

Blossom Upper House Post 16



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Post 16

Motspur Park | Wimbledon

Last updated: September 2026 by Viviana Patterson (DDSL)

Date of next review: September 2027

About this Policy

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

The abuse of adults, whether physical, emotional, financial, psychological, discriminatory, sexual or through neglect, remains a significant safeguarding concern. Adults may experience abuse regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or socio-economic status. Abuse is often perpetrated by someone known to the individual, but may also occur online, within institutions, family networks, peer groups or the wider community.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults with care and support needs is **everyone's responsibility**. Blossom House School promotes a culture of vigilance whereby all staff maintain the attitude that **"it could happen here"** and act promptly when concerns arise.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect adults with care and support needs attending Blossom House P16 Provision.
- To ensure staff understand safeguarding responsibilities.
- To promote early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- To provide clear reporting procedures.
- To support person-centred, trauma-informed safeguarding practice.
- To ensure compliance with current adult safeguarding legislation and guidance.
- To support effective transition from child to adult safeguarding frameworks.

Statutory Framework

This policy should be read alongside:

- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Local Safeguarding Adults Board Procedures
- Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Procedures

Blossom House School follows procedures in line with the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB).

What is an Adult with Care and Support Needs?

For safeguarding purposes, the Care Act 2014 applies where an adult:

- Is aged 18 or over;
- Has needs for care and support (whether those needs are currently being met);
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect;
- Is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

The school recognises that learners with SEND may have additional vulnerabilities, but that disability alone does not make a person incapable of making decisions or exercising choice.

Good Practice

The following values underpin all safeguarding practice at Blossom House P16 Provision:

Access to Information and Knowledge

All adults will have access to information presented in a way they can understand to support informed decision-making.

Choice

Adults will be encouraged and supported to make choices and exercise control over decisions affecting their lives.

Confidentiality

Information will be shared appropriately, lawfully and only where necessary to safeguard individuals.

Consent

Adults have the right to make their own decisions and be supported to provide informed consent wherever possible.

Dignity and Respect

All adults will be treated with dignity, kindness and respect.

Equality and Diversity

All adults will be treated regardless of background, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or age.

Fulfilment

Adults will be supported to achieve their aspirations and outcomes.

Independence

Individuals will be encouraged to develop independence while remaining protected from avoidable harm.

Privacy

Adults have the right to privacy while maintaining an appropriate balance between safety and autonomy.

Safety

All adults have the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.

Support

All adults will be supported to report concerns and access help.

Making Safeguarding Personal

Blossom House P16 Provision adopts the principles of **Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)**.

Safeguarding interventions should:

- Be person-centred.
- Focus on outcomes desired by the individual.
- Support choice and control.
- Promote wellbeing.
- Respect rights and independence.
- Involve the adult throughout safeguarding processes wherever possible.

Staff should seek to understand:

"What does the adult want to happen?"

and ensure their views, wishes and feelings help shape safeguarding responses.

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 act 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.

"Professionals only become involved to the extent required to reduce risk."

4. Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need.

"I get help and support to report abuse and neglect."

5. Partnership

Local solutions through services working together.

"I am confident organisations work together effectively to keep me safe."

6. Accountability

Transparency in delivering safeguarding.

"I understand the role of everyone involved and why decisions are being made."

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.

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Staff must work in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

The five statutory principles are:

1. Presume capacity unless established otherwise.
2. Provide all practicable support before deciding someone cannot make a decision.
3. Individuals have the right to make unwise decisions.
4. Decisions made on behalf of a person lacking capacity must be in their best interests.
5. Any intervention must be the least restrictive option.

Where capacity is questioned in relation to safeguarding decisions, advice must be sought from the DSL and relevant professionals.

Trauma-Informed Practice

Many learners attending Blossom House P16 Provision may have experienced:

- Trauma
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Abuse or neglect
- Social exclusion
- Exploitation
- Attachment disruption

Staff will:

- Build safe and trusting relationships.
- Remain curious rather than judgemental.
- Use a relational approach.
- Promote emotional regulation and co-regulation.
- Avoid re-traumatising practices.
- Consider behaviour as a form of communication.
- Adapt support for communication and sensory needs associated with SEND

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 coming into contact with 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.

	DSL: Hannah Millyard • 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
	Deputy DSL for Post 16: Viviana Patterson • 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

	Principal: Joey Burgess • 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
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Adults with SEND

Adults with SEND may experience increased vulnerability to:

- Criminal exploitation
- Financial abuse
- Mate crime
- Online harm
- Coercion and manipulation
- Isolation
- Grooming
- Domestic abuse

Staff must remain professionally curious and ensure communication needs do not create barriers to safeguarding support.

Transition to Adulthood

The school recognises that safeguarding risks do not cease when a learner turns 18.

Transition planning will:

- Begin early.
- Consider safeguarding risks.
- Involve families where appropriate.
- Involve Adult Social Care where required.
- Link with EHCP reviews.
- Promote continuity of support.
- Ensure effective transfer between child and adult safeguarding services.

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

Physical abuse: Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions

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

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 networks

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 as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation

Domestic Violence: Including psychological, 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

Criminal Exploitation

Including county lines, cuckooing, forced criminality, gang association and drug distribution

Online Abuse

Including grooming, sextortion, online fraud, radicalisation, cyberbullying and coercive control.

Mate Crime

The exploitation of a disabled or vulnerable person by an individual presenting themselves as a friend.

Forced Marriage

Marriage conducted without free and informed consent.

Radicalisation

The process by which an individual becomes supportive of extremist ideologies or terrorism

Reporting Vulnerable Adult Concerns

Staff members who are in contact with vulnerable adults are in a 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.

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.
- **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 *"What happened?"*; *"Is there anything else?"*
- Record what has been observed & said as soon as possible via the Bromcom 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.

Immediate Risk

If an adult is at immediate risk of harm:

- Contact Emergency Services (999).
- Notify the DSL immediately.
- Take reasonable steps to preserve evidence.
- Record all actions taken.

Safeguarding referrals must never delay emergency medical treatment.

- 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.

Information Sharing

Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and in accordance with safeguarding duties, UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, information may be shared without consent where necessary to prevent harm.

Section 42 Care Act Enquiries

Where an adult:

- Has care and support needs;
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect;
- Is unable to protect themselves because of those needs;

the Local Authority has a duty to undertake, or cause to be undertaken, a **Section 42**

Safeguarding Enquiry. The DSL will cooperate fully with Adult Social Care, Police and partner agencies during any enquiry.

What Happens After a Concern is Reported?

Following notification of a safeguarding concern, actions may include:

- Internal safeguarding and pastoral support.
- Risk assessment and monitoring.
- Referral to Adult Social Care.
- Referral to Community Mental Health Services.
- Referral to advocacy services.
- Multi-agency planning.
- Police involvement where criminal offences may have occurred.
- Participation in Section 42 enquiries.

All staff, including the DSL, must be prepared to challenge inaction if they feel a safeguarding response is insufficient.

Multi-Agency Working

The school works collaboratively with:

- Adult Social Care
 - Children's Social Care
 - Police
 - NHS Services
 - Mental Health Services
 - Safeguarding Adults Board
 - Advocacy Services
 - Education Providers
 - Effective safeguarding relies on coordinated multi-agency working and information sharing.
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Whistleblowing

All staff have a duty to report safeguarding concerns.

Where concerns are not appropriately addressed, staff should:

- Escalate concerns internally.
- Follow the school's Whistleblowing Policy.
- Seek external advice where necessary.

No member of staff will suffer detriment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern.