Dartmouth Academy

Keeping Children Safe

A parent and carer guide to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2026-27

Our commitment

We want every child to feel safe, respected, valued and listened to. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we work in partnership with children, families and other agencies to protect children from harm and provide help as early as possible.

What safeguarding means?

Safeguarding is the action we take to promote children's welfare and protect them from harm. Child protection is the part of safeguarding focused on children who may be suffering, or be likely to suffer, significant harm.

- providing help and support as soon as difficulties emerge
- protecting children from abuse, neglect and exploitation, including risks online and outside the home
- supporting children's physical health, mental health and development
- helping children grow up with safe and effective care and achieve the best possible outcomes

What parents and carers can expect from us?

- We listen carefully to children and take their concerns seriously.
- Staff receive safeguarding training and know how to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- We teach children, in an age-appropriate way, how to keep themselves safe, including online.
- We recognise that some children may face additional barriers to seeking help and may need extra support.
- We act on child-on-child abuse and do not dismiss it as banter or part of growing up.
- We monitor patterns such as unexplained or persistent absence because these can sometimes indicate a safeguarding concern.

How the school responds to a concern

Step	What happens	In practice
1	**Listen and record**	Staff listen calmly, reassure the child and make an accurate record. They do not investigate or promise secrecy.
2	**Share promptly**	The concern is shared without delay with the DSL or safeguarding team.
3	**Assess and support**	The DSL considers the child's needs, wishes and circumstances, and may arrange school support, Family Help or advice from other agencies.
4	**Refer when needed**	Where a child may be at risk of harm, the school may contact Children's Social Care, the police or another appropriate service.
5	**Follow up**	The school records decisions, reviews the child's situation and escalates concerns if improvement is not seen.

Working with parents and sharing information

The school will normally discuss concerns with parents or carers and aims to work in a respectful, supportive partnership. However, information may be shared without consent where this is necessary to protect a child. The school may delay speaking to a parent or carer if doing so could increase risk to the child or affect a police or safeguarding investigation.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is handled carefully, stored securely and shared only with people who need it to protect or support the child. Data protection law does not prevent appropriate information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

Concerns the school may respond to

Safeguarding concerns can arise at home, in school, in the community and/or online. They may include but are not limited to:

Abuse and neglect	physical, emotional or sexual abuse; neglect; domestic abuse
Peer relationships	bullying, discriminatory behaviour, violence, harassment or harmful behaviour between children
Exploitation	criminal or sexual exploitation, trafficking, county lines or radicalisation
Online safety	grooming, coercion, harmful content, image sharing, deepfakes or misuse of artificial intelligence
Wellbeing and attendance	serious mental health concerns, self-harm risk, persistent absence or children missing education
Other specific risks	forced marriage, female genital mutilation, private fostering and other circumstances requiring safeguarding support

How parents and carers can help

- Talk regularly with your child and let them know they can speak to a trusted adult if something worries them.
- Take changes in behaviour, wellbeing, friendships, attendance or online activity seriously, while remembering that a change does not automatically mean there is a safeguarding concern.
- Use age-appropriate parental controls and talk openly about online risks, image sharing, artificial intelligence and who your child communicates with.
- Tell the school promptly about concerns, changes at home or support your family may need. Early conversations often help us respond more effectively.
- Keep your contact details up to date, including more than one emergency contact where possible.

If you are worried about a child

You do not need proof. Share what you have seen, heard or been told. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. Otherwise, contact the school safeguarding team or the relevant local authority service.

School DSL	Name: Paul Girardot Email: principal@dartmouthacademy.org.uk Telephone: 01803 839700
Deputy DSL(s)	Name(s): Bex Darke & Jade Abraham Contact details: bex.darke@dartmouthacademy.org.uk and jade.abraham@dartmouthacademy.org.uk
During school closure	Safeguarding contact or arrangements: safeguarding@dartmouthacademy.org.uk
Devon schools	Children's Front Door: 0345 155 1071 Out of hours Emergency Duty Team: 0345 6000 388
Torbay schools	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: 01803 208100
Emergency	Police: 999 Police non-emergency: 101

Important

If you have a concern about the conduct of a member of staff or a volunteer, contact the Headteacher or member of the senior leadership team. If your concern about conduct is about the Headteacher, you can contact the Trust Inclusion and Safeguarding lead - Andy Goodwin – andy.goodwin@educationsouthwest.org.uk