

Blossom Upper House Post 16



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Post 16

Motspur Park | Wimbledon

Last updated: November 2025, Viviana Patterson (DDSL)

Date of next review: September 2026

About this Policy

"Blossom House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, students and volunteers to share this commitment."

The abuse of adults – physically, emotionally, financially and sexually – is a sad fact of life.

People may be abused regardless of their age, gender, religious belief, racial origin, culture or disability. They are usually (but not always) abused by people they know and trust.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults is **everyone's** responsibility.

Blossom House School actively promotes a culture of vigilance; everyone who comes into contact with vulnerable adults has a role to play in identifying concerns, encouraging them to talk about anything that is worrying them, providing help, and taking action to prevent concerns from escalating.

The purpose of this policy is

- to help protect the vulnerable adults we are responsible for in an educational setting
- to ensure that staff are aware of issues that can cause them harm
- to ensure that staff know how to respond to concerns relating to the possibility of a vulnerable adult suffering harm

This policy is written with reference to the following documents:

[Care Act 2014](#)

[Care Standards Act 2000](#)

Blossom House School follows procedures in line with [Merton's Safeguarding Adult's Board](#) (MSAB). This policy is reviewed annually and in line with the latest guidance and legislation.

What is a Vulnerable Adult?

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This may be because they have a physical or mental illness, a learning or physical disability, a sensory impairment, reduction in physical or mental capacity, is old or frail, or has some form of chronic illness. Adult safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Good Practice

The following are given as values and principles underpinning this policy:

Access to information and knowledge – all vulnerable adults will have access to information that they can understand to make an informed choice, including access to expert knowledge and advocacy, as required.

Choice – all vulnerable adults will have the opportunity to select independently from a range of options based on clear and accurate information.

Confidentiality – all vulnerable adults will know that information about them is managed appropriately and there is a clear understanding of confidentiality and its limits among staff.

Consent – all vulnerable adults have the right to be supported to make their own decisions and to give or withhold their consent to an activity or service. Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. It may be signalled verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. No one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special provision has been made for this, usually by law.

Dignity and respect – all vulnerable adults will be accorded the same respect and dignity as any other adult, by recognising their uniqueness and personal needs.

Equality, diversity and inclusion – all vulnerable adults will be treated equally, and their background and culture will be valued and respected.

Fulfilment – all vulnerable adults will be invited to engage in activities and offered services that enable them to fulfil their ability and potential.

Independence – all vulnerable adults will have as much control as possible over their lives whilst being safeguarded against unreasonable risks.

Privacy – all vulnerable adults will be free from unnecessary intrusion into their affairs; and there will be a balance between the individual's own safety and the safety of others.

Safety – all vulnerable adults will feel safe, and live without fear of violence, neglect or abuse in any form.

Support – all vulnerable adults will be supported to report any form of abuse.

Key Safeguarding Principles

Six key principles underpin all adult safeguarding work

1. Empowerment

People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”

2. Prevention

It is better to take action before harm occurs.

“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”

3. Proportionality

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

“I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed.”

4. Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need.

“I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I can take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”

5. Partnership

Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

“I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”

6. Accountability

Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

Safeguarding is fundamentally about promoting the safety and well-being of an adult in line with the above six principles.

Historically, the safeguarding system around vulnerable adults was designed to respond to problems rather than prevent them ([No Secrets, 2009](#)). It is essential that members of Blossom House Staff take action to prevent harm from occurring, as well as report any concerns, incidents or disclosures to the DSL or Deputy DSL for Post 16.

Safer Recruitment

The School recognises the need to be alert to the risks posed by strangers or others who may wish to harm vulnerable adults in school. Procedures are followed to ensure that anyone encountering vulnerable adults are subject to the appropriate regulatory checks (***please refer to the Safer Recruitment Policy***).

Designed Safeguarding Leads

Blossom House School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is also a member of the senior management team. The DSL has **lead responsibility** for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults (including online) and provides support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties. Blossom House also has a Deputy DSL for Post 16, who will act as an initial contact for concerns, including those involving vulnerable adults.

	<p>DSL: Hannah Millyard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults across all school sites, including online safety and Prevent awareness • Acts as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff • Refers cases of suspected abuse to social care • Refers cases of radicalisation to the Channel programme • Refers cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police • Refers cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) • Promotes supportive engagement with parents/carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
	<p>Deputy DSL for Post 16: Viviana Patterson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as initial contact for safeguarding concerns in Post 16 and liaises with the DSL where concerns meet the threshold for safeguarding intervention • May deputise as DSL for Post 16 • Reports any actions taken to the DSL as soon as possible • Oversees safeguarding protocols for Post 16, which may include facilitating LA audits
	<p>Principal: Joey Burgess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As proprietor, ensures full oversight of safeguarding across all school sites • Manages allegations against staff, including liaising with LADO where required • Meets regularly with DSL to discuss cases, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 or police investigations

Categories of abuse (*Taken from Merton's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults resource page*)

Physical abuse: Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, strangling, drowning, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions to name some, but not all.

Sexual abuse: Rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing, or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. Sexual abuse can occur in person or online.

Psychological abuse: Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse,

cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive network.

Financial or Material abuse: Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Neglect and acts of omission: Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory abuse: Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment: because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse: Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Domestic Violence: Including psychological and controlling coercive behaviour, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse or 'honour' based violence.

Modern Slavery: Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Self-Neglect: This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Reporting Vulnerable Adult Concerns

Staff members who are in contact with vulnerable adults are in a professional position to detect possible abuse. Our 'Culture of Vigilance' ensures that staff maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' and that they do not assume a colleague will take action or report a concern instead. If staff members are unsure they should **always** speak to the DSL or deputy immediately.

If you are concerned that a vulnerable adult is being (or has been) abused or exploited, you should:

- **Talk to the student about what happened.** Listen carefully to what they are saying, treat it seriously, and value what they say. If you can, write brief notes that contain facts.

- **Never promise that you will not tell anyone.** Let the student know that you have a responsibility to make sure they are safe. Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told.
- **Do not ask leading questions.** These might give your own idea of what might have happened. Ask open questions such as “*Tell /Explain / Describe me what happened?*”; “*Is there anything else I should know?*”, “*Have we covered everything you wanted to share?*”.
- **Record** what has been observed & said as soon as possible on **CPOMS** secure reporting system. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker as they could become part of a statutory assessment by adult's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation. ***All safeguarding concerns MUST be documented somewhere.***
- **If the student is considered at risk of harm, notify the DSL immediately. An urgent referral may need to be made to adult social care and/or the police.**
- The DSL, Deputy DSL, or Principal will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. In the unlikely event they are not available, staff can speak to adult social care directly. Any actions taken must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.
- In circumstances where a student requires urgent medical attention, the referral process should not delay the administration of First Aid or emergency medical assistance.

What Happens after a Concern is Reported?

Following notification of a safeguarding concern, the following options will include:

- Managing support for the vulnerable adult internally, drawing on the professional network and pastoral support available within Blossom House
- Monitoring low level concerns to ensure that they are not accumulating to the extent that they become major concerns
- Making a referral to adult social care or adult mental health services
- Involving the police if there is an indication that a crime has been committed

All staff, including the DSL must be prepared to challenge inaction if felt necessary.

For concerns involving peer or peer abuse, or allegations of abuse against staff, students or volunteers, please refer to the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.