



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The John McNeill Opportunity Centre fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection.

Policy agreed (date):	23 rd September 2025
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Next review (date):	September 2026

Key Safeguarding Personnel

Role	Name	Tel.	Email
Manager	Eleni Andrews	01722 413263	manager@johnmcneilloppcentre.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Eleni Andrews	01722 413263	manager@johnmcneilloppcentre.org.uk
Deputy DSL(s) (DDSL)	Julie Ling/ Louise Hatch	01722 413263	info@johnmcneilloppcentre.org.uk
Nominated Trustee	Gillian Silman	01722 413263	jmcntrustees@gmail.com
Chair of Trustees	Suzanna Pearce	01722 413263	jmcntrustees@gmail.com
Designated Lead for Looked After Children	Eleni Andrews	01722 413263	info@johnmcneilloppcentre.org.uk

The key safeguarding responsibilities within each of the roles above are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)

Children's Social Care referrals:	
Integrated Front Door:	0300 456 0108
Out of hours:	0300 456 0100

If you believe a child is **at immediate risk** of significant harm or injury,
you **must** call the police on 999.

Introduction

The John McNeill Opportunity Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We will fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- The procedures of the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (formerly WSCB)
- Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2024)

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- all our pupils are safe and protected from harm.
- safeguarding procedures are in place to help pupils to feel safe and learn to stay safe.
- adults in the setting's community are aware of the expected behaviours and the setting's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

Scope

Safeguarding children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

The term 'safeguarding children' covers a range of measures including child protection procedures. It encompasses a whole-school preventative approach to keeping children safe, including online that incorporates pupil health and safety; school behaviour management and preventing child-on-child abuse; supporting pupils with medical conditions; Relationships, Sex and Health education (RSHE) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education; providing first aid and site security.

Consequently, this policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by the trustees and should be read alongside the following policies relevant to the safety and welfare of our pupils:

- Online safety policy
- Staff Behaviour Policy
- Equality Statement
- Behaviour policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Administration of medicines
- SEND policy
- Complaints policy
- Health and Safety policy

This policy applies to all staff in our setting. For the purposes of this policy:

- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the setting, full-time or part-time, in a paid or regular voluntary capacity.
- **A volunteer** is a person who performs an activity that involves spending time, unpaid in setting (except for approved expenses).
- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.
- **Child** refers to all children on our setting roll and any child under the age of 18 who comes into contact with our setting. This includes unborn babies.

Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to a child at setting, outside of setting and online are within the scope of this policy.

Expectations

All staff are:

- familiar with this safeguarding policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review.
- alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse and wider safeguarding issues.
- aware of the importance of professional curiosity.
- able to record and report concerns as set out in this policy.
- able to deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child.
- involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, integrated support plans, child in need plans and interagency child protection plans as required.

In addition, all staff have read and understood Part 1 or Annex A of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2024) Setting leaders and staff who work directly with children have also read Annex B and Part 5.

Trustees

As key strategic decision makers and vision setters for the setting, the trustees will make sure that our policies and procedures are in line with national and local safeguarding requirements. Trustees will work with the senior leaders to make sure the following safeguarding essentials are in place:

Training/Teaching	Policy/Procedures	Key safeguarding roles
Whole setting approach to broad and balanced curriculum embedding safeguarding teaching D/DSL training Designated teacher training KCSiE Part 1 or Annex A (and Annex B and Part 5 for staff working directly with children) Staff training, including regular safeguarding updates Online safety training for staff Preventing radicalisation Annual review of online safety arrangements	Child-on-child abuse Pupil voice Online safety Whistleblowing Staff Behaviour Policy (for safer working practice), incl. low-level concerns about staff conduct Early help Mental Health Multi-agency working Children who are absent and/or missing from education Children with SEND and a physical health issue Reporting abuse, incl. dealing with a child at immediate risk / SVPP procedures Honour based abuse (HBA) Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Behaviour policy Staff contribution to policy Safeguarding policy review	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a senior member of the leadership team. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Designated lead for children looked-after (even if there are no LAC on roll) Nominated trustee for safeguarding & whistleblowing

Concerns and allegations management

Our chair of trustees is responsible for liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations and other partner agencies in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Headteacher.

See also 'Managing concerns and allegations against staff'.

Audit

The nominated governor trustee for safeguarding collaborates with the Manager/ D/DSL to complete an annual safeguarding audit return to the local authority.

Safer Recruitment

Our trustee's monitor the school's safer recruitment practice, including scrutiny around DSL and /or manager monitoring of the Single Central Record.

Monitoring and review

The manager ensures that the policies and procedures, adopted by the governing body (particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect), are understood, and followed by all staff and should be easily understood by staff, children and parents, by re-visiting regularly.

The manager reports at least three times per year to the governors around the effectiveness of the setting's safeguarding procedures, and in particular, child-on-child incidents, including all aspects of trend analysis. The setting's approach to online safety and filtering and monitoring is reviewed annually as a minimum.

We ensure that safeguarding is an agenda item for every full governing body meeting.

The Manager ensures that safeguarding is an agenda item for every staff meeting.

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier as required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

The nominated trustee meets the DSL to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

Mandatory procedures – Staff and adults at school

Safer recruitment

All staff are subject to safer recruitment processes and checks

At John McNeill, we scrutinise all applications for paid or voluntary posts. We undertake interviews and make appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). We maintain a single central record (SCR) of the essential checks as set out in KCSiE, that have been carried out and certificates obtained. The SCR applies to:

- all staff who work at the setting.
- All committee members/trustees

Visitors

All visitors complete a signing in/out process, wear a school ID badge and are provided with key safeguarding information including the contact details of safeguarding personnel in school.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the school, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity, if necessary.

Site safety

Risk assessments are undertaken and maintained in accordance with the school's health and safety policy. The school ensures that when our premises are hired or rented to other organisations (ASC,

evening and weekend clubs) including shared site providers who work with children, those organisations adhere to the guidance for out-of-school settings.

Staff Behaviour Policy (for safer working practice)

The John McNeill Opportunity is committed to positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for our pupils underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour.

The Staff Behaviour Policy sets out staff behaviours that should be avoided as well as those that constitute safe practice and supports our commitment to safeguarding children.

Identifying the signs

All staff know how to recognise and are alert to the signs of neglect, abuse, exploitation and wider safeguarding issues, child-on-child abuse, and 'all' risks of harm outside of the home and within the local area including online. Definitions of abuse, set out in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners' (2015), 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2024) along with notes from safeguarding training, are important reference documents for all staff. **Every member of staff is provided with a copy of Part 1 or Annex A of KCSiE which they are required to read, and which also includes supporting guidance about several specific safeguarding issues. Staff who work directly with children are also required to read Annex B and Part 5 of KCSiE (2024)**

Responding to concerns/disclosures of abuse

Flowcharts provided by Wiltshire Council Safeguarding Team and SVPP that set out the required procedure for staff to follow when they have a safeguarding concern about a child are displayed in each room for easy reference.

Staff adhere to the organisation's safeguarding training requirements when concerned about abuse or when responding to a disclosure of abuse. Staff understand that they must NOT:

- take photographs of any injuries.
- postpone or delay the opportunity for the child to talk.
- take notes while the child is speaking or ask the child to write an account.
- try to investigate the allegation.
- promise confidentiality e.g. say they will keep 'the secret'.
- approach or inform the alleged abuser.

All staff record any concern about or disclosure by a pupil of abuse or neglect and report this to the D/DSL using the standard form. It is the responsibility of each adult in school to ensure that the D/DSL receives the record of concern without delay. In the absence of the D/DSL, staff members know to speak directly to the IFD. In some circumstances, the D/DSL or member of staff seeks advice by ringing the IFD for advice.

The D/DSL will liaise with safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together (2018) and will refer to National Police Chief's Council guidance for schools to understand when they should consider calling the police.

The D/DSL will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

The D/DSL consistently monitors all children with concerns, whether a request for service to the Wiltshire IFD or appropriate Local Authority Children's Services has been made or not.

During term time, the DSL and or DDSL is always available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The D/DSL provides feedback to any staff who share concern/s.

The voice of the child is central to our safeguarding practice and pupils are encouraged to express and have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them.

Online safety

Online safety is a running and interrelated theme which is reflected in our policies and procedures. Online safety is considered as part of our whole setting safeguarding approach and wider staff training. A personalised or contextualised approach is taken for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some children with SEND.

Managing concerns and allegations against staff (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, and those from organisations or individuals using the school premises)

The John McNeill Opportunity Centre follows the procedure set out by the SVPP 'Allegations against adults' flowchart which is displayed in the setting for easy reference.

Where anyone in the school has a concern about the behaviour of an adult (including online) who works or volunteers at the school, they must immediately consult the Manager/D/DSL who will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations.

Any concern or allegation against the Manager will be reported to the Chair of Committee without informing the Manager.

All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount and must not delay raising concerns for fear a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. We promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the setting are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

In addition to the concern/allegation management process, the setting's DSL will also refer suspected abuse to the Wiltshire IFD, as described in 'responding to a concern.'

All members of staff and volunteers have read and signed to confirm they have understood the school's Staff Behaviour Policy (for safer working practice).

John McNeill will appoint a 'case manager' to lead any investigation where the reported allegation does not meet the allegations threshold to consider a referral to the LADO. This is the safeguarding lead or where the safeguarding lead is the subject of an allegation, the chair of trustees.

Managing low-level concerns about adults

We operate a 'low-level' concerns policy in accordance with KCSIE. 'Low-level' refers to behaviour that is: inconsistent with expectations set out in the Staff Behaviour Policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and/or does not meet the allegations threshold, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO

All low-level concerns will be reported to the manager; low-level concerns about the manager will be reported to the chair of trustees.

The John McNeill Opportunity Centre will:

- ensure all staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is (as set out in the Staff Behaviour Policy), and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns;
- provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised, for both the child/ren and the adult; and,
- respond to reports of low-level concerns in by addressing unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the manager will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:
 - directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
 - to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reporting low-level concerns helps to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

Staff are encouraged to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing, retained and reviewed to help recognise any weakness in the school safeguarding system so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Whistleblowing

In accordance with our whistleblowing policy and procedures all staff can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. Our whistleblowing procedures, are in place for such concerns to be raised with the nursery manager.

If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the nursery manager or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline
Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 from 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday, or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- A member of the governing body.

Escalation of concerns

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between colleagues and between agencies.

Staff must be confident and able to professionally disagree and challenge decision-making as an entirely legitimate activity; a part of our professional responsibility to promote the best safeguarding practice. Staff are encouraged to press for re-consideration if they believe a decision to act/not act in response to a concern raised about a child is wrong. In such cases the SVPP Case Resolution Protocol is used if necessary.

If we are on the receiving end of a professional challenge, we see this as an opportunity to reflect on our decision making.

Record keeping and information sharing

The setting:

- liaises with partner organisations (dual setting provisions, Wiltshire Council, external professional agencies) to ensure any safeguarding records for learners are shared on transition and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term:
 - by the setting/school/organisation previously attended by the child.
 - by our DSL when the child leaves our school.

For any child dual-registered with another school/setting/organisation, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of the placed pupil thus the DSL will regularly liaise with the DSL at that base to ensure information is shared in the child's best interests. This includes contextual safeguarding information about relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online to enable assessment and intervention to happen within these extra-familial contexts.

keeps clear and comprehensive written records of all pupil safeguarding and child protection concerns using a standard recording form/electronic recording system, with a body map, including how the concern was followed up and resolved as well as a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent Program etc.

- ensures all pupil safeguarding and child protection records are kept securely in a locked location.

- ensures the records incorporate the wishes and views of the pupil.

The D/DSL acts in accordance with Information Sharing – (DfE May 2024) and in line with the Wiltshire Council Record Keeping Guidance which includes details about file retention. Information about pupils at risk of harm is shared with members of staff in keeping with the seven golden rules to sharing information in the DfE guidance.

We are committed to work in partnership with parents and carers. In most situations, we will discuss initial concerns with them. However, the D/DSL will not share information where there are concerns that if so doing would:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm
- place an adult at increased risk of serious harm
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child, or serious harm to an adult.

When we become aware that a child is being privately fostered, we remind the carer/parent of their legal duty to notify Wiltshire Children's Social Care. We follow this up by contacting Children's Social Care directly.

Mandatory procedures – Supporting children

Early help

At John McNeill, all our staff can identify children who may benefit from early help as a problem emerges and discuss this with the D/DSL.

The D/DSL uses:

- The Wiltshire's Integrate Front Door (MASH and Early Support Hub).
- The Digital Assessment and Referral Tool as appropriate as part of a holistic assessment of the child's needs.
- The Multi-Agency Thresholds guidance for Safeguarding Children on the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) website about suitable action to take when a pupil has been identified as making inadequate progress or having an unmet need.
- Liaises with Wiltshire SEND service
- Various resources to identify and respond to harmful sexual behaviour

Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or physical health issues

Pupils with additional needs or certain health conditions face an increased risk of abuse and neglect. Staff take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect. We never assume that behaviour, mood or injury relates to the pupil's additional needs without further exploration. Staff understand that additional challenges can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in pupils with SEND, including communication barriers. Staff recognise that children with SEND are also at a higher risk of peer group isolation and can be disproportionately affected by bullying (including prejudiced-based bullying).

The use of 'reasonable force' in setting

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'.

All staff will follow our behaviour policy and all pupils are encouraged to follow these expectations to reduce the need for 'use of reasonable force.'

Mandatory procedures – Specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues

Child-on-child abuse

All children have a right to attend early years and learn in a safe environment. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Children who are absent and/or missing from education

Children who do not attend school regularly can be at increased risk of abuse and neglect. Where there is unauthorised/unexplained absence, and

- after reasonable attempts have been made to contact the family without success, the DSL follows the SVPP procedure and consults/refers to the IFD team as appropriate.
- there are no known welfare concerns about a pupil, we follow our procedures for unauthorised absence.

Mental health

All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff understand that:

- abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Staff are aware of how
- these experiences can impact on children's mental health, behaviour and education.
- they have a duty to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will report this concern using the agreed reporting mechanisms.

Domestic abuse

Staff understand that domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional harm, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

The DSL liaises with partner agencies as part of 'Encompass' in Wiltshire. When police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the DSL ensures the organisation receives up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and will ensure key staff provide emotional and practical support to the child according to their needs.

Preventing radicalisation

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of schools' wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting pupils from other forms of harm and abuse.

Staff use their judgement in identifying pupils who might be at risk of radicalisation and speak to the D/DSL if they are concerned about a pupil. The D/DSL will always act proportionately, and this may include making a Prevent referral to the Channel support programme or to the Local Authority Children's Services.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Staff will inform the D/DSL immediately if they suspect a girl is at risk of FGM. We will report to the police any 'known' cases of FGM to the police as required by law.

Staff training

Induction

All staff including trustees and regular volunteers are informed of our safeguarding policy and procedures including online safety, at induction.

Our written induction schedule for staff also includes:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures
- Online safety
- KCSiE update
- Whistleblowing policy
- Behaviour Policy (pupils)
- Staff Behaviour Policy (or Code of Conduct)
- Role and identities of the DSL and DDSL
- The setting's response to children who are absent and/or missing from education.
- Procedure to follow in case of an allegation being raised against an adult
- Professional disagreement and escalation including the SVPP Case Resolution Protocol

Safeguarding training

This training is for all staff and is updated every 3 years as a minimum to ensure staff understand their role in safeguarding. Any member of staff not present at this whole school session will undertake this statutory training requirement on their return.

In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as necessary and at least annually. All staff also receive training in online safety and this is updated as necessary.

Advanced training

The D/DSL has additional multi agency training which is updated every two years as a minimum. The D/DSL also attend multi-agency courses relevant to school needs. Their knowledge and skills are refreshed at least annually e.g. via e-bulletins or safeguarding networking events with other D/DSLs. The D/DSL attend a Wiltshire IFD tour.

Safer Recruitment

At least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. This training is updated every five years as a minimum.

Preventing Radicalisation

All staff undertake Prevent awareness training.

Staff support

Due to the demanding, often distressing nature of child protection work, we support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through the challenges of this aspect of their role with a senior leader and to seek further support as appropriate.

Trustees

As well as the school's safeguarding induction programme, all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. Trustees are also encouraged to attend whole school safeguarding and child protection training.

This policy is to be read alongside the following policies:

- 06.09 – Whistleblowing
- 06.10 – Safer Recruitment
- 09.03 – Absence and Attendance

Appendix 1

Related legislation and key documents

Children Act 1989 (and 2004 update): The Children Act 1989 gives every child the right to protection from abuse and exploitation and the right to have enquires made to safeguard his or her welfare. The Act place duties on several agencies, including schools, to assist Social Services departments acting on behalf of children and young people in need (s17) or enquiring into allegations of child abuse (s47).

Education Act 2002 - This requires schools to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education.

Sexual Offences Act 2003 - This act sets out an offence of 'abuse of trust' - a sexual or otherwise inappropriate relationship between an adult who is responsible for young people and a young person in his/her care.

Information Sharing – Department for Education (DfE) Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2024 This advice is for all frontline practitioners and senior managers working with children, young people, parents and carers who have to make decisions about sharing personal information on a case by case basis.

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), section 26 requires all schools, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

Mental health and behaviour in schools (2018) advice to help schools to support pupils whose mental health problems manifest themselves in behaviour. It is also intended to be helpful to staff in alternative provision settings, although some of the legislation mentioned will only apply to those alternative provision settings that are legally classified as schools.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) Section 53(3) and (4) of this applies to schools if they broker student accommodation with host families for which the host family receives a payment from a third party, such as a language school. At a future date, the regulated activity provider will have a duty to carry out a barred list check on any new carer – section 34ZA Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

The Teachers’ Standards (2013) set a clear baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers and define the minimum level of practice expected of teachers in England.

Children Missing Education (2016) Statutory guidance for local authorities and advice for other groups on helping children who are missing education get back into it.

Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017) Advice for schools on effectively preventing and tackling bullying.

Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2016) Advice for headteachers and school staff on developing school behaviour policy, including an overview of their powers and duties.