



Vita et Pax
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Vita et Pax Preparatory School
Established 1936

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Policy Originator	Kate Newton & Darren May
Chair of Governors	Pushkar Acharya
Date Approved	1 March 2026
Status	Statutory
Review Period	Annually (next: March 2027)

This policy is reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Leads and ratified by the Governing Body. All staff read and agree to the policy during their induction. Families are encouraged to be familiar with this policy via the school website. Copies of this policy and its associated documents are available from the school office.

1. Key Contacts

School Safeguarding Team

Role	Name	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Head Teacher	Darren May	head@vitaetpax.co.uk 020 8449 8336
Deputy DSL DSL for EYFS Acting Head EYFS	Kate Newton	k.newton@vitaetpax.co.uk 020 8449 8336
DSL trained staff	Maria Castro	m.castro@vitaetpax.co.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Maria Poullos	Via school office

Safer recruitment trained staff and governors: Darren May, Maria Poullos, Pushkar Acharya, Nisha Waghay, Kate Newton.

To refer a safeguarding matter to the school: head@vitaetpax.co.uk. To refer a safeguarding matter to the safeguarding governor: chair@vitaetpax.co.uk.

Enfield Safeguarding Partnership — Local Authority Contacts

Agency	Contact Details
Children's MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm: 020 8379 5555 Out of hours: 020 8379 1000 (option 2) childrensMASH@enfield.gov.uk https://www.enfield.gov.uk/safeguardingenfield/
LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)	Bruno Capela 020 8379 2850 / 4392 safeguardingservice@enfield.gov.uk
Child & Family Support Team	020 8379 2574
Looked After Children Team	020 8379 8200
Police CAIT (Child Abuse Investigation Team)	020 8733 5139

National Contacts

Organisation	Contact Details
NSPCC Helpline	0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Abuse in Education	0800 136 663 help@nspcc.org.uk
Childline	0800 1111
DBS (Disclosure & Barring)	03000 200 190 customerservices@dbs.gov.uk
TRA (Teaching Regulation Agency)	0207 593 5393 misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk
ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate)	0207 6000 100 concerns@isi.net
OFSTED Safeguarding	0300 123 4666 CIE@ofsted.gov.uk
FGM Helpline	0800 028 3550
Prevent Referrals (DfE)	020 7340 7264

2. Introduction

Vita et Pax Preparatory School is a co-educational environment for children from the age of two to the end of their primary education. Our school delivers a child-centred and co-ordinated approach to safeguarding. We aim for our children to be creative and caring learners who are happy and safe. The school works in strong partnership with parents to ensure pupils are demonstrably safe, academically confident and well cared for physically, socially and emotionally.

This policy sets out how the school and its governing body discharge their statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It takes into account the procedures and practice of the London Borough of Enfield as part of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This policy applies to all staff (paid and unpaid), governors, volunteers and contractors.

All stakeholders will read this policy, which is based on:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2025 — all staff must read at least Part 1 and Annex B.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (April 2021).
- Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education (2024).
- Behaviour in Schools (2024).
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024).
- Digital and Technology Standards in Schools (2023).
- The Charity Commission guidance: Safeguarding and Protecting People (2022).
- The Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSRs) 2014.
- The Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024.

3. Equality Act 2010

The school understands and recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and that it must not discriminate against pupils because of a protected characteristic including sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, or sexual orientation. In the context of safeguarding, the school will consider how to support pupils with regard to particular protected characteristics in order to meet their specific needs, and will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

4. Concerns About a Child

The school has a duty to consider at all times the best interests of the pupil and take action to enable all pupils to achieve the best outcomes. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. The school adopts a 'whole school' approach, ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of all aspects of process and policy development.

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

Abuse is a form of maltreatment. The four categories are:

- Physical abuse — hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Emotional abuse — persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and adverse effects on emotional development.
- Sexual abuse — forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including contact and non-contact abuse and online abuse.
- Neglect — persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs.

Staff are referred to Appendix 1 of this policy for detailed signs and types of abuse and specific safeguarding issues including child criminal and sexual exploitation.

5. Procedures for Dealing with Concerns About a Child

If staff suspect or hear any allegation or complaint of abuse, exploitation or neglect from a child or any third party, they must act immediately. Staff should not assume that somebody else will take action.

Information sharing: Fears regarding sharing information under the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR should not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard children. If in doubt, staff should speak to the DSL.

All staff should:

- Listen carefully to the child.
- Avoid asking leading questions.
- Reassure the individual that the allegation/complaint will be taken seriously.
- Ensure the individual is not made to feel ashamed for making the report.
- Not guarantee absolute confidentiality — explain that information needs to be passed to the appropriate person.
- Be aware that the child may not feel ready or know how to tell someone.
- Exercise professional curiosity and speak to the DSL if they have concerns.
- Build trusted relationships that facilitate communication.

All concerns, discussions and decisions (with reasons) must be recorded in writing. Records should include a clear summary of the concern, how it was followed up, actions taken, decisions reached and outcomes. Information must be kept confidential and stored securely, accessible only to those who need to see it.

5.1 Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents can be associated with factors outside the school. All staff, especially the DSL, should consider the context within which incidents occur. The school will share as much information with Children's Social Care as possible to enable consideration of all available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

5.2 Early Help

Any child may benefit from early help. Staff should be particularly alert to children who:

- Are disabled or have specific additional needs.
- Have special educational needs (with or without an EHC plan).
- Have a mental health need.
- Are young carers.
- Are showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement, organised crime groups or county lines.
- Frequently go missing from care or from home.
- Are misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or sexual/criminal exploitation.
- Are in families with substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- Have returned home from care.
- Are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- Are at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Have a family member in prison.

- Are experiencing or at risk of family ostracism.
- Are at risk of honour-based abuse, FGM or forced marriage.
- Are privately fostered.
- Are absent from education, particularly persistently.

In the first instance, staff who consider a pupil may benefit from early help should discuss this with the DSL, who will consider appropriate action in accordance with the Enfield MASH referral threshold document.

5.3 What Staff Should Do If They Have Concerns About a Child

If staff have concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger), they should speak with the DSL to agree a course of action. Staff can also make a direct referral to children's social care. Staff should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral, they should inform the DSL as soon as possible. If a child's situation does not improve after a referral, the referring person should press for reconsideration.

5.4 What Staff Should Do If a Child Is in Immediate Danger

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate, the police) should be made immediately. Anyone can make this referral. If in doubt, call 999.

5.5 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

All forms of FGM are illegal. There is a mandatory reporting duty on teachers under Section 5B of the FGM Act 2003: where a teacher discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18, they must report it to the police. Staff must also report concerns about potential FGM to the DSL.

5.6 Concerns About Another Staff Member

If staff have concerns about another staff member, they should refer this to the Head Teacher. Where the concern relates to the Head Teacher, it should be referred to the Chair of Governors (Pushkar Acharya) on chair@vitaetpax.co.uk.

5.7 Whistleblowing

The school's Whistleblowing Policy provides protection for staff who report concerns in good faith. If staff feel unable to raise concerns internally, they can contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline on 0800 028 0285.

6. Child-on-Child Abuse (Including Sexual Violence and Harassment)

The school recognises that children can abuse other children (child-on-child abuse). This is most likely to include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying), prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Physical abuse (hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, etc.).
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude/semi-nude images (sexting).
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

- Upskirting (a criminal offence).
- Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. It is never acceptable and will not be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. All concerns are reported to the DSL immediately.

6.1 Sexual Violence and Harassment

Sexual violence refers to offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault). Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. The school follows KCSIE 2025 Part 5 and will:

- Take all reports seriously — never dismiss them.
- Reassure and support the victim.
- Carry out a risk assessment, considering the wishes of the victim.
- Consider the alleged perpetrator's needs and provide support.
- Report to the police (where a crime may have been committed) and children's social care.
- Consider the balance of safeguarding vs education for all parties.
- Record all decisions and reasons.

6.2 Managing Reports

Options for managing reports include:

- Managing internally with school pastoral support.
- Early help — inter-agency support.
- Referral to children's social care.
- Reporting to the police.

Where there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment, considering the victim, the alleged perpetrator and other children at the school. Risk assessments are recorded and kept under review.

7. Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

The school follows KCSIE 2025 Part 4. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk; or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including conduct outside of work).

The case manager for allegations is the Head Teacher (or the Chair of Governors if the allegation is about the Head). The following procedure applies:

1. Allegations meeting the reporting criteria are reported immediately to the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors).
2. The case manager discusses the allegation with the LADO (Bruno Capela, 020 8379 2850) within one working day.

3. Where the case manager is concerned about other children, or the person is a risk to children, a referral to children's social care and/or police is made immediately.
4. The case manager considers whether the member of staff should be suspended. Suspension is a neutral act and not a presumption of guilt.
5. Where further enquiries are required, the LADO and case manager discuss how to proceed.
6. Parents are informed as soon as possible and kept informed about the progress of the case.
7. The case manager monitors progress to ensure cases are dealt with quickly and without unnecessary delay.
8. Reviews are conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals.
9. The case manager discusses with the LADO whether a referral to the DBS and/or TRA is appropriate.
10. On conclusion, the case manager reviews circumstances to determine whether any improvements to procedures are needed.

7.1 Supply Teachers and Agency Staff

Allegations against supply teachers are handled in the same way. The school will not simply cease to use the supply teacher, but will ensure proper investigation. The school will liaise with the supply agency and the LADO.

8. Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern — no matter how small — that an adult has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Examples include:

- Being overly friendly with children.
- Having favourites.
- Taking photographs of children on personal devices.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area.
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Low-level concerns should be reported to the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors). All low-level concerns are recorded, even if the concern appears insignificant at the time. Records are reviewed periodically to identify patterns. A culture of openness is promoted where staff feel empowered to share concerns.

9. Safer Recruitment

The school follows KCSIE 2025 Part 3. At least one person on every interview panel has completed accredited safer recruitment training. Pre-appointment checks include:

- Enhanced DBS check with barred list check (for regulated activity).
- Section 128 direction check (governors and management positions).
- Prohibition from teaching check (TRA).
- Identity verification (original documents).
- Right to work in the UK.

- Two references (including current/most recent employer).
- Professional qualifications verification.
- Medical fitness declaration.
- Full employment history with gaps explained.
- Overseas checks where applicable.
- Childcare disqualification declaration (EYFS and under-8s care).

The Single Central Record (SCR) is maintained electronically via OnlineSCR and records all checks for all staff, governors, volunteers and agency workers. The SCR is reviewed regularly by the DSL and audited by the proprietorial body.

10. Management of Safeguarding

10.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL (Darren May) takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). This is explicit in the role-holder's job description. The DSL's responsibilities include:

- Managing referrals to children's social care, police, LADO, DBS, TRA and Channel programme.
- Working with the MASH and safeguarding partners.
- Acting as a source of support and expertise for all staff.
- Understanding the assessment process for providing early help.
- Ensuring each member of staff has access to and understands this policy.
- Being alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with SEND, young carers and looked after/previously looked after children.
- Keeping detailed, accurate and secure safeguarding records.
- Sharing information with appropriate agencies and professionals.
- Ensuring that child protection files are transferred to the new school when a pupil leaves.
- Liaising with the IT Lead to ensure online safety is embedded across the curriculum and that NeuralShield filtering and monitoring is effective.

10.2 The Governing Body

The governing body ensures the school has an effective safeguarding policy, appropriate staff training, safer recruitment procedures, and that remedial action is taken where deficiencies are identified. The safeguarding governor (Maria Poullos) provides oversight, challenge and support.

10.3 Online Safety and NeuralShield

The school operates NeuralShield, an AI-powered network safeguarding system providing DNS-level content filtering and real-time network monitoring across all school devices and networks. NeuralShield blocks access to harmful content and generates alerts for the DSL where monitoring identifies safeguarding concerns. The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring is reviewed termly and reported annually to the governing body, as required by KCSIE 2025.

11. Training

- All staff (including temporary and supply staff) receive safeguarding training at induction, including reading Part 1 and Annex B of KCSIE 2025, the school's safeguarding policy, behaviour policy, staff code of conduct, and whistleblowing policy.
- The DSL and Deputy DSL undergo Level 3 child protection training every two years.
- All staff receive regular safeguarding updates — at least annually, and more frequently through briefings, emails and staff meetings.
- Staff receive Prevent awareness training.
- Staff are trained in online safety, including recognising the risks of grooming, exploitation and radicalisation online.
- Training records are maintained centrally and reviewed termly.

12. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Safeguarding Arrangements

In addition to the whole-school arrangements, the following apply to children in the EYFS (Little Vitas, Nursery and Reception):

- The Deputy DSL (Kate Newton) is the designated safeguarding lead for EYFS.
- Appropriate staff:child ratios are maintained at all times.
- All staff in EYFS hold a current paediatric first aid certificate.
- Mobile phones and cameras are strictly prohibited in EYFS areas.
- Visitors to EYFS areas are supervised at all times.
- Intimate care procedures follow the school's policy and are carried out by trained staff.
- Sleep monitoring procedures are in place for children who sleep during the day.
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 — the school obtains declarations from all staff working in EYFS or providing childcare for under-8s.
- The school informs Ofsted and ISI of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children on the premises.

13. Oversight and Review

The school ensures ongoing oversight of safeguarding through:

- Annual review of this policy by the DSL and governing body.
- Termly safeguarding reports to the governing body.
- Regular audits of the SCR.
- Annual Section 175 (equivalent) safeguarding audit.
- Monitoring of filtering and monitoring effectiveness (NeuralShield reports).
- Review of all safeguarding incidents to identify patterns and improve practice.
- Annual ISI compliance review against all relevant standards.

Appendix 1 — Signs and Types of Abuse and Specific Safeguarding Issues

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Signs include: unexplained injuries, bruises in unusual places, burns, bite marks, fear of physical contact, flinching.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and adverse effects on emotional development. May involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Signs include: low self-esteem, withdrawal, sudden speech disorders, self-harm, delayed development, excessive fear of making mistakes.

Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Includes contact and non-contact abuse, and abuse facilitated online. Signs include: age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, sexually explicit behaviour, reluctance to undress, regression, unexplained gifts.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs. May involve failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care or stimulation. Signs include: constant hunger, poor hygiene, poor attendance, untreated medical conditions, tiredness, inappropriate clothing.

Specific Safeguarding Issues

Staff must also be aware of:

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) — children (or young people) under 18 being manipulated or coerced into sexual activity in exchange for something.
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE) — including county lines: criminal gangs using children to transport drugs across counties.
- Domestic abuse — children witnessing or experiencing controlling, coercive or violent behaviour. Children are victims in their own right.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) — all forms are illegal. Mandatory reporting duty applies.
- Forced marriage — illegal to force someone to marry. Contact the Forced Marriage Unit if concerned.
- Honour-based abuse — violence committed to protect the perceived honour of the family.
- Radicalisation and extremism — the Prevent duty requires the school to identify and refer children at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- Modern slavery and trafficking — exploitation for labour, sexual exploitation or domestic servitude.
- Private fostering — when a child under 16 lives with someone who is not a close relative for 28+ days. Must be reported to the local authority.
- Children missing education — a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

- Online abuse — grooming, cyberbullying, sexting, exposure to harmful content.
- Serious violence — indicators include increased absence, changes in friendships, unexplained injuries, signs of substance misuse.
- Mental health — mental health problems can be an indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Upskirting — a criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019.
- Looked after children and previously looked after children — may be particularly vulnerable and require additional support.
- Children with SEND — face additional safeguarding challenges including communication barriers and increased vulnerability to peer isolation.

Appendix 2 — Note of Concern Form

If you have concerns about a child, complete this form and discuss the concerns with the DSL as soon as possible (within one working day). If a child has made a disclosure, do not promise to keep it a secret. Tell the DSL immediately and write down everything the child has told you. At all stages, confidentiality is crucial.

The form should include: child's name and date of birth; nature of concern/incident (with dates, times, frequencies and any relevant conversations); any additional information including previous events; staff member's name and role; date passed to DSL; initial action taken; recommended follow-up action; signatures and dates.

This record must be filed separately from the child's learning and development records by the DSL.

Approved by: Governing Body of Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Date: 1 March 2026