



The Pioneers Academy Safeguarding Policy

THE PIONEERS ACADEMY

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Academic Year: 2026–2027

Policy Owner: Headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr Saif Ahmad

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Shabnam Parveen

Mental Health Lead: Mrs Asma Pandor

Attendance Officer: Mrs Fariyah Chowdhury

ICT / Online Safety Lead: Mr Aburahman Maniam

Applies to: All pupils, staff, volunteers, governors/proprietors, contractors and visitors

Date of Policy: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Pioneers Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The school recognises that children and young people have the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and harm, both within and outside the school environment.

The Pioneers Academy will maintain a strong safeguarding culture in which:

- safeguarding is prioritised;
- children are listened to and taken seriously;
- concerns are acted upon promptly;
- staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
- information is shared appropriately where necessary to protect children;
- concerns are recorded accurately;
- safeguarding practice is regularly reviewed;
- children are taught how to keep themselves safe;
- staff understand that abuse can happen in any family, community or setting;
- the school maintains a child-centred approach.

The school's approach is based on the principle that **it could happen here**.

This policy has regard to **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026)**, which is statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England and came into force on 1 September 2026.

The school also has regard to **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, which establishes the statutory multi-agency framework for safeguarding children.

2. OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The Pioneers Academy has identified the following safeguarding roles:

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr Saif Ahmad – Lead DSL

The Lead DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the school.

The DSL is responsible for:

- managing safeguarding concerns;
- receiving reports from staff;
- deciding appropriate safeguarding action;
- making referrals to children's social care, police or other agencies;
- maintaining safeguarding records;
- overseeing child protection plans;
- supporting staff;
- ensuring safeguarding training is completed;
- ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented;
- liaising with external safeguarding agencies;
- ensuring safeguarding information is appropriately shared;
- maintaining oversight of children who are vulnerable or at increased risk.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Shabnam Parveen – Deputy DSL

The Deputy DSL supports the Lead DSL and undertakes the responsibilities of the DSL when the Lead DSL is unavailable.

The Deputy DSL may receive safeguarding concerns directly and will ensure that concerns are escalated appropriately.

All staff must understand that safeguarding concerns should not be delayed because one particular DSL is unavailable.

Mental Health Lead

Mrs Asma Pandor – Mental Health Lead

The Mental Health Lead supports the school's approach to pupil mental health and wellbeing.

The Mental Health Lead works alongside the DSL where mental health concerns may represent or contribute to a safeguarding concern.

Staff must remember that mental health difficulties can sometimes be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns.

Mental health concerns should therefore be considered within the wider safeguarding context.

Attendance Officer

Mrs Farihah Chowdhury – Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer plays an important safeguarding role through the monitoring of attendance and absence.

Responsibilities include:

- monitoring daily attendance;
- identifying unexplained absence;
- contacting parents/carers;
- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- escalating concerns to the DSL;
- identifying concerning patterns of absence;
- supporting welfare checks and home visits where appropriate;
- working with the DSL where attendance concerns may indicate safeguarding risks.

The school recognises that changes in attendance can be an important indicator that a child may require help or protection.

ICT / Online Safety Lead

Mr Aburahman Maniam – ICT / Online Safety Lead

The ICT / Online Safety Lead supports the school's approach to keeping pupils safe online.

Responsibilities include:

- supporting effective filtering and monitoring;
- identifying online safety risks;
- supporting staff with online safety concerns;
- escalating online safeguarding concerns to the DSL;
- supporting the school's online safety education;
- assisting with appropriate responses to online incidents;
- working with external agencies where required.

Online safeguarding forms part of the school's overall safeguarding arrangements. Net support is used to filter and monitor ICT usage.

3. STATUTORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

This policy should be read alongside the school's other safeguarding-related policies and procedures.

The school has regard to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- relevant Department for Education attendance guidance;
- relevant information-sharing guidance;
- Prevent duty requirements;
- statutory requirements relating to safer recruitment;
- relevant safeguarding partnership procedures;
- local authority safeguarding procedures.

KCSIE 2026 confirms that all staff must read Part One and follow their school's safeguarding procedures.

4. SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Every member of staff has a responsibility to safeguard pupils.

This includes:

- teachers;
- teaching assistants;
- administrative staff;
- lunchtime and premises staff;
- volunteers;
- governors/proprietors;
- contractors;
- supply staff;
- visitors working with pupils.

Staff must not assume that another member of staff has reported a concern.

Where a member of staff has a safeguarding concern, they must report it to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

KCSIE 2026 emphasises that staff must act immediately on safeguarding concerns and report concerns to the DSL or deputy.

If the safeguarding issue is relating to a DSL then it must be referred to external agencies including CASS, LADO and/or law enforcement agencies.

5. WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding includes protection from:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- domestic abuse;
- child sexual exploitation;
- criminal exploitation;
- county lines;
- trafficking;
- modern slavery;
- radicalisation;
- extremism;
- online abuse;
- bullying;
- cyberbullying;
- child-on-child abuse;
- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- honour-based abuse;
- forced marriage;
- female genital mutilation;
- abuse linked to cultural or familial expectations;
- serious violence;
- substance misuse;
- missing education;

- exploitation;
 - self-harm and other welfare concerns.
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6. CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH

The welfare of the child is at the centre of safeguarding decisions.

Staff must:

- listen to children;
- take children seriously;
- avoid making assumptions;
- avoid promising confidentiality;
- respond calmly;
- avoid leading questions;
- record what the child has said accurately;
- report concerns promptly.

Children should be given appropriate opportunities to express their views and concerns.

The school will ensure that safeguarding arrangements take account of the individual circumstances and needs of each child.

7. RECOGNISING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Staff must be alert to indicators of abuse and neglect.

Indicators may include:

- unexplained injuries;
- changes in behaviour;
- withdrawal;
- anxiety;
- aggression;
- sudden deterioration in school performance;
- poor hygiene;
- persistent hunger;
- unexplained gifts or possessions;
- changes in friendship groups;
- inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- fear of going home;

- disclosures;
- changes in attendance;
- repeated lateness;
- unexplained absences;
- online threats;
- signs of exploitation.

A single indicator does not necessarily mean that abuse is occurring.

However, staff must report concerns where something causes them to be worried about a child's welfare.

8. REPORTING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

If a member of staff has a concern about a child, they must report it to:

Lead DSL – Mr Saif Ahmad

or

Deputy DSL – Mrs Shabnam Parveen

The concern must be reported as soon as possible.

Staff must not delay reporting because they are unsure whether the concern is sufficiently serious.

The DSL will determine the appropriate next step.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- speaking with the child;
- contacting parents/carers;
- providing early help;
- making a referral to children's social care;
- contacting the police;
- contacting health services;
- seeking advice from the local safeguarding partnership;
- implementing additional school-based support.

9. IF A CHILD MAKES A DISCLOSURE

If a child makes a disclosure, staff should:

1. remain calm;
2. listen carefully;
3. allow the child to speak;
4. reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking;
5. explain that the information cannot be kept secret;
6. avoid asking unnecessary questions;
7. avoid making promises;
8. report the concern to the DSL immediately;
9. make an accurate written record.

Staff should not investigate the allegation themselves.

The role of the staff member is to listen, respond appropriately, record and report.

10. RECORDING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded accurately.

Records should include:

- the date;
- time;
- child involved;
- nature of concern;
- factual observations;
- the child's words where relevant;
- action taken;
- who the concern was reported to;
- decisions made;
- rationale for decisions;
- outcome.

KCSIE 2026 emphasises that safeguarding records should include the concern, actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for decisions and outcomes.

Records must be stored securely and accessed only by authorised individuals.

11. INFORMATION SHARING

The school will share safeguarding information where this is necessary to protect a child.

Data protection legislation must not be used as a reason to prevent appropriate safeguarding information sharing.

KCSIE 2026 explicitly confirms that data protection is not a barrier to sharing information where necessary to protect a child.

Information will be shared:

- lawfully;
- proportionately;
- appropriately;
- securely;
- on a need-to-know basis.

12. ATTENDANCE AS A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE

Attendance is an important safeguarding indicator.

The school will monitor:

- unexplained absence;
- repeated absence;
- persistent absence;
- changes in attendance patterns;
- repeated lateness;
- children who regularly leave school unexpectedly;
- children who cannot be accounted for.

Where an unexplained absence raises safeguarding concerns, the Attendance Officer will immediately inform the DSL.

The school will follow its Registration and Attendance Policies.

Where necessary, the school may:

- contact parents;
- contact emergency contacts;
- request a welfare check;
- undertake a home visit;
- contact children's social care;
- contact the police.

13. HOME VISITS AND WELFARE CHECKS

Where appropriate, the school may conduct a home visit where there are concerns regarding:

- unexplained absence;
- a child's whereabouts;
- welfare;
- safeguarding;
- persistent non-engagement by parents;
- an unexpected change in attendance.

Home visits must be conducted safely and in accordance with school procedures.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, emergency services or children's social care should be contacted rather than relying solely on a school home visit.

Records must be made of any home visits in the home visits log.

14. CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE

The school recognises that children can abuse other children.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying;
- cyberbullying;
- physical violence;
- sexual violence;
- sexual harassment;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- sharing sexual images;
- coercion;
- intimidation;
- exploitation;
- initiation/hazing-type behaviour;
- discriminatory abuse.

The school will not dismiss such behaviour as:

- "banter";
- "just a joke";
- "part of growing up";
- "children being children".

All concerns will be taken seriously.

15. SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Any allegation or concern will be reported to the DSL immediately.

The school will consider:

- the safety of the victim;
 - the safety of other pupils;
 - the needs of the alleged perpetrator;
 - whether external agencies should be contacted;
 - appropriate risk management;
 - support for all affected pupils.
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16. ONLINE SAFETY

The Pioneers Academy recognises that children face safeguarding risks through technology and online activity.

Risks include:

- cyberbullying;
- grooming;
- exploitation;
- inappropriate content;
- online sexual abuse;
- harmful communications;
- gaming-related risks;
- social media;
- image sharing;
- sexting;
- financial exploitation;
- extremist content;

- misinformation;
- contact with unknown individuals.

The ICT / Online Safety Lead will work with the DSL to ensure appropriate filtering, monitoring, education and response procedures are in place.

Online safety concerns must be reported through the school's safeguarding procedures.

17. MENTAL HEALTH AND SAFEGUARDING

The school recognises the relationship between safeguarding and mental health.

The Mental Health Lead will work closely with the DSL.

Staff must remember that mental health difficulties may sometimes be associated with safeguarding concerns.

Where there is concern that a pupil's mental health may place them at risk, the concern must be reported to the DSL.

Immediate risk of serious harm must be escalated without delay.

18. PREVENTING RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM

The school recognises its responsibility to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremist influence.

Staff should be alert to:

- significant changes in behaviour;
- expressions of extremist views;
- exposure to extremist material;
- attempts to recruit or influence others;
- online extremist activity;
- vulnerability to radicalisation.

Concerns must be reported to the DSL.

The DSL will determine whether Prevent or other external safeguarding procedures should be initiated.

19. DOMESTIC ABUSE

The school recognises that domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children.

Children may:

- witness domestic abuse;
- experience abuse directly;
- hear or see incidents;
- experience emotional harm;
- become subject to coercive control.

Any concern about domestic abuse affecting a pupil must be reported to the DSL.

20. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

The school recognises that children can be exploited for sexual or criminal purposes.

Indicators may include:

- unexplained money or possessions;
- unexplained gifts;
- associations with unknown adults;
- changes in friendship groups;
- unexplained travel;
- missing episodes;
- declining attendance;
- behavioural changes;
- increased secrecy;
- online contact with unknown people.

Concerns must be referred to the DSL.

21. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

The school recognises the serious safeguarding implications of female genital mutilation.

Where staff have concerns that a pupil may be at risk, the concern must be referred immediately to the DSL.

Staff must follow the relevant statutory requirements and safeguarding procedures.

22. FORCED MARRIAGE AND HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

The school recognises that children may be at risk of forced marriage or honour-based abuse.

Potential indicators may include:

- fear about returning home;
- sudden absence;
- restrictions on friendships;
- family pressure;
- discussion of marriage;
- unexplained travel;
- withdrawal from education;
- threats or intimidation.

Such concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately.

23. CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITIES

The school recognises that some children may face increased safeguarding risks.

This may include:

- children with SEND;
- children with medical needs;
- children experiencing mental health difficulties;
- children experiencing attendance difficulties;
- children in care;
- previously looked-after children;
- children experiencing family difficulties;
- children experiencing poverty or disadvantage;

- children vulnerable to exploitation;
- children with communication difficulties.

The school will ensure that safeguarding arrangements take account of individual vulnerabilities.

24. CHILDREN WHO ARE MISSING FROM EDUCATION

The school will monitor pupils whose attendance becomes concerning.

Where the school cannot establish a child's whereabouts or there are concerns that the child may no longer be receiving education, the matter will be escalated appropriately.

The school will work with the local authority and other agencies where required.

25. SAFER RECRUITMENT

The Pioneers Academy is committed to safer recruitment.

Recruitment procedures will include appropriate:

- identity checks;
- right-to-work checks;
- employment history checks;
- reference checks;
- DBS checks;
- barred-list checks where applicable;
- qualification checks;
- suitability checks;
- safeguarding-related recruitment questions.

The school will ensure that individuals recruited to work with children are suitable to do so.

26. STAFF SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

All staff must receive appropriate safeguarding training.

Training will cover:

- recognising abuse;
- reporting concerns;
- safeguarding procedures;
- the role of the DSL;
- child-on-child abuse;
- online safety;
- Prevent;
- attendance and safeguarding;
- information sharing;
- staff conduct;
- allegations against staff;
- whistleblowing.

Staff must understand their individual safeguarding responsibilities.

KCSIE 2026 requires staff to understand the school's safeguarding systems and know the DSL and deputy DSL.

27. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Any allegation that a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other adult working with children may have:

- harmed a child;
- potentially committed an offence against a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;

must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's allegations procedure.

The school will follow the relevant local authority designated officer (LADO) procedures.

The school will not conduct its own investigation where doing so could interfere with an external investigation.

28. LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS

The school will maintain a culture in which staff are expected to report concerns about adult behaviour, even where the behaviour does not meet the threshold for a formal safeguarding allegation.

Low-level concerns may include behaviour that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct;
- causes discomfort or concern;
- crosses professional boundaries;
- appears inappropriate but does not meet the harm threshold.

Low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed and addressed appropriately.

Patterns of low-level concerns will be considered carefully because individual incidents may become more significant when viewed collectively.

29. STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

All staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Staff must:

- communicate professionally;
- maintain appropriate physical boundaries;
- avoid inappropriate relationships with pupils;
- avoid private communication with pupils unless authorised;
- follow school ICT and social media procedures;
- never use inappropriate or discriminatory language;
- report concerns about colleagues appropriately;
- maintain confidentiality.

30. WHISTLEBLOWING

Staff are encouraged to raise safeguarding concerns.

If a member of staff believes that safeguarding procedures are not being followed, they should raise the concern with the DSL, Deputy DSL or Headteacher as appropriate.

Where a member of staff feels unable to raise a concern internally, they may use appropriate external whistleblowing routes.

KCSIE 2026 recognises whistleblowing as an important safeguarding mechanism.

31. VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS

Visitors and contractors must follow the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Where appropriate, visitors will:

- sign in;
- wear identification;
- be accompanied;
- receive safeguarding information;
- be subject to appropriate checks where required.

Visitors must report any safeguarding concern to the DSL or a member of the senior leadership team.

32. CONFIDENTIALITY

Safeguarding information is confidential.

However, confidentiality must never prevent information being shared where this is necessary to protect a child.

Staff must not:

- discuss safeguarding cases casually;
 - share confidential information with unauthorised individuals;
 - promise absolute confidentiality to a child.
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33. EMERGENCY SAFEGUARDING RESPONSE

Where a child is believed to be in immediate danger, staff must act immediately.

The DSL should be informed without delay.

Where necessary, the school will contact:

- police;
- children's social care;
- emergency services;
- health professionals;
- other appropriate safeguarding agencies.

Where there is an immediate emergency, staff should contact **999**.

KCSIE 2026 confirms that where a child is in immediate danger, staff should call 999.

34. SAFEGUARDING AND PARENTS

The school will work positively with parents and carers wherever appropriate.

However, there may be circumstances where informing a parent/carer of a safeguarding concern could increase risk to the child or interfere with safeguarding enquiries.

In such circumstances, the DSL will determine whether information should be shared with parents/carers and will seek advice from relevant safeguarding agencies where necessary.

35. SAFEGUARDING RECORDS

The school will maintain secure safeguarding records.

Records will be:

- accurate;
- factual;
- chronological where appropriate;
- securely stored;
- appropriately accessed;
- transferred securely where required.

Records relating to safeguarding must not be stored in unsecured locations.

36. SAFEGUARDING AUDIT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Headteacher and DSL will regularly review safeguarding arrangements.

The school will monitor:

- safeguarding referrals;
- attendance concerns;
- safeguarding records;
- staff training;
- safer recruitment;
- allegations;

- low-level concerns;
- online safety;
- filtering and monitoring;
- child-on-child incidents;
- safeguarding curriculum;
- vulnerable pupils;
- safeguarding policies and procedures.

The DSL will ensure that safeguarding practice is continuously improved.

37. SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

The Pioneers Academy is committed to maintaining a culture where:

Children feel safe to speak.

Staff feel confident to report concerns.

Concerns are acted upon promptly.

Safeguarding information is shared appropriately.

No concern is ignored.

The welfare of the child remains paramount.

The school recognises the KCSIE principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

38. CONTACT AND REPORTING STRUCTURE

Safeguarding Concern

1st point of contact:

Mr Saif Ahmad – Lead DSL

Alternative:

Mrs Shabnam Parveen – Deputy DSL

Mental Health Concern

Mrs Asma Pandor – Mental Health Lead

Safeguarding concerns linked to mental health must also be referred to the DSL.

Attendance Concern

Mrs Fariyah Chowdhury – Attendance Officer

Safeguarding concerns arising from attendance must be escalated to the DSL.

Online Safety Concern

Mr Aburahman Maniam – ICT / Online Safety Lead

Safeguarding concerns arising from online activity must also be referred to the DSL.

39. KEY STAFF SAFEGUARDING MESSAGE

All staff must remember:

If you see something, hear something or are told something that causes you concern about a child's safety or welfare, report it.

Do not assume someone else will report it.

Do not investigate it yourself.

Do not promise confidentiality.

Do not delay.

Report the concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately.

40. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually and whenever significant changes occur to statutory guidance, legislation, local safeguarding arrangements or school procedures.

The policy will be reviewed against the latest version of:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- relevant Department for Education guidance;

- local safeguarding partnership procedures.

APPROVED BY: The Headteacher

Date: 2nd September 2026

Signed: S. Parveen