Heathland Whitefriars Federation

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20th March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well. I am writing to share important information about the newly updated 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026' statutory guidance, published by the Department for Education on 18 March 2026. This guidance sets out how all agencies working with children, including schools, must work together to protect, support and safeguard every child.

The 2026 update reinforces several key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the guidance applies to all children, including those in foster care, kinship care, adoption, and babies where there are concerns before birth.
- There is a stronger focus on inclusive, anti-discriminatory practice, with clear expectations that professionals actively challenge racism, inequality and discriminatory behaviour.
- It emphasises early identification of concerns and the importance of coordinated multi-agency working, ensuring that organisations share information effectively to protect children.

As part of this national framework, schools have a vital role in safeguarding. The updated guidance highlights:

- The responsibility of schools to work closely with safeguarding partners, such as health services and children's social care, to ensure that children receive the right help at the right time.
- A strengthened expectation that school staff remain child-centred, vigilant, and curious about children's lived experiences, especially where risks may occur outside the home (e.g. online harm, exploitation or peer-on-peer concerns).
- A clearer system for Family Help, combining early help and statutory support so families experience a more seamless service when they need it.

In practice, this means our staff are trained to recognise concerns, act promptly, and work closely with families and external agencies to ensure every child is safe, supported and heard.

To meet these responsibilities, we:

- Maintain robust safeguarding policies and procedures aligned to national requirements.
- Train all staff regularly in identifying signs of harm, understanding children's needs, and responding appropriately.
- Work in partnership with professionals across education, social care and health as part of the wider safeguarding system.
- Ensure our approach is inclusive, anti-racist and respectful of all families and backgrounds, as outlined in the 2026 update.
- Prioritise building trusting relationships with children and families so concerns can be identified early and responded to effectively.

Safeguarding works best when our whole school community supports it. We kindly ask parents and carers to:

- Share any concerns about your child's wellbeing - no matter how small - so we can help early.
- Keep contact details up to date so we can reach you quickly if we need to.
- Work with us and relevant agencies if additional support is needed.
- Encourage your child to speak openly with trusted adults at home or at school.

Together, we can ensure that every child in our school community feels safe, supported and able to thrive.

Kind regards,

Claire Lee

Claire Lee
Designated Safeguarding Lead and Inclusion Support