings; including section 47 enquiries and those under section 17 of the children act (1989)
- support safeguarding investigations;
- contribute to quality assurance and safeguarding audits;
- ensure safeguarding records remain accurate and up to date.
- Deliver staff training on key aspects of safeguarding.

The ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This includes:
- ensuring that the college knows who its cohort of students who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or

reasonable adjustments to help students who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on student's educational outcomes.

3.6 Safeguarding Intervention Workers Will:

Safeguarding Intervention Workers play a key operational role in safeguarding students.
They will:

- provide direct support to students;
- undertake safeguarding assessments;
- contribute to early help interventions;
- attend Child Protection Conferences, Child in Need meetings, Team Around the Family, and Adult Safeguarding meetings where required;
- maintain accurate safeguarding records;
- contribute to multi-agency working;
- provide advice to curriculum staff;
- support attendance, wellbeing and student engagement;
- escalate safeguarding concerns to the DSL where required.

3.7 Training:

Blackburn College is committed to ensuring all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training.
The College will ensure:

- safeguarding training is completed by all staff during induction;
- safeguarding training is refreshed annually;
- DSLs complete enhanced safeguarding training every two years, with knowledge refreshed annually;
- governors receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role;
- all staff receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the year.

Training will include:

- child protection;
- adult safeguarding;
- Prevent;
- online safety;
- Artificial Intelligence risks;
- contextual safeguarding;
- child criminal exploitation;
- county lines;
- domestic abuse;
- mental health;
- child-on-child abuse;
- professional curiosity;
- attendance as a safeguarding indicator;
- information sharing;
- safer working practice.

3.8 Availability

During normal College operating hours, a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will always be available to provide advice, receive safeguarding concerns and coordinate safeguarding responses.

Arrangements will also be in place to ensure safeguarding support is available during educational visits, residential activities, international work projects and other College activities taking place outside normal working hours.

4. SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUBCONTRACTED/CO VENTURED PROVISION

The College has sub-contracted / partnership provision for 14-16 students, 16-18 students and vulnerable adults with the following providers:

- Blackburn Rovers Football Club
- Launchpad powered by Blackburn College and Newground Together
- Launchpad Darwen – Darwen Youth Zone
- Training 2000
- Witton Park – Animal Care Unit
- Saturn Centre
- Blackburn Leisure Centre
- Local Partner Schools

These organisations have their own safeguarding policies but within these they must refer to Blackburn Colleges practices and a requirement to pass details of any referrals to one of the designated officers.

All employees delivering courses at a subcontractor / partner must attend the providers own safeguarding training.

5. SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Blackburn College recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond the College environment and apply equally to students and apprentices undertaking apprenticeships, work placements, T Level industry placements, supported internships, work experience and employer-based learning.

The College remains responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place throughout the duration of any placement or apprenticeship delivered on behalf of Blackburn College.

5.1 Employer Responsibilities

Before a placement or apprenticeship commences, the College will ensure that employers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard students.

Employers will be expected to:

- provide a safe working environment;
- promote the welfare of students and apprentices;
- comply with relevant health and safety legislation;
- identify an appropriate workplace supervisor;
- understand how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns;
- immediately report any safeguarding concern, allegation, disclosure or incident involving a Blackburn College student or apprentice;
- cooperate with College safeguarding procedures and any external safeguarding investigations.

Where appropriate, employers will receive safeguarding guidance from the College prior to the placement commencing.

5.2 College Responsibilities

The College will:

- undertake appropriate placement checks and risk assessments before students commence placements;
- ensure students receive safeguarding, Prevent, online safety and health and safety information before attending placements;
- provide employers with information on safeguarding reporting arrangements;
- maintain appropriate communication with employers throughout placements;
- monitor student wellbeing during placements through regular reviews and contact;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with College procedures regardless of where the concern occurs;
- work collaboratively with employers, parents, carers and external agencies where safeguarding concerns arise.

5.3 Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Any safeguarding concern arising during an apprenticeship, work placement, supported internship, T Level industry placement or work experience must be reported immediately to the College Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Employers should not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves but should preserve information, ensure the immediate safety of the student where required and notify the College without delay.

The College will determine the appropriate safeguarding response, including referrals to Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, the Police, Prevent or other agencies where appropriate.

5.4 Student Support

Students undertaking employer-based learning remain entitled to the same safeguarding support available to students studying on College premises.

The College will ensure students know:

- how to report safeguarding concerns;
- how to contact the safeguarding team;
- how to access wellbeing, counselling and pastoral support;
- how to report concerns outside normal College hours where emergency services or statutory agencies may need to be contacted.

Safeguarding information will continue to be made available through College systems, tutorials, OneFile (where applicable), ProMonitor and other student communication platforms.

5.5 Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The College will regularly review safeguarding arrangements relating to employer-based learning to ensure they remain effective.

This will include:

- monitoring safeguarding incidents arising within placements;

- reviewing employer safeguarding arrangements where concerns arise;
- incorporating safeguarding into placement quality assurance activities;
- evaluating safeguarding themes and trends through the Strategic Safeguarding Committee;
- ensuring lessons learned are reflected within future employer engagement and staff training.

6. SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRIPS AND VISITS

Blackburn College recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend to all educational visits, residential programmes, work-related learning, enrichment activities and international mobility opportunities organised or delivered by the College.

The College has the same duty to safeguard students regardless of whether activities take place on College premises, elsewhere within the United Kingdom or overseas.

All visits and activities must be planned and delivered in accordance with the College's Educational Visits procedures and associated risk assessment processes

6.1 Planning and Risk Assessment

Before any educational visit, residential activity or international mobility programme takes place, an appropriate risk assessment must be completed and approved.
Risk assessments will consider, where appropriate:

- safeguarding risks;
- health and safety;
- medical and welfare needs;
- supervision arrangements;
- accommodation arrangements;
- transport;
- emergency procedures;
- local safeguarding arrangements;
- cultural, environmental and legal considerations;
- communication arrangements;
- students requiring additional support or reasonable adjustments.

Where activities take place overseas, additional consideration will be given to local safeguarding legislation, healthcare provision, emergency contacts, political or environmental risks and cultural expectations.

6.2 Staff Responsibilities

Staff leading visits must:

- maintain professional boundaries at all times;
- ensure appropriate supervision ratios are maintained;
- remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns throughout the visit;
- respond promptly to any safeguarding disclosure or concern;
- follow College safeguarding procedures regardless of the location of the visit;
- record safeguarding concerns accurately and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as practicable;
- ensure students know how to seek help during the visit.
- Zero tolerance to drugs and alcohol consumption.

Staff must not assume safeguarding responsibilities transfer to partner organisations or host

providers.

6.3 Partner Organisations

Where visits involve external providers, employers, accommodation providers, overseas partners or host organisations, Blackburn College will undertake appropriate due diligence before approving the activity.

The College will seek assurance that partner organisations:

- provide safe learning environments;
- have appropriate safeguarding arrangements;
- understand reporting expectations;
- cooperate with Blackburn College safeguarding procedures;
- respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns involving Blackburn College students.

6.4 Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Any safeguarding concern arising during an educational visit, residential activity or international work project must be reported immediately to the Visit Leader and the College Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy DSL).

Where a student is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, staff must take appropriate action to ensure their immediate safety, including contacting emergency services or local safeguarding authorities where necessary.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine whether referrals should be made to Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, the Police, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (where relevant) or other appropriate agencies.

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded in accordance with College safeguarding procedures upon return, or sooner where practicable.

6.5 Student Preparation

Students participating in visits, residential activities or overseas programmes will receive appropriate preparation before departure, including information relating to:

- safeguarding and personal safety;
- expected standards of behaviour;
- online safety whilst travelling;
- local laws and cultural expectations;
- emergency contact arrangements;
- reporting safeguarding concerns;
- health and wellbeing;
- accommodation expectations;
- maintaining professional conduct during placements and employer-based activities.

Parents, carers and employers, where appropriate, will also receive relevant safeguarding information before activities commence.

6.6 International Work Related Projects

Where students participate in international mobility programmes, including Turing Scheme activities,

the College will ensure safeguarding arrangements reflect both UK statutory expectations and local safeguarding requirements.

The College will work with approved international partners to ensure that:

- safeguarding responsibilities are clearly understood;
- suitable accommodation arrangements are in place;
- emergency support is available throughout the visit;
- students have access to Blackburn College safeguarding staff whilst overseas;
- safeguarding incidents are reported promptly and managed in accordance with College procedures.

The welfare of students will remain paramount throughout all international activities.

7. SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILD (LAC) AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN

Blackburn College recognises that children who are looked after, previously looked after and care experienced students are among the most vulnerable members of our learning community and may have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, loss or instability that continues to impact upon their education, wellbeing and personal development.

The College is committed to promoting high aspirations, reducing barriers to learning and ensuring these students receive the safeguarding, pastoral and academic support required to achieve positive outcomes.

The College recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond protecting students from harm and include promoting attendance, engagement, achievement, progression and emotional wellbeing.

7.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Looked After Child (LAC)** means a child under the age of 18 who is in the care of a local authority under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, either through a Care Order or voluntary accommodation.
- **Care Experienced Student** refers to young people or adults who have spent time in care and may continue to require additional support beyond their eighteenth birthday.

7.2 College Responsibilities

The College will:

- identify students who are looked after, previously looked after or care experienced at the earliest opportunity;
- ensure appropriate safeguarding and pastoral support arrangements are established;
- promote high aspirations and positive educational outcomes;
- work collaboratively with local authorities, Virtual School Heads, social workers, personal advisers and carers;
- provide reasonable adjustments where appropriate to support participation and achievement;
- monitor attendance, wellbeing, progress and engagement;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are identified and responded to promptly;
- support transition into, through and beyond College.

Where appropriate, the College will contribute to statutory reviews, Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and other multi-agency meetings.

7.3 Designated Member of Staff

The College will appoint an appropriately trained member of staff with responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children, in accordance with statutory guidance.

This member of staff will be the Designated Safeguarding Lead, relevant curriculum and student support teams will ensure students receive coordinated support. The SPO/LAC Lead will where appropriate deputise for the DSL for meeting with the virtual school.

Responsibilities include:

- maintaining oversight of the College's looked after and previously looked after cohort;
- working with Virtual School Heads and local authorities;
- supporting curriculum teams;
- promoting attendance and progression;
- ensuring safeguarding information is shared appropriately;
- advocating for students where additional support is required.

7.4 Students with a Social Worker

Blackburn College recognises that students who have, or have previously had, a social worker are statistically more likely to experience safeguarding concerns and poorer educational outcomes.

The College will work proactively to:

- identify students with current or previous social worker involvement;
- understand how safeguarding issues may affect attendance, learning and achievement;
- ensure appropriate support is available;
- maintain high aspirations for educational success;
- contribute to multi-agency planning where appropriate.

The College recognises that the impact of abuse, neglect or statutory intervention may continue long after formal involvement with Children's Social Care has ended.

7.5 Information Sharing

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that appropriate information is obtained and maintained regarding students who are looked after or previously looked after, including, where appropriate:

- legal status;
- social worker details;
- carers and those with parental responsibility;
- emergency contacts;
- Virtual School Head contact details;
- Personal Education Plan arrangements;
- safeguarding risks;
- delegated authority arrangements.

Information will be shared only where lawful, proportionate and necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of the student, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and statutory safeguarding guidance.

7.6 Care Leavers and Care Experienced Adults

As a further education college, Blackburn College also supports care experienced adults and care leavers over the age of 18.

Whilst statutory looked after arrangements may no longer apply, the College recognises that many care experienced students continue to require additional pastoral, safeguarding and wellbeing support.

The College will work collaboratively with personal advisers, local authorities and partner agencies to ensure appropriate support remains available throughout the student's programme of study.

8. SAFER RECRUITMENT

Blackburn College is committed to creating and maintaining a safe culture in which students are protected from harm and unsuitable individuals are prevented from working with children, young people and adults at risk.

The College recognises that safeguarding begins with robust recruitment, safer working practices and a culture where concerns about adults working with students are identified, reported and managed appropriately.

The College will follow the principles set out within **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)**, relevant employment legislation and statutory safeguarding guidance when recruiting, appointing and managing staff.

8.1 Safer Recruitment

The College will ensure all recruitment processes are robust, transparent and designed to deter, identify and reject unsuitable applicants.

Recruitment procedures will include, where appropriate:

- verification of identity;
- verification of qualifications and professional status;
- employment history checks and explanation of any gaps;
- satisfactory references;
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks at the appropriate level;
- Children's Barred List checks where legally required;
- Prohibition from Teaching checks where applicable;
- Section 128 Direction checks for relevant leadership and management positions;
- right to work checks;
- online searches of shortlisted candidates, in accordance with statutory guidance, to identify any information relevant to a candidate's suitability to work with children;
- verification of overseas criminal records or additional safeguarding checks where applicants have lived or worked overseas.

The College will maintain a Single Central Record in accordance with statutory requirements

8.2 Recruitment Panels

At least one member of every recruitment panel involved in appointing staff to roles involving regulated activity will have successfully completed recognised Safer Recruitment training.

Recruitment decisions will always consider a candidate's suitability to work with children and adults at risk, alongside their qualifications, experience and competence.

8.3 Induction

All newly appointed staff, volunteers and regular contractors will complete an appropriate safeguarding induction before commencing work with students.

Induction will include:

- safeguarding responsibilities;
- child protection procedures;
- Prevent Duty;
- online safety;
- staff code of conduct;
- whistleblowing procedures;
- acceptable use of technology;
- professional boundaries;
- safeguarding reporting procedures;
- the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Staff will also be required to read:

- Part One (or Annex A where appropriate) of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)**;
- the College Safeguarding Policy;
- the Staff Code of Conduct;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Behaviour and Relationships policies relevant to their role.

8.4 Safer Working Practice

All adults working for or on behalf of Blackburn College are in a position of trust.
Staff are expected to:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times;
- avoid behaviour that could be misinterpreted;
- act in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct;
- use professional communication methods only;
- avoid personal relationships with students;
- avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations where these cannot be justified;
- challenge inappropriate behaviour;
- report concerns regarding colleagues immediately.

The College recognises that safeguarding responsibilities apply equally within face-to-face, online and digital environments.

8.5 Low-Level Concerns

Blackburn College encourages an open and transparent culture where concerns about the conduct of adults working with students can be raised without fear of reprisal.

A low-level concern is behaviour that may not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority

Designated Officer (LADO) but is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct or expected professional standards.

Examples may include:

- over-familiar behaviour;
- inappropriate communication;
- poor professional judgement;
- boundary issues;
- behaviour creating a sense of unease.

All low-level concerns will be reported, recorded, reviewed and managed proportionately by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Executive Director of People and Culture, where appropriate.

The College recognises that identifying and addressing low-level concerns helps prevent more serious safeguarding issues from developing.

8.6 Allegations Against Staff

Any concern or allegation that an adult working in or on behalf of the College has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Any concerns relating to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be reported directly to the Principal. Where concerns relate to the Principal, these should be reported to the DSL, who will escalate the matter to the Chair of Governors in accordance with the College's safeguarding procedures.

The Principal (or Chair of Governors, where appropriate) will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before commencing any internal investigation where this is required by statutory guidance.

The College will ensure allegations are managed fairly, consistently, confidentially and without unnecessary delay, balancing the welfare of students with the rights of employees.

8.7 Allegations Relating to Agency Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

Safeguarding concerns relating to agency workers, contractors, consultants, volunteers or partner organisation staff will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance.

The College will:

- notify the individual's employer;
- liaise with the LADO where appropriate;
- take immediate action to protect students where required;
- cooperate fully with external investigations.

8.8 Whistleblowing

All staff have a professional duty to report safeguarding concerns, poor practice or unsafe behaviour.

No member of staff should assume that someone else has taken action.
Staff who have concerns about safeguarding practice, leadership decisions or the conduct of colleagues should report these concerns through the College Whistleblowing Policy.

Where staff believe concerns have not been addressed appropriately, they should escalate concerns through external safeguarding procedures, including contacting Children's Social Care, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer or other appropriate agencies where necessary.

The College will ensure staff raising safeguarding concerns in good faith are supported and protected from victimisation.

8.9 Leaving Employment

Where a member of staff, volunteer or contractor is dismissed, resigns or otherwise leaves employment because they have harmed a child, posed a risk of harm or would have been dismissed had they not resigned, the College will fulfil its statutory duty to make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any relevant professional regulatory body.

9. PREVENT PROTOCOL

Blackburn College is fully committed to fulfilling its statutory duties under the **Prevent Duty Guidance 2023** and recognises that protecting students from radicalisation and extremism forms an integral part of the College's safeguarding responsibilities.

The College acknowledges that radicalisation is a safeguarding issue and that individuals may be vulnerable to extremist ideology from a wide range of sources, including online platforms, social media, peer groups, organised groups and individuals.

Our approach is founded on the principles of safeguarding, inclusion, equality, freedom of expression, mutual respect and the promotion of fundamental British values.

The College recognises that there is no single profile of an individual who may become vulnerable to radicalisation. Staff are therefore expected to remain vigilant, exercise professional curiosity and report concerns promptly.

9.1 The College Will

Blackburn College will:

- fulfil its statutory Prevent Duty responsibilities;
- maintain an appropriate Prevent risk assessment and action plan;
- appoint a designated Prevent Lead. The Deputy DSL fulfils this role and acts as the Single Point of Contact for Prevent, working closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- embed Prevent within the College's safeguarding arrangements;
- ensure staff receive Prevent awareness training appropriate to their role;
- provide students with opportunities to develop resilience, critical thinking and digital literacy;
- promote equality, diversity, inclusion, respect and democratic values;
- create an environment where students feel able to discuss difficult issues safely and respectfully;
- work collaboratively with local safeguarding partners, Prevent teams, the Police and other agencies where appropriate.

9.2 Identifying Vulnerability

Staff should be alert to behaviour or circumstances which may indicate that a student is vulnerable to radicalisation.

Indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- significant changes in behaviour or presentation;
- increasingly intolerant attitudes towards others;
- isolation from family, friends or established peer groups;
- fixation on extremist material or ideology;
- accessing or sharing extremist content online;
- attempts to recruit or influence others;
- expressions of support for violence to achieve ideological aims;
- changes in appearance or behaviour associated with extremist groups;
- concerning online activity, including engagement with extremist content generated or amplified through artificial intelligence or social media algorithms.

The presence of one or more indicators does not necessarily mean a student is being radicalised. Staff should always consider the wider context and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

9.3 Reporting Concerns

Any concern relating to radicalisation or extremism must be treated as a safeguarding concern.
Staff must:

- report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- accurately record the concern in accordance with College safeguarding procedures;
- avoid investigating concerns themselves;
- continue to support the student whilst safeguarding procedures are followed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and SPOC will determine the most appropriate course of action, which may include:

- Early Help;
- referral to Children's or Adult Social Care;
- referral to the Police;
- referral to the Channel Programme;
- multi-agency safeguarding intervention.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm or criminal activity, the Police will be contacted without delay.

9.4 The Channel Panel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential, multi-agency safeguarding process that provides early intervention and support to individuals identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Where appropriate, Blackburn College will make referrals to the Prevent Team, police will assess radicalisation risk and Channel Panel will meet to discuss the referral, assess the risk and decide whether the person should be accepted into Channel. The College recognises that the purpose of Channel is to provide safeguarding support rather than criminalise vulnerable individuals.

9.5 Online Radicalisation

The College recognises that many individuals become exposed to extremist ideology through online activity.

The College will therefore:

- maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems;
- educate students about online manipulation, misinformation and disinformation;
- promote critical thinking and media literacy;
- support students in recognising harmful online narratives;
- raise awareness of the risks associated with artificial intelligence, deepfake content, algorithm-driven content and online grooming by extremist groups.

Online safety education forms part of the College's wider safeguarding and Personal Development curriculum.

9.6 Freedom of Expression

Blackburn College is committed to protecting freedom of speech, academic debate and lawful expression of opinion.

The College recognises that holding or expressing controversial, political or religious views does not in itself constitute extremism.

Safeguarding concerns will always be assessed proportionately, objectively and based upon evidence, with appropriate regard to equality, human rights and freedom of expression.

9.7 Training and Quality Assurance

The College will ensure:

- all staff complete Prevent awareness training during induction;
- Prevent training is refreshed regularly in line with national requirements;
- Prevent forms part of annual safeguarding updates;
- Prevent risks are monitored through the Strategic Safeguarding Committee;
- referrals and themes are reviewed to inform continuous improvement.

10. MODERN SLAVERY

Blackburn College is committed to preventing, identifying and responding to all forms of modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation.

The College recognises that modern slavery is a serious safeguarding issue affecting both children and adults and that victims may be exploited through coercion, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability.

The College has a statutory and moral responsibility to safeguard students who may be at risk of exploitation and will work collaboratively with safeguarding partners, law enforcement agencies and other professionals to protect those at risk.

The College is also committed to meeting its responsibilities under the **Modern Slavery Act 2015** and ensuring that all College operations, procurement, partnerships and supply chains are conducted ethically and without exploitation.

10.1 Forms of Exploitation

Modern slavery may include, but is not limited to:

- human trafficking;

- forced or compulsory labour;
- debt bondage;
- domestic servitude;
- criminal exploitation;
- sexual exploitation;
- labour exploitation;
- forced criminality, including county lines activity;
- forced begging;
- forced marriage where exploitation is present;
- organ harvesting.

Victims may be children or adults and may not recognise themselves as victims.

10.2 Indicators of Modern Slavery

Staff should remain professionally curious where students display indicators that may suggest exploitation.

Possible indicators include:
- unexplained absence or poor attendance;
- significant changes in behaviour or presentation;
- evidence of controlling or coercive relationships;
- fearfulness, anxiety or reluctance to speak openly;
- unexplained injuries;
- possession of multiple mobile phones or unexplained money;
- being collected or closely monitored by unknown adults;
- signs of physical neglect or poor living conditions;
- excessive working hours affecting attendance or wellbeing;
- reluctance to provide information about accommodation or employment;
- concerns regarding immigration status or documentation.

The presence of one or more indicators does not necessarily mean exploitation is taking place; however, all concerns must be taken seriously.

10.3 Reporting Concerns

Any suspicion or disclosure relating to modern slavery or human trafficking must be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Staff must:
- report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- accurately record concerns in accordance with College safeguarding procedures;
- avoid investigating concerns themselves;
- continue to provide appropriate support to the student whilst safeguarding procedures are followed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine the appropriate course of action, which may include referral to:
- Children's Social Care;
- Adult Social Care;
- the Police;
- the Modern Slavery Helpline;

- the National Referral Mechanism (NRM);
- other safeguarding partners, where appropriate.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services will be contacted without delay.

10.4 Supporting Students

Blackburn College recognises that victims of exploitation may require long-term safeguarding, pastoral and wellbeing support.

The College will:
- adopt a trauma-informed approach wherever appropriate;
- work collaboratively with partner agencies;
- support continued participation in education wherever possible;
- ensure information is shared lawfully and proportionately to safeguard the individual.

Safeguarding decisions will always place the welfare of the student at the centre of decision making.

10.5 Governance

The College's **Modern Slavery Statement** is published annually in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and sets out the actions taken to reduce the risk of exploitation within the College's operations and supply chains.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor themes relating to exploitation and modern slavery and report emerging risks through the Strategic Safeguarding Committee and Corporation Board where appropriate.

11. TYPES OF ABUSE

Blackburn College recognises that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding concerns can affect any student regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or socio-economic background.

Abuse may occur within the family, within institutions, within peer groups, in the community, online or through individuals known or unknown to the student.

All staff should remain vigilant, exercise professional curiosity and report any safeguarding concerns immediately in accordance with this policy.

Whilst the categories below are not exhaustive, they represent the most common safeguarding concerns identified within statutory guidance.

11.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate infliction of physical harm or injury upon a child or adult at risk.
This may include:
- hitting;
- shaking;
- throwing;
- burning or scalding;
- poisoning;

- suffocation;
- fabricated or induced illness;
- inappropriate restraint.

Physical abuse may also occur within peer relationships, organised criminal groups or domestic abuse situations.

11.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or adult which adversely affects emotional development, confidence or wellbeing.
Examples include:

- humiliation;
- Belittling & name-calling
- intimidation;
- threats;
- coercive control;
- rejection;
- isolation;
- bullying;
- exposure to domestic abuse;
- online abuse;
- persistent criticism.

Emotional abuse may occur independently or alongside other forms of abuse.

11.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities.

This includes:

- sexual assault;
- rape;
- sexual exploitation;
- grooming;
- indecent images;
- online sexual abuse;
- sexual coercion;
- image-based abuse;
- sexual harassment;
- non-contact abuse.

Sexual abuse can occur both online and offline.

11.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a student's basic physical and psychological needs.

This may include failure to provide:

- adequate food;
- clothing;
- supervision;

- medical care;
- emotional support;
- safe accommodation;
- education.

Neglect may significantly affect a student's health, wellbeing and educational progress.

11.5 Child-on-Child Abuse

Blackburn College recognises that children can abuse other children.

Child-on-child abuse will never be dismissed as:
- banter;
- growing up;
- part of college life;
- horseplay.

Child-on-child abuse may include:
- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse;
- sexual violence;
- sexual harassment;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- coercive behaviour;
- initiation or hazing activities;
- image-based abuse;
- sharing of nude or semi-nude images;
- AI-generated sexual images;
- deepfake imagery;
- sextortion;
- stalking;
- controlling behaviour.

The College adopts a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims will always be supported and allegations managed in accordance with statutory guidance (including OfS E6 condition).

11.6 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where individuals or groups manipulate, coerce or deceive children into criminal activity.

Examples include:
- county lines;
- drug supply;
- theft;
- violence;
- carrying weapons;
- money laundering;
- organised criminal activity.

Children involved in criminal exploitation are victims and require safeguarding support.

11.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which children receive something, or believe they will receive something, in exchange for sexual activity.

Exploitation may occur:
- online;
- through organised groups;
- within peer relationships;
- through coercion;
- through manipulation;
- through violence.

11.8 Serious Violence

Staff should remain alert to indicators that students may be affected by serious violence.

These may include:
- unexplained injuries;
- carrying weapons;
- association with gangs;
- unexplained gifts or money;
- changes in behaviour;
- declining attendance;
- fear of travelling;
- substance misuse.

11.9 Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse may be:
- physical;
- emotional;
- sexual;
- psychological;
- financial;
- economic;
- coercive or controlling behaviour.

Students may experience domestic abuse directly or through witnessing abuse within the home.

11.10 Honour-Based Abuse

Honour-Based Abuse includes practices carried out to protect perceived family or community honour.

This may include:
- forced marriage;
- female genital mutilation (FGM);
- honour-based violence.

Such abuse is a safeguarding concern and must always be reported.

11.11 Radicalisation and Extremism

Radicalisation is the process through which an individual comes to support terrorism or extremist ideology.

Concerns relating to radicalisation must always be managed as safeguarding concerns and referred in accordance with the College's Prevent procedures.

11.12 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery includes:
- trafficking;
- forced labour;
- domestic servitude;
- criminal exploitation;
- sexual exploitation;
- debt bondage.

Victims require safeguarding and support.

11.13 Online Safety

Technology presents significant safeguarding opportunities and risks.

Online safeguarding concerns may include:
- online grooming;
- cyberbullying;
- exposure to harmful content;
- misinformation and disinformation;
- online fraud;
- sextortion;
- AI-generated abuse;
- deepfakes;
- online radicalisation;
- exploitation through social media;
- gaming-related risks.

Students should be supported to develop safe online behaviours and digital resilience.

11.14 Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health concerns do not in themselves constitute abuse.

However, poor mental health may:
- be an indicator that abuse has occurred;
- increase vulnerability to exploitation;
- increase safeguarding risk.

Where mental health concerns present alongside safeguarding concerns, safeguarding procedures will always take precedence.

11.15 Additional Safeguarding Risks

Staff should also remain alert to:

- children missing education;
- homelessness;
- private fostering;
- fabricated or induced illness;
- young carers;
- contextual safeguarding concerns;
- abuse linked to disability;
- attendance concerns;
- exploitation linked to artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.

11.16 Further Guidance

The safeguarding risks described above are not exhaustive.

Staff should refer to **Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)** for detailed information regarding specific safeguarding issues and should always seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead where they are uncertain.

12. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

Blackburn College recognises that students may disclose abuse, neglect or exploitation in a variety of ways. Disclosures may be made directly, indirectly, through changes in behaviour, attendance, emotional wellbeing, online activity or through information received from others.

The College also recognises that many students may not recognise that they are experiencing abuse, may not feel able to disclose concerns or may communicate their experiences gradually over time.

All safeguarding concerns must therefore be taken seriously.

Staff should always exercise professional curiosity and act without delay where they have concerns about the welfare of a student.

The welfare of the student will always be the College's primary consideration.

12.1 If a Student Makes a Disclosure

Where a student discloses abuse, neglect, exploitation or any other safeguarding concern, staff should:

- remain calm and listen carefully;
- give the student their full attention;
- reassure the student that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- allow the student to speak freely without interruption;
- use open questions only where clarification is genuinely required;
- avoid asking leading or investigative questions;
- explain that the information cannot be kept confidential and will need to be shared with those who can help keep them safe;
- reassure the student that only those who need to know will be informed;
- report the concern immediately using College safeguarding procedures.

Staff should remember that the student has chosen them, the time and the place to disclose. The response provided may have a significant impact on the student's confidence in seeking further support.

12.2 Staff Must Not

Staff must never:

- promise confidentiality;
- investigate the concern themselves;
- ask leading questions;
- express disbelief, shock or anger;
- confront the alleged perpetrator;
- contact parents, carers or external agencies without direction from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, unless there is an immediate risk to life;
- make assumptions or personal judgements;
- delay reporting concerns because they are uncertain.

It is not the role of College staff to determine whether abuse has occurred. Their responsibility is to recognise concerns, respond appropriately and report them promptly.

12.3 Recording Concerns

Safeguarding records should be completed as soon as possible following the disclosure or concern.

Records should:

- be factual, accurate and objective;
- distinguish clearly between fact, observation and opinion;
- include the student's own words wherever possible;
- include dates, times and locations;
- identify all individuals present;
- record any actions taken;
- be signed, dated and uploaded in accordance with College procedures.

Records should never be altered once completed.

12.4 Immediate Risk

Where a student is believed to be at immediate risk of significant harm, staff must take immediate action to safeguard the individual.

This may include:

- contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately;
- contacting emergency services (999);
- contacting Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care where immediate intervention is required.

Staff should never delay emergency action whilst attempting to locate a Designated Safeguarding Lead where immediate action is required to protect life or prevent serious harm.

12.5 Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns, regardless of perceived severity, must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine the most appropriate course of action, which may include:

- Early Help;
- internal safeguarding intervention;
- referral to Children's Social Care;
- referral to Adult Social Care;
- Police involvement;
- referral to the Prevent Team
- referral to other safeguarding partners.

Where appropriate, the College will work collaboratively with external agencies to safeguard the student and promote positive outcomes.

12.6 Information Sharing

Effective safeguarding depends upon timely and appropriate information sharing.

The College will share safeguarding information where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to protect a student or another person from harm.

Staff should never allow concerns regarding data protection legislation to prevent appropriate safeguarding information being shared.

Information sharing will be undertaken in accordance with:
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026);
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

12.7 Supporting the Student

Following a disclosure, the College will ensure that appropriate support is made available.

Support may include:
- safeguarding intervention;
- pastoral support;
- wellbeing services;
- counselling;
- mental health support;
- academic adjustments;
- external agency involvement.

The College recognises that safeguarding does not end when a referral is made. Students may require ongoing support throughout and beyond any safeguarding intervention.

12.8 Supporting Staff

Managing safeguarding concerns can be emotionally demanding.

Staff involved in safeguarding incidents will be offered appropriate supervision, advice and support through the Designated Safeguarding Lead, line managers, Human Resources or the College's Employee Assistance Programme where appropriate.

12.9 Record Management

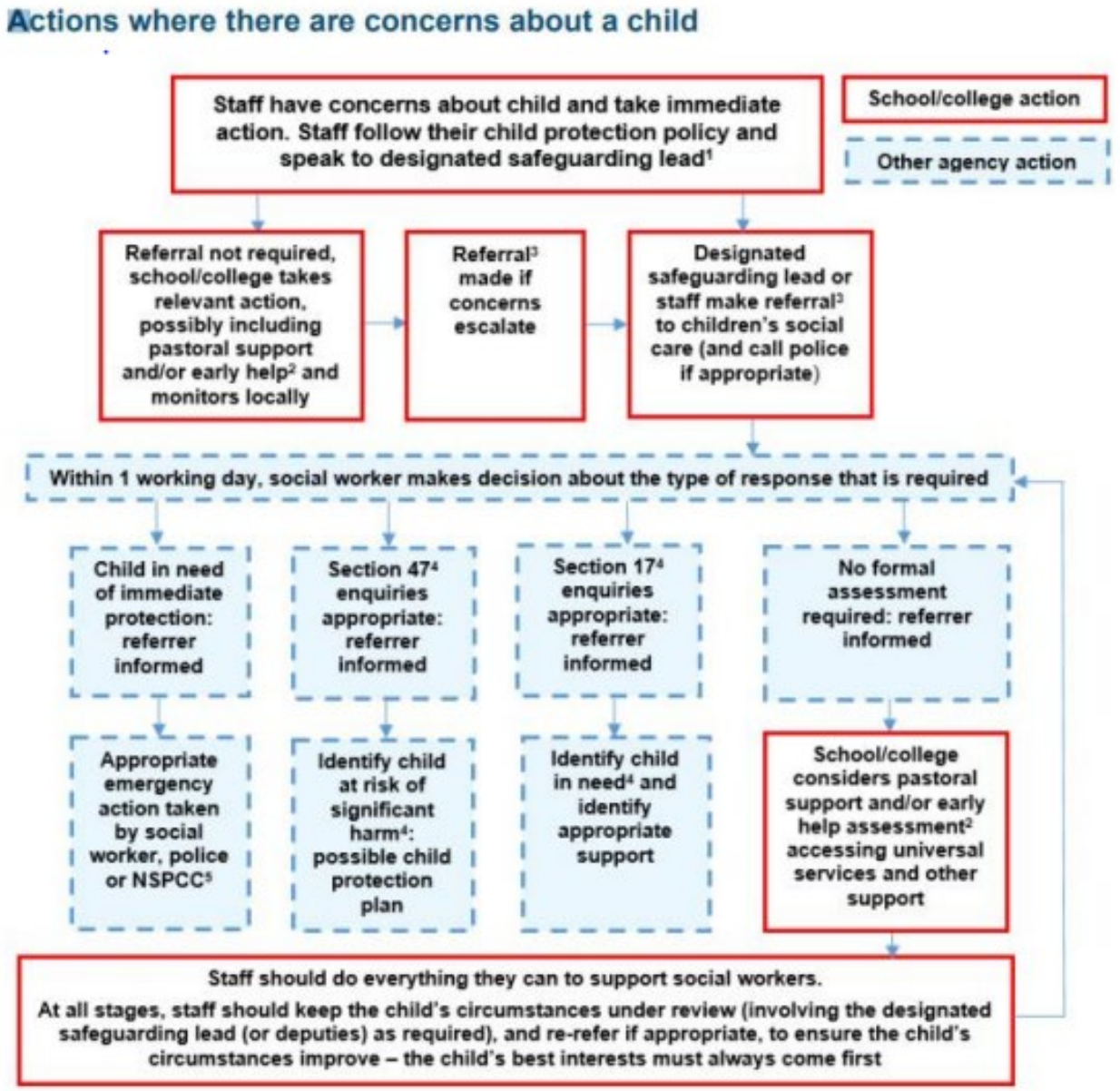
All safeguarding concerns will be recorded securely using the College's approved safeguarding systems.

Safeguarding records will:

- be maintained separately from general student records where appropriate;
- be retained securely;
- only be accessible by authorised staff;
- be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.

Where students transfer to another education provider, relevant safeguarding information will be shared securely and without unnecessary delay to ensure continuity of safeguarding support.

13. Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse in Respect of a Child or Vulnerable Adult



Flow chart provided by **BwD Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

14. ONLINE SAFETY

Blackburn College recognises that technology is an integral part of education and everyday life. Whilst technology provides significant educational and social benefits, it also presents safeguarding risks that may affect students both within and beyond the College environment.

The College is committed to creating a culture in which students are supported to use technology safely, responsibly and respectfully whilst being protected from online abuse, exploitation and harm.

Online safety is recognised as a safeguarding issue and forms an integral part of the College's safeguarding arrangements, Personal Development curriculum, digital strategy and wider student support services.

14.1 The College's Approach

Blackburn College will:

- promote a culture of safe and responsible technology use;
- educate students to become digitally resilient and informed users of technology;
- maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems;
- review filtering and monitoring arrangements at least annually, or sooner where risks change;
- assess emerging technological risks, including Artificial Intelligence (AI);
- provide staff with regular online safety training;
- ensure safeguarding considerations are embedded within digital learning and information technology systems;
- work collaboratively with students, parents, carers, employers and safeguarding partners to promote online safety.

14.2 Categories of Online Risk

The College recognises that online risks fall into four broad categories.

Content: Exposure to illegal, harmful or inappropriate material including:

- pornography;
- violent or extremist content;
- self-harm and suicide content;
- hate speech;
- misogyny and misandry;
- racism;
- antisemitism;
- radicalisation;
- misinformation;
- disinformation;
- manipulated or AI-generated content.

Contact: Being subjected to harmful online interaction including:

- grooming;
- child sexual exploitation;
- criminal exploitation;
- coercion;
- online radicalisation;
- financial exploitation;

- sextortion;
- adults posing as children or young people;
- unwanted contact through gaming platforms or social media.

Conduct: Online behaviour that increases safeguarding risks including:
- cyberbullying;
- online harassment;
- sharing of inappropriate material;
- image-based abuse;
- sharing of nude or semi-nude images;
- deepfake imagery;
- abusive online behaviour;
- harmful online challenges;
- misuse of Artificial Intelligence.

Commerce: Online risks associated with financial activity including:
- phishing;
- scams;
- fraud;
- identity theft;
- online gambling;
- malicious advertising;
- financial exploitation.

14.3 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Blackburn College recognises that Artificial Intelligence presents both educational opportunities and safeguarding risks.

The College will raise awareness of risks associated with:
- AI-generated sexual images;
- deepfake images and videos;
- AI-enabled grooming;
- AI chatbots used to manipulate vulnerable individuals;
- misinformation and disinformation;
- impersonation and identity fraud;
- academic misuse of AI;
- cyber security threats.

Students will be supported to develop the knowledge and critical thinking skills required to use Artificial Intelligence safely, ethically and responsibly.

14.4 Filtering and Monitoring

The College will maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems designed to safeguard students whilst enabling legitimate educational access to online resources.

Filtering and monitoring arrangements will:
- be proportionate to identified risks;
- comply with Department for Education guidance;
- be reviewed regularly;
- reflect emerging technologies and online threats;

- support safeguarding investigations where appropriate.

The College will utilise appropriate monitoring systems to identify safeguarding concerns, including indicators of:

- online exploitation;
- radicalisation;
- self-harm;
- bullying;
- inappropriate communication;
- access to harmful content.

Monitoring systems support safeguarding but do not replace professional judgement or staff vigilance.

14.5 Digital Education

Students will receive age and stage-appropriate education regarding:

- online safety;
- digital resilience;
- healthy online relationships;
- privacy and personal information;
- cyber security;
- recognising scams and phishing;
- safe use of Artificial Intelligence;
- misinformation and disinformation;
- respectful online behaviour;
- reporting online concerns.

These themes will be embedded throughout the College's Personal Development curriculum and wider student experience.

14.6 Staff Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to:

- promote safe use of technology;
- model appropriate online behaviour;
- remain vigilant to online safeguarding concerns;
- report concerns immediately using safeguarding procedures;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries online;
- use only authorised College communication systems when communicating with students;
- challenge inappropriate online behaviour where appropriate.

14.7 Cyber Security

The College recognises that cyber security forms an important element of safeguarding.

Appropriate measures will be implemented to protect:

- student information;
- safeguarding records;
- digital learning platforms;
- College networks;
- online communications.

Staff and students will receive appropriate guidance regarding cyber security, password security, phishing and data protection.

14.8 Reporting Online Safety Concerns

Any online safeguarding concern should be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where concerns involve criminal activity, image-based abuse, online exploitation or an immediate risk of harm, the College will work with the Police, Children's Social Care and other appropriate agencies.

Where appropriate, harmful online content may also be reported to:

- the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF);
- CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command);
- relevant online platforms;
- other statutory agencies.

14.9 Acceptable Use

Students, staff and visitors are expected to use College technology responsibly and in accordance with the:

- Student Code of Conduct;
- Student Computer Usage Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- IT Acceptable Use Policy;
- Data Protection Policy.

Misuse of College systems may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, safeguarding intervention or referral to external agencies.

15. RECORD KEEPING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING INFORMATION

Blackburn College recognises that accurate record keeping, appropriate information sharing and effective confidentiality arrangements are fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students.

The College will ensure that safeguarding records are accurate, timely, secure and accessible only to those with a legitimate safeguarding need.

The College also recognises that effective safeguarding depends upon appropriate information sharing between professionals and that concerns about confidentiality or data protection must never prevent information being shared where this is necessary to safeguard a child, young person or adult at risk.

15.1 Safeguarding Records

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, allegations and referrals will be recorded promptly and accurately.

Safeguarding records should:

- be completed as soon as possible after the concern arises;
- be factual, objective and written in clear, professional language;

- distinguish between fact, observation and professional opinion;
- include the student's own words wherever possible;
- include dates, times and locations;
- record actions taken and decisions made;
- identify the member of staff completing the record.

Safeguarding records form part of the College's safeguarding evidence and may be required during statutory safeguarding investigations or legal proceedings.

15.2 Recording Systems

Blackburn College maintains secure electronic safeguarding records using approved College systems, including:

- **CPOMS** for safeguarding, child protection and wellbeing concerns;
- **ProMonitor** (or successor student record system) where appropriate for safeguarding-related learner support information.

Access to safeguarding records will be restricted according to staff roles and responsibilities and managed through appropriate system permissions. The College will ensure safeguarding records remain secure, accurate and appropriately retained in accordance with statutory requirements.

15.3 Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is confidential and will only be shared on a **need-to-know** basis.

Staff should not discuss safeguarding concerns with colleagues unless this is necessary to protect the student or forms part of their professional responsibilities.

Students should never be promised confidentiality where safeguarding concerns are disclosed.

Staff must explain sensitively that information may need to be shared with those who can help keep the student safe.

15.4 Information Sharing

Blackburn College recognises that timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

The College will share information with appropriate agencies where this is:

- necessary to safeguard a child, young person or adult at risk;
- proportionate;
- lawful;
- relevant;
- in the best interests of the individual.

Information may be shared with:

- Children's Social Care;
- Adult Social Care;
- the Police;
- health professionals;
- education providers;
- Virtual Schools;
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);

- the Channel Panel;
- other safeguarding partners where appropriate.

The College will follow the principles contained within:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026);**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026);**
- **Data Protection Act 2018;**
- **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);**
- **Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners.**

Where there is concern that a student may be at risk of significant harm, information will be shared without unnecessary delay.

15.5 Student Transfers

Where a student transfers to another education or training provider, the College will ensure that relevant safeguarding information is transferred securely and without unnecessary delay.

Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise directly with the receiving provider to ensure continuity of safeguarding support.

Records will be transferred securely and retained in accordance with statutory guidance.

15.6 Data Protection

Blackburn College processes safeguarding information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Personal information will be:

- processed lawfully, fairly and transparently;
- collected for legitimate safeguarding purposes;
- accurate and kept up to date;
- retained only for as long as necessary;
- stored securely;
- protected from unauthorised access.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do **not** prevent the sharing of information where there is a safeguarding concern or where doing so is necessary to protect a child or vulnerable adult.

15.7 Access to Records

Safeguarding records are exempt from the general right of access in certain circumstances where disclosure may place a child or another individual at risk or prejudice safeguarding processes. Any request to access safeguarding records must be referred immediately to the College's **Data Protection Officer**, who will consider the request in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

15.8 Quality Assurance

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake regular audits of safeguarding records to ensure they are:

- accurate;
- timely;
- complete;
- appropriately categorised;
- securely maintained;
- compliant with statutory guidance.

Findings from safeguarding audits will inform staff training, quality improvement and safeguarding governance.

16. MONITORING AND REVIEWING

Quarterly monitoring will be undertaken by the Executive Director of Student Support and Experience (College DSL) and formally reported to the Safeguarding Strategic Committee and Corporation Board. The Policy will be reviewed annually.

17. RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES

- Sexual Violence, Abuse and Harassment Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- The Pledge
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff and Student Personal Relationships Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Intruder and Lockdown Procedure
- Information Sharing Protocol
- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Student Computer Usage Policy
- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

18. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

The management responsibility is with the Executive Director for Student Supportand Experience (The College DSL).

19. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Blackburn College is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity, inclusion and providing a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment means that this policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) any of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion or sexual orientation and meets our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, this policy has no adverse impact on any of the above protected groups.

Author:	***Executive Director of Student Support and Experience***
Owner:	*Executive Director of Student Support and Experience*
Consultation:	*Vice Principals, Executive Directors, Head of Student Experience and DDSL, Safeguarding Lead, Head of Student Services, Director of Quality and Innovation, Director of IT and MIS. Safeguarding Committee, Safeguarding Link Governor, Director of Governance.*
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