



The Cornerstone Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Staff Guide to Child Protection and Safeguarding

**Safeguarding is everyone's
responsibility.**



Named Persons of Responsibility



Kim Stray -

Vice

Principal

DSL and SENDCo



Sascha Turnbull

DDSL



Chris Phillips

Principal



Naomi Teixeira

Deputy

SENDCo

Governors for:

Denise Jenkins—Safeguarding

Marriane Harris-Bridges — Chair Local Governing Body

Although the school has named persons of responsibility for safeguarding, it is **everyone's** responsibility to safeguard children.

All schools have a legal and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people by:

- Provide a safe and secure environment with effective Safeguarding policies, procedures and systems in place.
- Identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking appropriate and timely action to address them, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate.
- Schools also contribute through the curriculum by developing children's understanding, awareness and resilience.

Disclosure

When a child discloses that they are suffering or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing physical or sexual harm to others, the initial response should be to **listen carefully** to what the child says and to **observe** the child's behaviour and circumstances.

The DO's:

- Do inform them that the disclosure will have to be shared
- Do listen carefully to what the child has to say
- Do clarify the concerns if necessary
- Do use open questions, *if* you need to clarify the concerns -
Why? How? Where? Who? When?
- Do offer re-assurance

The DON'T'S:

- Don't promise to keep the disclosure confidential
- Don't press the child for more information or cross examine them
- Don't investigate the concern yourself
- Don't use leading or closed questions
- Don't make false promises about what can be done
- Don't ask the child to sign and date any records you make

Reporting Concerns

Recording

- Record the concern on CPOMs **as soon as possible** after disclosure; on the same day
- Include: - Date and time of any incident
 - What the child said and what you said
 - Your observations e.g. child's behaviour/ emotional state
 - Any action you took as a result of your concerns

Confidentiality

- All staff must be aware of the school's policy on confidentiality
- Disclosures cannot be kept confidential
- Only share information with those who need to know.

Policies and Documents

There are a number of policies and documents relating to safeguarding practices at The Cornerstone Academy.

These include:-

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026/2027
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused
- Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners
- Safeguarding Reporting at Carter
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- United Learning Safeguarding Children Policy and Child Protection
- E-safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Lockdown Procedures
- The Use of Physical Intervention
- Medical Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Please see the Team Drive for all Important Documents, Guidelines and Advice. You can find all these documents, leaflets and posters in the following place:

Teams — All Staff — File— Safeguarding and E Safety—Important Documents and Leaflets.

It is the responsibility of each member of staff to make themselves aware of these policies.

Child Abuse and Significant Harm

Child abuse and neglect can occur as a single incident or as a series of incidents over time.

Abuse and neglect can have serious and lasting effects on a child's physical and mental health, development and wellbeing.

Under the **Children Act 1989**, a child is considered to be suffering, or likely to suffer, **significant harm** where there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Harm may be caused by:

- physical abuse
- emotional or psychological abuse
 - sexual abuse
 - Neglect
- Domestic Abuse

Abuse and neglect can occur within a family or other setting, and can also be perpetrated by adults or other children. Harm may be caused deliberately or as a result of neglect or failure to protect a child.

Any concern that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, abuse or neglect should be taken seriously and reported in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental physical trauma or injury or where physical aggression has been shown. Physical abuse doesn't always leave visible marks or injuries.

Physical abuse can include:

- Beating, slapping, hitting, pushing, kicking, or throwing.
- Pinching, biting, choking, or hair-pulling
- Burning/ scalding

Visual Signs of Physical Abuse

- Injuries in unusual areas or with well defined edges
- Burns, scalds, bite marks.
- Fractures, Breaks or sprains - refusal to discuss injuries/ inconsistent explanations
- Talk of excessive punishment
- Reluctance to remove clothing
- Resistance to going home.
- Fear of adults.

Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse is interacting with the child causing distress or upset. When verbal abuse happens, the person is attempting to control and punish.

Verbal abuse can include:

- Shouting, screaming, swearing and threats
- Negative comparing to siblings, parents or other members of the family.
- Verbal Criticism
- Public humiliation

Signs of Verbal Abuse

- Lack of emotional stability or withdrawal
- Abnormal attachment to parent / carer
- Lack of confidence/ low self esteem
- Anxiety or attention seeking behaviour
- Inappropriate emotional response
- Repeating bad language heard
- Bullying others around them

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the **persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child**, which can seriously affect their emotional wellbeing, development and mental health.

It can include:

- Rejection, ignoring or withholding affection
- Persistent criticism, insults, humiliation or belittling
- Threats, intimidation or controlling behaviour
- Unrealistic expectations or consistently undermining a child

Exposing a child to domestic abuse or other harmful behaviour

Possible Signs

- Low self-esteem, lack of confidence or anxiety
 - Withdrawal or significant changes in behaviour
 - Excessive attention-seeking or emotional neediness
 - Difficulty forming or maintaining relationships
 - Unusual attachment to, or fear of, a parent/carer
 - Developmental or emotional difficulties
 - Risk-taking or harmful behaviours
-

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse involves controlling, coercive, threatening or violent behaviour between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected. It can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial or psychological and may occur in person or online.

It can include:

- Physical or sexual violence
- Threats, intimidation, harassment or verbal abuse
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Financial abuse or restricting access to money
- Isolation from family, friends or support networks

Monitoring or controlling communication and technology

Possible Signs in Children

- Fear, anxiety or emotional distress
- Withdrawal or changes in behaviour
- Aggression, challenging behaviour or difficulties at school
- Sleep problems or difficulty concentrating
- Becoming unusually quiet, watchful or withdrawn
- Taking on a caring role or worrying excessively about a parent/carer

Remember: Children do not have to be directly abused to be harmed by domestic abuse. Seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse can have a significant impact on a child's safety and wellbeing.

What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse involves forcing, manipulating or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It can be perpetrated by adults or other children.

It can include:

- Sexual touching, kissing or contact
- Penetrative or non-penetrative sexual activity
- Exposing a child to sexual acts, pornography or sexualised material
- Making, sharing or requesting sexual images or videos of children
- Encouraging or forcing a child to behave or pose sexually
- Sexual harassment, sexualised communication or grooming
- Forcing a child to undress or invading their bodily privacy, including upskirting

Sexual exploitation or trafficking for sexual purposes

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour, mood or emotional wellbeing
- Withdrawal, anxiety, aggression or sleep difficulties
- Sexualised behaviour, language or knowledge that is inappropriate for their age
- Self-harm or changes in eating behaviour
- Fear or avoidance of particular people, places or activities
- Reluctance to change clothes or participate in PE/swimming
- Unexplained physical symptoms, injuries or recurrent infections
- Concerns relating to online activity, sexual messaging, images or grooming
- Disclosure or comments that suggest sexual abuse or inappropriate contact

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

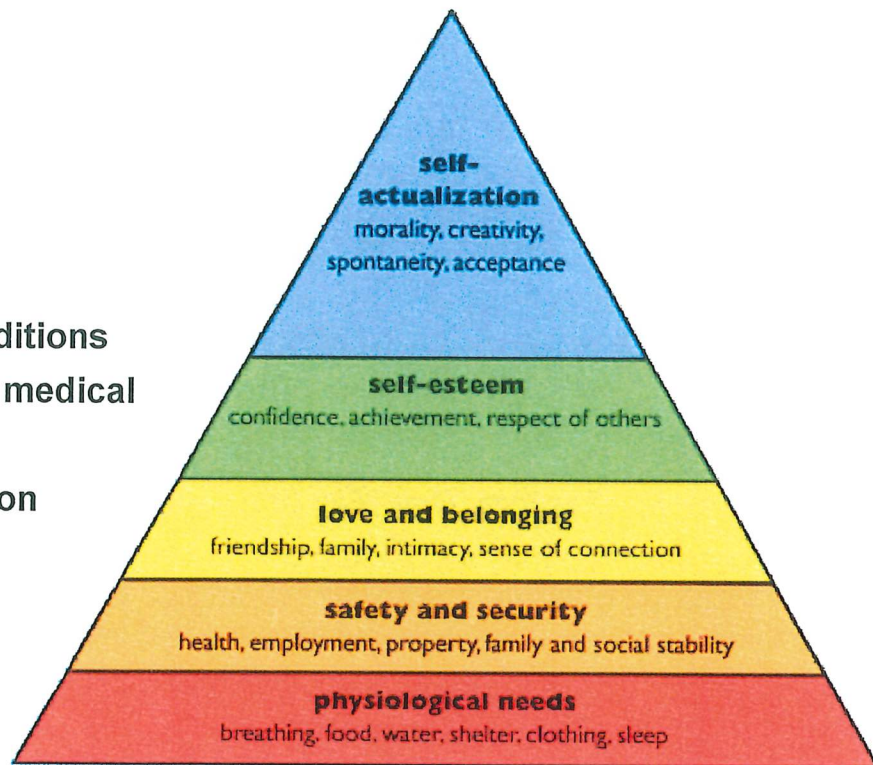
CSE is a form of child sexual abuse where a child is sexually exploited for money, power, status or other forms of gain. Children may be groomed, coerced, manipulated or exploited, and may believe they are in a consensual relationship. CSE can occur online and/or in person and may involve trafficking.

What is Child Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected.

Basic needs include:

- Food
- Housing
- Health care
- Adequate clothing
- Personal hygiene
- Hygienic living conditions
- Timely provision of medical treatment
- Adequate supervision



Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic, physical or psychological needs, which may result in serious harm to their health or development.

Possible signs may include:

- Inadequate clothing, food, warmth or hygiene
- Frequently hungry, seeking, stealing or hoarding food
- Poor growth, significant changes in weight or consistently tired
- Frequent absence or lateness from school
- Untreated medical, dental or health needs
- Untreated injuries, wounds or infections
- Persistent poor personal hygiene or unwashed clothing
- Appearing withdrawn, emotionally needy or lacking appropriate care and supervision
- Being left without appropriate adult supervision or saying they are regularly left alone
- Repeatedly lacking essential equipment, medication or support needed to meet their needs
- Developmental, educational or emotional needs are not being supported appropriately

General Indicators of Child Abuse

Some general indicators of child abuse include:

- Showing wariness/distrust of adults
- Wetting or soiling
- Demanding or aggressive behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Mental health issues
- Difficulty relating to adults and peers
- Risk taking behaviour/ drugs, alcohol, promiscuity
- Self harming/ feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Being withdrawn
- Being overly obedient
- Being reluctant to go home
- A change in behaviour or demeanour
- Isolated from peers
- Sleeping difficulties; often being tired and falling asleep

Factors That May Increase Vulnerability

Certain circumstances may increase a child's vulnerability to abuse or neglect. **These factors do not mean that abuse will occur**, but they may indicate that a child or family requires additional support or professional consideration.

Parent / Carer Factors

- **Previous concerns about abuse or neglect**
 - **History of experiencing abuse or adverse childhood experiences**
 - **Limited support or social isolation**
 - **Unrealistic expectations of a child's development or behaviour**
 - **Difficulty understanding or meeting a child's needs**
 - **Parental conflict or difficulties within the family**
- Substance misuse or difficulties affecting a parent/carer's wellbeing**

Family & Environmental Factors

- **Domestic abuse or violence within the household**
- **Poverty, financial hardship or housing difficulties**
- **Overcrowding or unsuitable living conditions**
- **Social isolation or lack of support networks**
- **Multiple or significant family stresses**

Frequent changes or instability within the family

Child Factors

- **Disability, developmental delay or additional needs**
- **Communication difficulties**
- **Difficulties with attachment or relationships**
- **Social isolation or limited peer support**
- **Previous experience of abuse, neglect or trauma**
- **Being particularly vulnerable due to age, circumstances or individual needs**

Criminal Exploitation & County Lines

Criminal exploitation occurs when children or vulnerable people are groomed, coerced or manipulated into criminal activity for someone else's benefit.

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where children may be used to transport, store or sell drugs, often involving travel away from home and the use of dedicated phone lines.

Possible Signs

- Going missing, staying out late or being found away from home
 - Unexplained money, phones, clothing or other possessions
 - Unexplained absences from school or changes in behaviour
 - Drug use or possession
 - Secretive behaviour about whereabouts or contacts
 - Involvement with unfamiliar adults or older peers
 - Injuries, intimidation or signs of violence
 - Using drug, gang or violent language
 - Hotel keys/cards or evidence of staying in unfamiliar places
-

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is when criminals take over or use another person's home to facilitate criminal activity, such as storing or dealing drugs. The occupant may be coerced, threatened or manipulated.

Children living in or visiting the property may also be exposed to, or exploited in, criminal activity.

Possible Signs

- Increased visitors, particularly at unusual times
- Unfamiliar people or vehicles regularly attending an address
- Increased anti-social behaviour or criminal activity
- Changes in the behaviour or appearance of the occupant
- A previously visible or active neighbour becoming isolated or rarely seen
- Children appearing fearful, withdrawn or involved in activity which is suspicious.

Criminal exploitation can happen online and offline, and children may not recognise themselves as victims

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM involves procedures that intentionally alter or injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse.

Possible Risk Indicators

- A family member has undergone FGM or there are concerns it may occur
 - Plans for a child to travel to, or stay in, a country where FGM is practised
 - Extended or unexplained absence from school, particularly around holidays
 - Talk of a special ceremony or becoming a woman
- family or community pressure relating to FGM

Possible Signs Following FGM

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- Spending longer in the toilet or difficulty urinating
- Pain, discomfort or recurrent health problems
- Reluctance to take part in PE or undergo medical examinations
- Changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing

If you are concerned that FGM may be planned or has occurred, report this immediately to the DSL and follow safeguarding procedures.

Extremism & Radicalisation

Extremism involves support for, or promotion of, ideologies based on violence, hatred or intolerance. Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to adopt extremist views or support terrorism.

Children can be vulnerable to radicalisation online or in person, and there is no single profile or set of indicators.

Possible Signs

- Significant or unexplained changes in behaviour, attitudes or relationships
 - Increasing secrecy or withdrawal
 - Expressing or promoting extremist, hateful or violent views
 - Glorifying violence or terrorism
 - Accessing or sharing extremist content online
 - Using language that promotes hatred, intolerance or violence
 - Becoming increasingly isolated from family, friends or usual activities
- Attempts by others to influence, groom or manipulate the child

Extremism and Radicalisation

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Possible Signs of Radicalisation

- Significant or unexplained changes in behaviour, attitudes, appearance or friendships
- Withdrawal from family, friends or previously enjoyed activities
- Increasing secrecy about online activity or new contacts
- Expressing, promoting or sharing extremist or hateful views
- Glorifying violence, terrorism or extremist groups
- Accessing, creating or sharing extremist material online
- Using language that promotes hatred, intolerance or violence
- Appearing to be groomed, manipulated or influenced by extremist individuals or groups

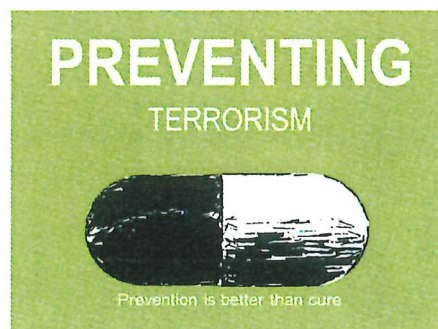
Becoming increasingly isolated or adopting an 'us and them' view of others

Prevent

Prevent is part of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) and aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Schools have a statutory Prevent duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This includes recognising and responding to concerns about radicalisation and extremist influence, both online and offline.

Prevent applies to all forms of terrorism and extremism, including extreme right-wing and Islamist extremism, as well as other ideologies that promote violence or terrorism.



Online Safety and Grooming.

Children can be vulnerable to grooming, exploitation and abuse online through social media, gaming platforms, messaging apps and other digital spaces. Grooming may involve building trust, secrecy, manipulation or control.

Possible Signs

- Sudden secrecy about phones, devices, apps or online activity
- Changes in mood, behaviour or emotional wellbeing
- Withdrawal from family, friends or usual activities
- Appearing distracted, anxious, distressed or unusually preoccupied
- Becoming increasingly dependent on or anxious about their phone or online contact
- Receiving unexplained gifts, money or new devices
- Having unexplained online relationships or contacts
- Talking about meeting someone they have met online
- Sexualised messages, images or behaviour that are inappropriate for their age
- Being threatened, pressured or encouraged to keep online relationships secret

Remember: Children may not recognise that they are being groomed or exploited. Do not blame, shame or interrogate a child. Listen calmly, reassure them, avoid leading questions and report concerns to the DSL without delay.

Online safeguarding applies across social media, gaming, messaging apps and other digital platforms.

If you are concerned about a child's online safety, follow your school's safeguarding procedures and speak to the DSL.



Social Media

The OBVIOUS!

- Don't add, or accept students, as friends on social media platforms
- Do set privacy settings to high
- Do remember that all information shared on the internet leaves a 'digital footprint' and can be traced. Once it's out there, you can't take it off!

Social Media DOs

Post updates and comments.

If you're in a public forum, keep it light & positive. If you can't, keep quiet.

Connect with colleagues with whom you feel safe. Don't connect with colleagues you're unsure about. Being friends with everyone isn't part of the job description.

Control your privacy settings.

And keep up with the changes that Facebook makes to those privacy settings.

Take care when posting pictures of others.

If you tag a colleague, just think how you'd feel if they did the same to you.

Disconnect from negativity.

Unfriend or block those who continually blast you with negativity and trolling.

Show what you're proud of.

Done something great?

Let people know.

Social Media DON'Ts

Don't comment on status updates of your students, even if its positive, because you'll either be criticising or showing favouritism. You can't win.

Don't follow your students on Facebook. Your intentions are innocent but there's little to gain and much to lose.

Never drink and tweet or post. Comments made after a bottle has been opened never look so wise or amusing in the morning.

Think twice before connecting with parents on social media. In a small community it can be fine, but think before you do.

Don't show the beach shots of anything with a state of undress. Those bikini photographs may look fabulous but will just cause comment.

Don't post party pictures off social media. If you lost dignity and it was photographed, don't revisit the crime scene.

Don't post during work hours.

It just doesn't look good. Not even if it was scheduled.

Don't overpost.

Don't offer the world continuous updates on your activities.

If you get a 'Friend' request from a student, you should report it immediately!

If you want to know how else you can keep yourself safe online, You can contact your phone provider and they can support you in increasing your security on apps

Self Harm

Self-harm is when a child or young person intentionally causes injury or harm to themselves. It can be a way of coping with overwhelming emotions, difficult experiences or distress.

Self-harm does not necessarily mean that a young person wants to die, but it can be associated with increased suicide risk and should always be taken seriously.

Possible Signs

- Unexplained cuts, scratches, burns or bruises
- Signs of hair-pulling or other self-injury
- Wearing clothing that covers the body despite hot weather
- Reluctance to change clothes or expose injuries
- Withdrawal, isolation or significant changes in behaviour
- Low mood, anxiety, tearfulness or low self-esteem
- Increased anger, distress or emotional outbursts
- Changes in eating or weight
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Talking about feeling hopeless, worthless or unable to cope
- Changes in sleep, concentration or school attendance
- Loss of interest in activities or relationships they previously enjoyed

What staff should do: Take any disclosure or concern seriously. Listen calmly, reassure the child and avoid judgement or promises of confidentiality. Do not focus on the injury alone; consider the child's emotional wellbeing and wider circumstances.

Never assume self-harm is attention-seeking. A child may find it difficult to explain what is happening or may be worried about the consequences of telling someone.

****If you believe a child is at immediate risk of serious harm or suicide, follow emergency procedures and seek urgent help.**

Child and Adolescent mental Health

It is important to know that we ALL have Mental Health.

Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people. They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.

70% of children and young people who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

These are some of the mental health problems that can affect children and young people.

Depression affects more children and young people today than in the last few decades, but it is still more common in adults. Teenagers are more likely to experience depression than young children.

Self-harm is a very common problem among young people. Some people find it helps them manage intense emotional pain if they harm themselves, through cutting or burning, for example. They may not wish to take their own life.

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) can cause young people to become extremely worried. Very young children or children starting or moving school may have separation anxiety.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can follow physical or sexual abuse, witnessing something extremely frightening or traumatising, being the victim of violence or severe bullying or surviving a disaster.

Eating disorders usually start in the teenage years and are more common in girls than boys. The number of young people who develop an eating disorder is small, but eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa can have serious consequences for their physical health and development.

Where you can go for extra advice

If you are worried about a child, speak to the DSL without delay and follow your school's safeguarding procedures.

Children's First Response MASH – BCP Council 01202 123334

For concerns about a child or young person who may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, or who may need additional support.

childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Professionals should use the Inter-Agency Referral Form when making a referral.

Children's Social Care – Out of Hours

For urgent concerns about a child's safety or welfare outside normal working hours.

01202 738256

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

For concerns or allegations about an adult working or volunteering with children. LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Concerns should be reported without delay and in accordance with the school's procedures.

NSPCC Helpline 0808 8005000

For adults seeking advice or guidance about a child's safety or wellbeing.

Childline 0800 1111

Free, confidential support for children and young people.

YoungMinds

Information and support for children, young people, parents and carers experiencing mental health difficulties.

Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544

Remember

If you are worried about a child, don't wait for proof. Share your concern with the DSL.

If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, call 999.

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

For children and young people experiencing significant emotional or mental health difficulties.

01202 584600

School Nursing Team

For advice and support relating to children and young people's physical, emotional and health needs.

[Insert current local School Nursing contact]

Domestic Abuse Support

For advice and support where a child or family is affected by domestic abuse.

[Insert current local domestic abuse service/contact]

Safe Schools & Communities Team (SSCT)

A partnership working to prevent and reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and harm affecting children and young people, including helping children stay safe online.

[Insert current local SSCT contact]

Police

101 – for non-emergency police matters.

999 – if there is an immediate danger or emergency.

Shout

Free, confidential 24/7 mental health text support for anyone in the UK.

Text SHOUT to 85258

Need Support Yourself?

Your physical, emotional, relationship and mental health matters too. Staff are Mental Health Trained and available to help. Please speak to your Line Manager in the first instance

Contact Information For
The Cornerstone Academy
safeguarding@cornerstoneacademy.org.uk

Designated Safeguarding Officers

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