



# Group Safeguarding Policy

## August 2023

Lead officer	Claire Woodward, Head of Business Development, Education and Skills  and  Mark Davies, Head of Customer Support
Author	Safeguarding Team
Version number	2
Date agreed	As per e-signatures
Agreed by	ELT
Review date	August 2026
Diversity compliant	yes
Equality Impact Assessment required	Carried out
Data Protection compliant	yes
Health and Safety compliant	yes

## Contents

		Page
1.	What this policy is about and why we need it	3
2.	Who does this policy apply to	3
3.	Our policy is...	7
4.	How we will monitor this policy	10
5.	Procedures and other documents that link to this policy	10
6.	Links to other policies, legislation and regulations	11
7.	When this policy will be reviewed	11
8.	Jargon Buster	11
9.	Further information	15

## 1. What this policy is about and why we need it?

This policy confirms Acis' group-wide commitment to safeguarding.

We recognise and believe that safeguarding matters. We have a legal, contractual, and moral duty to protect children and adults at risk and to assist statutory authorities in meeting their duties.

We have a clear policy statement and approach to safeguarding that is standard across everyone, regardless of what part of the group you work in or are supported by. This is outlined in this policy and applies to all Acis Group customers, learners, service users, participants, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

Each area within the group works differently and offers very differing services. Specifically our services to children and young people within the education and skills business unit holds different statutory responsibilities to those for adults across all business units. To support this we have a more detailed policy held in education and skills which aligns to this group wide statement to ensure those working within these areas can carry out statutory and regulatory duties responsible to them. This is outlined in the relevant appended policy for that specific area and applies to those working directly in that specific service area only, whether that be team members, contractors, volunteers or any other third party organisation, or those receiving support from that service area at the time of the concern being raised. More widely, should other areas have specific statutory responsibilities that differ from other areas, a detailed specific supporting policy will be in place.

Our legal duty includes the education and training of adults at risk. Any reference in the policy to an adult at risk applies to anyone over the age of 18 who may for a variety of reasons be in need of community services and/or unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the service area specific policy, as appropriate.

## 2. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to Acis Group customers, learners, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third-party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

We expect everyone, including volunteers and partners, to endorse and practice their responsibilities to Safeguarding at all times. Everyone has clear roles and responsibilities in delivering to this policy. It is different dependant on role, and in summary:

### Responsibilities

Our **Group Board** has overall accountability for Safeguarding and is committed to ensuring that across the Group we have a clear approach, understanding of responsibility and ownership of Safeguarding. It has appropriate designated and delegated responsibility at Board level, which is:

- *Enterprise Committee* for education, skills and wider enterprise services responsibility and
- *Operations Committee* for Housing services and corporate services responsibility

Our **Executive Leadership Team** as Directors of the Group have overall responsibility for safeguarding and ensures we have an understanding at all levels, including appropriate training, procedures and practices embedded and delivered to in all service areas. It also ensures safe recruitment practices and clear responsibilities within roles. It ensures nominated individuals within the senior management teams of all service areas understand their duties and responsibilities in respect of legislation, regulation and escalation. Whilst collectively they have overall responsibility for all areas, there is specific designated responsibility within it to the Director for Customer Excellence.

Our **safeguarding steering group** assumes day to day responsibility for Group wide Safeguarding activities, and ensures transparency, best practice and oversight at the relevant areas. They meet together quarterly as a minimum. It includes:

- Our Director for Customer Excellence who has designated responsibility on behalf of our Executive Leadership Team for safeguarding.
- Group-wide Senior Managers with responsibility for key teams whom safeguarding is naturally higher (Head of Customer Support, Head of Business Development, Education and Skills and Head of People Services)
- Leads responsible for safeguarding within each business unit area, including the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for education and skills , the safeguarding lead for Housing and tenant support (SLH), and a lead from procurement or commercial to represent contractor delivery. These lead roles will act as their area expert to ensure compliance, policy adherence and safe practice. .
- Deputy safeguarding leads within all business areas who are nominated individuals that are suitably trained across the organisation, who will support and guide our people and contractors to deal with concerns raised across the group and support those involved to resolution. These are usually people within roles who have a significant involvement in safeguarding practice across the group. All areas will have their own deputy Safeguarding lead/s to ensure tailored support, but will work closely together to ensure peer support is in place. They will be points of contact for safeguarding queries, with specific responsibility for their area of operation. They are not expected to investigate matters, but they are responsible for ensuring policy and procedure is adhered to and concerns are escalated as appropriate, and our people are fully supported when raising concerns. They are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding matters are managed in line with this policy and for sharing best practice or any safeguarding actions, messages or tasks within their area.

**Everyone** across the group, regardless of role (including but not limited to our teams, customers, contractors, and volunteers), has a responsibility to promote positive safeguarding procedures and practices, have a thorough understanding of what safeguarding is, our role within this, and the Safeguarding Policy and procedures to report and deal with concerns should they be raised.

The Responsibility Matrix below identifies the significant Safeguarding topics/issues and to who it is assigned to manage those areas.

** delegated individuals within this group to hold appropriate level training and responsibility	All employees and volunteers	Safeguarding Lead for business units	Deputy safeguarding leads	Safeguarding steering group*	People Services	Mental Health First aiders	Procurement and Commercial Manager	Contractors and Partners	DFCE on behalf of Joint Leadership Team	SL on behalf of Board (through Op'ns and enterprise Committee)	Acis Group Board
<b>Completing training</b>											
Safeguarding awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advanced, accredited Safeguarding at the level appropriate to the service area		X	X	X					X	X	
Safeguarding Lead training at the level appropriate to service area		X									
<b>Safeguarding concerns</b>											
Identifying	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Raising	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support to escalate appropriately		X	X								
Referring to Local Authority Designated Officer with DSL/SL		X			X						
Managing investigations against our people					X						
<b>General safeguarding practices</b>											
Safe Working	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Safer Recruitment					X			X			
On-boarding contractors and volunteers					X		X	X			
Wellbeing Support			X	X	X	X		X			
Organisational oversight and monitoring		X	X	X					X	X	X

## **Training**

### *Employees and volunteers (including Board members)*

We will follow safe recruitment practices in all internal appointments, including appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks (dependant on identified within the role description)

All new starters, as part of their intro programme (induction) are required to complete safeguarding training and those working in frontline services receive a safeguarding induction as part of their induction process before commencing their post.

We will provide all our people and volunteers with training appropriate for their role. As a minimum every employee will complete safeguarding awareness training annually, through our e-learning platform APLE. This includes a reminder of safeguarding issues and our policy and procedures.

We will support all our people to recognise persons at risk of and/or experiencing abuse or neglect and to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and the procedures for safeguarding through wider awareness activities throughout the year. Additionally, we will ensure all roles carry out any mandatory training required by external funders.

Our safeguarding team will receive advanced safeguarding training, and those with specific responsibility areas such as Safeguarding Lead's and Deputy Safeguarding Leads will receive additional training.

### *Contractors and partners*

For those delivering services directly to customers on our behalf we require them (including their sub-contractors) to:

- complete our 'on-boarding' process including proportionate due diligence checks.
- follow safe recruitment practices including appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks,
- have their own equivalent policy and processes in place (or accept ours as a minimum) and
- report any safeguarding concerns to the relevant Acis Group contract manager.
- attend any contractor or partner training we hold that we identify as a requirement of their organisation to ensure they are in line with policy or legislation changes.

### *Organisations awarding grants to us, or Acis making grants to other organisations.*

We will carry out due diligence when we work with, or make grants to, any other bodies, including delivery partners.

Ensure any grant recipient or partner organisation have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place.

Ensure there are clear lines of responsibility and reporting between all bodies involved.

### *Customers*

We will make our customers aware of who to go to if they want to raise a concern about anyone, or self-disclose through on-site communication, and sharing our policy on our website.

We will support all our customers to recognise persons at risk of and/or experiencing abuse or neglect through wider awareness activities throughout the year.

### **3. Our Policy Statement**

Acis Group recognises its duty of care to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk from any form of abuse whilst working with us in any of our service areas. We are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory provision, contractual obligations, government guidance, and best practice.

We will create a safe environment for people to thrive. To do this we will risk assess any venues used for events or training to ensure it is a safe space for all, free from risk of harm. We will use the different ways that we engage with customers (in their homes, in person, in communities, in classroom environments, or via virtual contact) to identify possible safeguarding issues and act on them.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. We will seek to ensure that any action taken is prompt, proportionate, and that it includes and respects the voice of those concerned.

This policy is underpinned by:

- Our belief that everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect.
- Our commitment to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.
- Our acknowledgement that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and our commitment to preventing abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of everyone.
- Our recognition that health, wellbeing, ability, disability and need for care and support can affect a person's resilience. We recognise that some people experience barriers, for example, communication in raising concerns or seeking help. We recognise that these factors can vary at different points in people's lives.
- Our recognition that there are legal and contractual frameworks within which we need to work to safeguard those who have care and support needs and for protecting those who are unable to take action to protect themselves. We will act in accordance with the relevant safeguarding legislation and with local statutory safeguarding procedures.

To implement this policy, regardless of where in the group, we will:

#### **Identify Safeguarding matters**

We will ensure that all of our people are equipped to identify the signs of potential safeguarding concerns and understand the need to refer these through to the Safeguarding team.

### **Respond to Safeguarding reports**

Any safeguarding concern or report will be taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with the accompanying guidance and procedures, with the support of a safeguarding team. Within the team, a nominated individual will be identified to support every specific case to ensure transparency and clear lines of communication.

The wellbeing of those at risk of harm will be put first, with active support for those subject to concern to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to as per the accompanying recording and sharing information procedures.

Any actions taken by Acis Group will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm. Any related whistleblowing will be managed in accordance with our Confidential Reporting Policy.

### **Manage allegations**

All allegations regarding safeguarding issues will be managed in accordance with accompanying guidance and procedures covering Acis Group people (either general or specific to the service area), contractors and/or partners working with/for Acis Group, customers and learners.

On receipt of an allegation, the safeguarding of everyone involved will be prioritised whilst an investigation is carried out. Where required, the concern will be raised with funding bodies.

If this allegation involves an employee, our Head of People Services will be notified and our internal policy will be adhered to alongside this. These policies are Disciplinary Policy and Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) policy.

### ***Multi Agency Working***

Where required, we will cooperate with all partners in taking action to safeguard, including supporting any investigations and/or enquiries we are asked to make on their behalf.

We will attend relevant safeguarding meetings and adhere to the terms of reference including completing assigned actions and providing updates and reports. We will refer cases to external safeguarding forums, teams, and panels where appropriate.

If any investigation uncovers a 'serious incident' as defined by the Charity Commission, the Head of Legal and Governance will ensure this is reported in line with our procedures.

### ***Record keeping***

Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns will be maintained and securely stored in line with our Data Protection Policy and Procedures and the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

Records may include information relating to care and/or support needs, which will be used to promote a safe and positive experience. All information will be gathered and stored in line with the Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

Adequate information gathering and sharing processes will be put in place to enable us to meet our customers' needs and maintain a safe environment for all.



### *Complaints*

If anyone raising a safeguarding concern feels it has not been dealt with appropriately by Acis Group, they can raise a complaint in line with our Customer Feedback Policy. If the complaint is regarding an employee, they can also use the confidential whistleblowing policy. If it is felt appropriate, they should be advised to report their concern to the appropriate statutory agency for further investigation.

### *Wellbeing Support*

Wellbeing support for those involved in safeguarding cases will be available through the Safeguarding steering group, Mental Health First Aiders, PayCare, and support areas of the organisation.

### **PREVENT: Radicalisation and Acts of Terrorism**

The Counter Terrorism & Security Act (2015) & The Prevent Duty Prevent is 1 of the 4 elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent strategy:

- responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.
- works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with. The strategy covers all forms of terrorism, including far right extremism and some aspects of nonviolent extremism. The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police also play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes. The Home Offices uses a range of measures to challenge extremism in the UK, including:
  - where necessary, preventing apologists for terrorism and extremism from travelling to this country
  - giving guidance to local authorities and institutions to understand the threat from extremism and the statutory powers available to them to challenge extremist speakers
  - funding a specialist police unit which works to remove online content that breaches terrorist legislation
  - supporting community-based campaigns and activity which can effectively rebut terrorist and extremist propaganda and offer alternative views to our most vulnerable target audiences - in this context they work with a range of civil society organisations
  - supporting people who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist activity through the Channel process, which involves several agencies working together to give individuals access to services such as health and education, specialist mentoring and diversionary activities.

This Act places a duty on Acis (and in particular its education subsidiaries), to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent Duty). More widely, across the whole group we acknowledge that we work with customers who may be at risk of radicalisation and seek to provide a framework for how we will protect vulnerable people who are at risk.

We are committed to supporting vulnerable learners through its safeguarding policies and procedures and recognises that this can support our contribution to the Prevent duty. Training is available for all those teams identified across the organisation (and in particular everyone within our education teams where there is a statutory duty), which is delivered as part of their induction, and is revisited each year. We actively promote awareness amongst customers, through tutorial and key themed events throughout the year.

#### **4. How we will monitor this policy**

The safeguarding steering group will monitor and review outcomes for all cases on a quarterly basis, identifying any

- issues that require action by e.g. changes to this policy and/or the accompanying procedures
- learning and best practice to share across teams
- themes to drive training and awareness campaigns

This team will report their findings to the senior management team, with reports shared with the executive leadership team, Committees and Board as required, and annually as a minimum.

Safeguarding metrics are reported as part of our performance management framework and shared with all our people monthly, including the Group Board. A more detailed report is shared with our operations and enterprise committees for their relevant areas to provide ongoing assurance of management of cases.

The safeguarding team will review the policy annually (or sooner if required) and procedures regularly.

The team will also review this policy when due for renewal with customers in their service area to ensure it is appropriate.

#### **5. Policies and other documents that link into this policy**

5.1 Safeguarding Children and Young People in our education services Policy and Procedure

5.2 Procedures that link into this policy are:

- ASB Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Confidential reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Hoarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Customer Feedback Policy
- Modern Slavery Policy
- Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy

- Disciplinary Policy

5.3 Other documents that link into this policy are:

- Safeguarding procedures
- Safeguarding alert form
- Safeguarding Lead- role description (service area specific)
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead role description
- Acis Group Safeguarding Steering Group Terms of Reference
- Data retention schedule
- IT security policy

## **6. Links to other legislation and/or regulations**

6.1 Policies, legislation and/or regulation that links to this Policy are listed below:

- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Caldicott principles
- Money laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of funds legislation
- The Children Act 1989 (as amended) and 2014
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- The Education Act 2002.
- The Education Act 2011
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- DfE statutory guidance (2014)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018

## **7. When will this policy will be reviewed**

This policy will be reviewed in August 2026 or before if necessary as a result of changes prompted by ongoing case review and/or legislation, contractual obligations, or best practice.

## **8. Jargon buster**

### *Significant Harm*

The concept of significant harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention into family life in the best interests of the child or young person and gives local authorities a duty

to make enquires as to whether to take action (Section 47, Children Act 1989). Our Safeguarding Policy promotes the welfare of a young person who is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. The Act also gives powers to the Police to take emergency action to protect a young person from significant harm.

### *Abuse*

“Abuse” relates to the mistreatment of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons and may consist of single or repeated acts. Incidents of abuse can be either to one person or more than one person at a time. Abuse and/or harmful behaviours can be either deliberate or the result of negligence, ignorance, lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Somebody may abuse or neglect an individual by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm.

Everyone should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another (KCSIE). Everyone should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the classroom.

Everyone, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence (KCSIE).

Everyone should be aware that abuse does happen and that where there are any concerns, no matter if they appear low level – they should be reported to the safeguarding team. Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

Within the context of this policy abuse and harmful behaviours are defined through the following main categories:

- Physical: this may involve hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, misuse of medication, inflicting inappropriate physical sanctions, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, young person or vulnerable adult including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing the individual ill health (DfE 2014, DoH 2000).
- Emotional/Psychological: this is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. This may involve the imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations resulting in fear, exploitation or corruption. This may also include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Threats of harm or abandonment; humiliation; blaming; intimidation; coercion; harassment; verbal abuse, bullying (including cyberbullying) and being prevented from receiving services or support are all forms of emotional abuse (DoH 2000). Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- Sexual: such as rape, sexual assault or sexual acts occurring through force or enticement and which a child, young person or vulnerable adult could not have consented to, or to which they were pressurised into consenting. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of

clothing. They may include non-contact activities such as involving the child, young person or vulnerable adult in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. (DoH 2000).

- Neglect or Acts of Omission: this includes the persistent failure to meet a child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psycho-social needs, and which are likely to result in a serious impairment of the individual's health or development. This may include failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or educational services and/or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs (DoH 2000).
- Financial or Material: this may include theft, fraud, and exploitation, pressure in connection with money or material possessions. This may also include loss of jewellery or personal property, loss of money from a wallet or purse (DoH 2000).
- Discriminatory: this may include abuse, bullying and harassment based on the individual's age, sex, disability, religion, race or sexual orientation (DoH 2000).
- Specific Issues and Further Information: specific advice should also be sought in relation to specific situations including forced marriage, the effects of domestic violence on young people, female genital mutilation, children and young people who sexually abuse or who are exploited and those affected by drug and alcohol abuse in families.
- Abuse of Trust: under the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over 18 to have a sexual relationship with a young person under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that young person, even if the relationship is consensual. This includes teaching and a range of support staff within educational establishments.
- Radicalisation: The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism (Prevent Strategy.Gov.uk).
- Online Abuse: any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing games online or using mobile phones (NSPCC 2015) The college uses an appropriate filter and monitoring system in place, which both learners and staff cohorts are aware of. We have a whole college approach to online safety where learners and staff are regularly updated about processes in place. Where learners have been asked to work from home, they have been provided with advice and guidance around online safety. Refer to Online safety policy.
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. This can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it

should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online (KCSIE).

- Female Genital Mutilation: FGM is the total or partial removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons (NSPCC 2015). Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police (KCSIE).
- Honour Based Abuse : So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take (KCSIE).
- Domestic abuse: witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, Teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships (NSPCC 2015).
- Child trafficking: Is a type of abuse where children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold (NSPCC 2015)
- Harmful sexual behaviour: Children or young people develop sexual behaviours that harm themselves or other (NSPCC 2015).
- County Lines Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns (KCSIE).
- Child on child abuse - Children can abuse other children and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting (also known as Youth Produced Sexual Imagery) and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (KCSIE).
- Homelessness Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property (KCSIE).
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children (KCSIE).
- Up skirting The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a persons clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim (KCSIE).
- Serious Violence – everyone should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-

harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs (KCSIE).

### *Adult at risk*

Care Act 2014 defines an **adult at risk** as an individual aged 18 years and over who: (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) AND; (b) is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND; as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

It is recognised within this policy that any adult may be vulnerable or become a victim of abuse. Specifically, an “adult at risk” is defined as any person who is 18 years of age or over and has a reduced capacity to give consent to disclosure of abuse allegations or suspicions. As defined by the Law Commission (1995) we use the following indicators to identify an adult who is, or may become “at risk” whilst they are registered with us:

- The individual is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness;
- Is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself.
- Is unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Whilst not definitive, the main categories of people covered by the definition of “adult at risk” include those who:

- have a learning disability
- have a physical or sensory impairment
- have a mental illness including dementia
- are old and frail
- are detained in custody or under a probation order
- are considered vulnerable and who may experience abuse due to problems with alcohol or drugs (or be vulnerable due to other circumstances such as being an asylum seeker)

### *Wellbeing*

Wellbeing is a broad concept, and it is described as relating to the following areas in particular: personal dignity; physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing; protection from abuse and neglect; control by the individual over day-to-day life; participation in work, education, training or recreation; social and economic wellbeing; domestic, family and personal; suitability of living accommodation; the individual’s contribution to society. The individual aspects of wellbeing or outcomes are those which are set out in the Care Act, and are most relevant to people with care and support needs and carers. There is no hierarchy, and all should be considered of equal importance when considering wellbeing in the round.

## **9. Appendices**

none

# Safeguarding Children and Young People in our education services Policy and Procedure

*To be read in conjunction with the group safeguarding policy*

**August 2023**

Lead officer	Kirsty Shaw Delivery Manager Education
Author	Kirsty Shaw
Version number	1
Date agreed	As per e-signatures
Agreed by	Executive Leadership Team
Review date	
Diversity compliant	Covered within group policy
Equality Impact Assessment required	Covered within group policy
Data Protection compliant	Covered within group policy
Health and Safety compliant	Covered within group policy



## Contents

		Page
1.	What this policy is about and why we need it	2
2.	Who does this policy apply to	2
3.	Our policy is...	3
4.	How we will monitor this policy	12
5.	Procedures and other documents that link to this policy	12
6.	Links to other policies, legislation and regulations	13
7.	When this policy will be reviewed	14
8.	Jargon Buster	14
9.	Further information	17

### 1.0 What this policy is about and why we need it

Across the group we have a standardised and consistent approach and position to safeguarding. But we recognise that the statutory and moral duty towards safeguarding the welfare of children and young people whilst receiving education and training with us has more requirements, and therefore have this policy in place that aligns to our group-wide policy and details more information about how that is applied in the context for children and young people who receive education from us.

We have a zero tolerance approach to abuse and other harmful behaviour within our learning hubs.

This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding for children attending our education programmes within education and skills. Any reference in the policy to a child, young person or learner applies to all those aged under 18.

Education and Skills (E&S) covers all our training, education, skills, employment, wellbeing and wider services across the group, primarily delivered through our subsidiaries, Community Learning in Partnership (CLIP) and Riverside Access and Training Centre, Gainsborough (Riverside).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, their families and carers have a role to play in safeguarding (KCSIE 2023). Where KCSIE is referenced within the policy, it is to be noted that the policy is referring to the most updated version of the guidance.

We have developed procedures in line with, and taking account of, guidance issued by the Department for Education, and other relevant bodies. We have incorporated child protection into the whole organisational approach to safeguarding and the term safeguarding is deemed to include child protection in all policies and procedures.

### 2.0 Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all our teams working in our education and skills service area, volunteers supporting our delivery, learners 18 or under and their families, contractors or partners delivering services on our behalf in this area, the group Board and any other third party organisation working in partnership with us.

Whilst overall responsibility for safeguarding children and young people is outlined in our Group safeguarding policy, for the purpose of clarity:

Our **Group Board** (monitored by the Enterprise Committee for this policy) has overall accountability for Safeguarding and is committed to ensuring that across the Group we have a clear approach, understanding of responsibility, and ownership of Safeguarding. Within the Enterprise Committee there is a nominated individual whom takes lead responsibility for safeguarding issues.

Our **Executive Leadership Team** as Directors of the Group have overall responsibility for safeguarding and ensures we have an understanding at all levels, including appropriate training, procedures and practices embedded and delivered to in all service areas. Our Director for Customer Excellence (DfCE) hold the lead role for the group, and to support this in Education and Skills this is delegated to the Head of Education and Skills who assumes all accountability for this business area, reporting into the DfCE for the overall group wide view.

Our **group safeguarding team** assumes day to day responsibility for Group wide Safeguarding activities, and ensures transparency, best practice and oversight at the relevant areas. We have representatives from within education and skills on this group. Within Education and Skills we have a named **Designated Safeguarding Lead** who is responsible for ensuring organisational compliance to this policy and its procedures. Along with **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads** across all our sites with coverage during all hours of operation.

Full detail of the roles and responsibilities for each of these teams is set out in appendix one.

### **3.0 Our policy is...**

Outlined in the group safeguarding policy, we:

*recognise our duty of care to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk from any form of abuse whilst working with us in any of our service areas. We are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory provision, contractual obligations, government guidance, and best practice.*

*We will create a safe environment for people to thrive. To do this we will risk assess any venues used for events or training to ensure it is a safe space for all, free from risk of harm. We will use the different ways that we engage with customers (in their homes, in person, in communities, in classroom environments, or via virtual contact) to identify possible safeguarding issues and act on them.*

*We have a zero tolerance approach to abuse. We will seek to ensure that any action taken is prompt, proportionate, and that it includes and respects the voice of those concerned.*

For children within our education setting we have a legal duty to ensure those children within our education setting on our programmes have a safe space to learn and where concerns are raised are supported and appropriate action taken.

This section outlines those key areas that are relevant specifically to education settings for young people, and shares our policy in these areas, the procedure and action that will be carried out, and the steps we will follow to ensure due process within the education setting.

## **Definitions of children and young people**

Our programmes are wide ranging. And it is important we clearly detail and understand our responsibilities in relation to all those who may use our services.

### *Children in Need of Protection and Early Help*

Some children and young people are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer “Significant harm”. Where local authorities believe a young person is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, they have a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a young person, this can be done through contacting the early help team to share concerns and ensure the early identification of needs within families. Everyone should be aware of their local Early Help process and understand their role in it. Any child may benefit from early help, but all everyone should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.

All Education and Skills teams are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of the above risks and as a result, will refer to the DSL or DDSL, which will lead to immediate action and any necessary referrals into external agencies.

### *Children in Need*

Children and young people who are defined as being “in need” under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of service(s). A child with a disability is a child in need.

### *Care Experienced*

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. The Board of Directors and senior leaders will ensure that everyone has the skills,

knowledge and understanding necessary to keeping looked after children safe. The appropriate people will have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They will also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The designated teacher/person for looked after children will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

### **Reducing the risk of harm to learners**

We recognise the risks that our learners face, both in and out of education and in order to support them in recognising risks themselves we have a number of mechanisms in place.

- Tutorial programme, covering key topics that raise awareness to risk and how to report concerns.
- Events, focusing on national and global campaigns such as Anti Bullying week.
- Clear reporting procedures and visual displays
- Learner induction activities
- Key themed weeks throughout the academic year with guest speakers
- Safeguarding week
- student voice
- Safeguarding training and regular refresher sessions for everyone

We have a zero tolerance to child-on-child abuse and all incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with in line with the severity and impact of the incident.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse does happen, and we will take all necessary steps to reduce the risk of harm to our learners. We will liaise with the Local Authorities, police and parents where appropriate. We will ensure that there are full and comprehensive records of every incident and any necessary risk assessments, or site safety plans are completed. Bullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence and physical violence will be taken seriously, with a zero tolerance approach to any incidents.

Such matters will be dealt with through our learner disciplinary process.

### **Missing from education**

We have a statutory duty to ensure those learners in our care for the provision of education are safe.

All learners should provide a minimum of two emergency contacts, all numbers provided should be checked as part of their initial 1 to 1 meeting (KCSIE).

Learners who do not attend (or their parents/carers) should be contacted within the first three hours. Learners should make contact to inform us that they are ill or going to be absent. (If a learner is a young carer, has an EHCP or has significant mental health issues, the person dealing with the situation will need to use the emergency contact numbers to establish that the learner is safe).

The following steps must also be taken for learners with the above support needs. If attempts to contact a vulnerable learner are unsuccessful, where possible a home visit will be conducted. If we have significant concerns for the safety and wellbeing of the learner, we will need to contact Children's services to raise concerns and if no action is taken by them, we will need to contact the police. Each hub should follow guidance from its own Local Authority.

We must complete a full log of all action taken and responses received.

### **Mental Health support for learners**

We all have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of learners. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a person has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation (KCSIE).

Our tutors are well placed to observe day to day behaviour which may suggest a child or young person could be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. They are to follow appropriate processes around early help and intervention.

### **PREVENT: Radicalisation and Acts of Terrorism**

The Counter Terrorism & Security Act (2015) & The Prevent Duty Prevent is 1 of the 4 elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent strategy:

- responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.
- works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with. The strategy covers all forms of terrorism, including far right extremism and some aspects of nonviolent extremism. The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police also play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes. The Home Offices uses a range of measures to challenge extremism in the UK, including:
  - where necessary, preventing apologists for terrorism and extremism from travelling to this country
  - giving guidance to local authorities and institutions to understand the threat from extremism and the statutory powers available to them to challenge extremist speakers
  - funding a specialist police unit which works to remove online content that breaches terrorist legislation
  - supporting community-based campaigns and activity which can effectively rebut terrorist and extremist propaganda and offer alternative views to our most vulnerable target audiences - in this context they work with a range of civil society organisations
  - supporting people who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist activity through the Channel process, which involves several agencies working together to

give individuals access to services such as health and education, specialist mentoring and diversionary activities.

This Act places a duty on education institutions to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent Duty). We are committed to supporting vulnerable learners through our policies and procedures and recognise that this can support our contribution to the Prevent duty. Training is available to for everyone as part of their induction, and it is revisited during the academic year. We actively promote awareness amongst the learners, through tutorial and key themed cross college events throughout the year.

#### *Contact with external services*

Referral for any issue concerning potential radicalisation to extremism should be managed as any other safeguarding referral, which will then refer any concerning information to [prevent@lincs.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@lincs.pnn.police.uk) or call **01522 885350** or other relevant local authority area

#### **Teaching learners about safeguarding**

Everyone will teach learners about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through personal, social health and economic education (PSHE) and/or through sex and relationship education.

#### **Safer Recruitment**

Safer recruitment and selection procedures we have in place provide robust recruitment procedures which ensure that care is taken to protect young or vulnerable learners.

The procedures apply to everyone, and they are reviewed regularly to take account of following principles:

- The post or role will be clearly defined.
- The key selection criteria for the post or role will be identified.
- Vacancies will be advertised widely in such a way as to ensure a diversity of applicants.
- Requirement of documentary evidence of academic and vocational qualifications.
- Obtaining of professional and character references.
- Verification of previous employment history including the explanation of any gap.
- We reserve the right to conduct online searches as part of our due diligence during our recruitment process.

## PROCEDURES

### Dealing with disclosure of abuse and procedure for reporting concerns

Anyone may suspect that a learner is being abused or is at risk of significant harm. A learner may disclose to a member of the team that s/he is being abused. In these circumstances the following procedure should be followed:

#### *Significant concerns.*

Where someone has concerns about a learner but does not believe that they are being abused or are at risk of immediate harm, the team member should:

- Speak to the learner about the concerns
- Seek advice from the DSL or DDSL regarding registering the concern
- Log the concern under the relevant safeguarding threshold.

#### *Disclosure of Abuse*

If a disclosure is made or abuse is suspected, everyone should:

- Listen carefully and stay calm
- Question without pressure to be sure that what is being said is properly understood
- Reassure the individual concerned that s/he has done the right thing
- Explain to the individual who has disclosed that the information must be passed on but only to those who need to know about it. Say who will receive the information
- Note the main points carefully - what the individual said/did and the questions asked - The learners voice must be heard when case notes are completed.
- Make a note of the date, time and place.
- Immediately speak to the DSL or DDSL

Employees must not:

- Ask leading questions or put words into the mouth of the disclosing individual
- Investigate concerns/ allegations
- Promise secrecy – Everyone is aware of the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.

#### *Reporting to DSL and the safeguarding team*

Everyone should report concerns, suspicions or disclosures of abuse immediately to the relevant person. Everyone must notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and always within 24 hours of a serious disclosure or suspicion being raised. If the DSL is unavailable it should be reported to one of the DDSL's.

#### *Contact with external services*

The DSL/DDSL must report the matter to Children's Social Care/ Adult Services or the police by phone immediately, followed up by written confirmation or email within 48 hours. Where a request for service form or an early help assessment is completed and sent via email to Children's social care, we can expect a response via email within 48 hours. A written record of the date and time of the report must be made and the document should include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone contact must be confirmed in writing using the appropriate Local Authority form within 24 hours.

The designated lead(s) should note down the detail of the discussion about action to be taken to inform the parents/carers, depending on the circumstances.

### *Contact with the ESFA*

Where there is a safeguarding incident the ESFA want to be made aware when an institution is itself the subject of an investigation by the local authority or the police. In such circumstances, they require the Chair or Chief Executive (or in our equivalent Head of Education and Skills) of the organisation (or designated safeguarding lead) to raise a query using the online enquiry form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-fundingagency>

### **Procedure for managing allegations of abuse against employees**

The whole organisation is required to comply with the detailed Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Procedure for Managing Allegations against employees. These procedures apply to all education and skills teams, whether teaching, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers.

In rare instances, people who work in education institutions have been found responsible for child abuse. Because of their frequent contact with children and young people, they may have allegations of child abuse made against them. We recognise that an allegation of child abuse made against an employee may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and those investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

We recognise that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

### *Receiving an allegation*

Anyone who receives an allegation about a colleague should follow the guidelines for dealing with disclosure. This procedure is followed for all permanent, temporary and supply team members. The allegation should be reported immediately to the Head of People Services or DSL. The following procedure should be embedded into practice:

- Obtain written details of the allegation from the person who received it, that are signed and dated. The written details should be countersigned and dated.
- Record information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.



### *Initial Assessment by the designated person*

The Head of People Services should make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with the DSL and the relevant Local Authority's Children's Services Safeguarding Team as appropriate.

An allegation is information which indicates that a person who works with a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or young person.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or young person.
- Behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children and young people.

It is important that the Head of People Services does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation. If the assessment of the allegation is that it requires to be investigated, then an investigation will take place in accordance with our disciplinary policy.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be advised and kept fully informed of progress and outcome.

### *Enquiries and Investigations*

Child protection enquiries by Social Services or the police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the group. We may be able to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of our own procedures. The child protection agencies, including the police, have no power to direct how we are to act in a particular way however, we should assist the agencies with their enquiries.

We will instigate our own internal enquiries regardless of any formal police or social services investigations but will ensure that this will not prejudice the investigation. Any internal enquiries shall conform to the existing disciplinary procedures. If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example the police, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Head of People Services should normally be involved in, and contribute to, the interagency strategy discussions.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that we give every assistance with the agency's enquiries. He/she will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made. The Head of People Services or group DSL will consult with Social Services, the police or the Children's Integrated Services Safeguarding Team, particularly in relation to timing and content of the information to be provided, and shall:

- Inform the learner or parent/carer making the allegation that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- Ensure that the parents/carers of the learner making the allegation have been informed verbally and in writing that the allegation has been made and what the likely process will be.

- Inform the employee against whom the allegation was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- Inform the employee making the allegation that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- Inform the Head of Education and Skills, who will inform the Chief Executive and the Board Lead for Safeguarding of the allegation and the investigation.
- The Head of People Services shall keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegation.

### *Suspension*

Suspension should not be automatic. Our people policies and procedures must be followed to determine whether suspension is required.

Suspension may be considered at any stage of the investigation. It is a neutral, not a disciplinary, act. Consideration should be given to alternatives: eg paid leave of absence; agreement to refrain from attending work; change of, or withdrawal from specified duties.

Suspension should only occur for a good reason. For example:

- Where a learner is at risk.
- Where the allegations are potentially sufficiently serious to justify dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.
- Where necessary for the good and efficient conduct of the investigation. If suspension is being considered, this will be conducted in accordance with the existing disciplinary procedures.

### *The Disciplinary Investigation*

The disciplinary investigation will be conducted in accordance with the existing disciplinary procedures.

### *Allegations without Foundation*

False allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere. A record should be kept and consideration given to a referral to the Children's Integrated Services Safeguarding Team in order that other agencies may act upon the information. In consultation with the DSL and/or Head of Education and Skills, we shall:

- Inform the employee against whom the allegation is made orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or child protection action will be taken. Consideration should be given to offering counselling and support in order to rebuild the teams confidence.
- Inform the parents/carers of those involved that the allegation has been made and of the outcome.
- Where the allegation was made by a learner other than the alleged victim, consideration to be given to informing the parents/carers of that learner.
- Prepare a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken.
- In some circumstances, consider the broader disclosure of details of the outcome of the investigations, for example if the matter is of general importance, has become common knowledge or the subject of general gossip.

## *Records*

It is important that documents relating to an investigation are retained in a secure place, together with a written record of the outcome and, if disciplinary action is taken, details retained on the HR's personal and confidential file. Where the allegation is found to be without foundation, a record of the allegation, investigation and outcome should be retained.

If a team member is dismissed or resigns before the disciplinary process is completed, he/she should be informed about the group's statutory duty to notify the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## *Confidentiality*

We will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2011 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a learner from the same school or college (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions will apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State or the General Teaching Council for Wales publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation. The reporting restrictions will also cease to apply if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so or if a judge lifts restrictions in response to a request to do so.

## **4.0 How we will monitor this policy**

In addition to the monitoring outlined in the group policy, we will:

- Ensure the policy will be available publicly and parents will be made aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made
- Link with the local LSP (Formerly LSCB) to make sure everyone is aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding
- Ensure that should learners leave us, if appropriate, their child protection file will be copied for any new school or college as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main learner file.

## **5.0 Procedures and other documents that link to this policy**

This policy has links to the following policies and procedures:

- Disciplinary Policy
- Learner Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Online safety policy and ICT Policy
- Behaviour and Exclusions Policy

## 6.0 Links to other policies, legislation and regulations

- The Education Act (2011) - requires local authorities and governing bodies of further education institutions to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. In addition, they should have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in considering what arrangements they may need to make.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 - sets out the safeguarding statutory responsibilities of schools and colleges, as well as good practice recommendations in relation to children. This covers the relevant legislation; the responsibilities of the Board of Directors; safer recruitment practice; recruitment and vetting checks; dealing with allegations of abuse or misconduct against staff; and also checklists, flowcharts and examples.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)- provides statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of agencies working together to safeguard children/young people. In addition, it sets out the framework for the formation of Local Safeguarding Partner's (formerly LSCB) and details the allegation management process. This includes providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. Access is allowed for children's social care from the local authority and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, for that authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment. Safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by the Local Safeguarding Partner's (LSP)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) - introduces a vetting and barring scheme to identify those who are permitted to work with children, young people and adults at risk. Implementation began in Autumn 2008. There will eventually be a single list for children and young people, and an aligned but separate list for adults, replacing the Protection of Children Act (PoCA) list, the Protection of Adults at risk (PoVA) list, List 99 and the Court Disqualification Order scheme. A remodelling review was undertaken following ministers' decision in June 2010. The review that was published in February 2011 and recommended merging the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) into a new non-departmental public body that could administer a proportionate central vetting service. The new scheme would retain the best features of the vetting and barring service, but would not require registration or monitoring, and would only cover those who have regular or close contact with vulnerable groups, defined as 'regulated activity' in legislation. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has been introduced to help employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.
- DfE Statutory Guidance (2014) - provides guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The guidance plays an important role in embedding this responsibility in the work of key agencies which have contact with children and young people.
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) Part 5 - Safeguarding vulnerable groups, criminal records etc covers the reduction in scope of the definition of regulated activity, new services provided by the DBS, and disregarding convictions and cautions for consensual gay sex.
- Mental Capacity Act (2005) - provides a way in which people who may need help to make decisions can get that help from someone who can be trusted to act in their

best interests. Mental Capacity under the Act means being able to make your own decisions. The Mental Capacity Act and its Code of Conduct contain a set of rules, procedures and guidance. The Act applies in full to those aged 18 or over, the entire Act except making Power of Attorney or Making a Will applies to 16 and 17 year olds. The Act only applies to those under 16 in very limited circumstances and these would have to be determined by a Court..

- **General Data Protection Regulation** This guidance has been updated to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018,

## 7.0 When this policy will be reviewed

In line with the group wide policy review – or sooner if need dictates.

## 8.0 Jargon Buster

### *Significant Harm*

The concept of significant harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention into family life in the best interests of the child or young person and gives local authorities a duty to make enquires as to whether to take action (Section 47, Children Act 1989). Our Safeguarding Policy promotes the welfare of a young person who is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. The Act also gives powers to the Police to take emergency action to protect a young person from significant harm.

### *Abuse*

“Abuse” relates to the mistreatment of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons and may consist of single or repeated acts. Incidents of abuse can be either to one person or more than one person at a time. Abuse and/or harmful behaviours can be either deliberate or the result of negligence, ignorance, lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Somebody may abuse or neglect an individual by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm.

Everyone should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another (KCSIE). Everyone should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the classroom.

Everyone, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence (KCSIE).

Everyone should be aware that abuse does happen and that where there are any concerns, no matter if they appear low level – they should be reported to the safeguarding team. Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

Within the context of this policy abuse and harmful behaviours are defined through the following main categories:

- **Physical:** this may involve hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, misuse of medication, inflicting inappropriate physical sanctions, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child,

young person or vulnerable adult including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing the individual ill health (DfE 2014, DoH 2000).

- Emotional/Psychological: this is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. This may involve the imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations resulting in fear, exploitation or corruption. This may also include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Threats of harm or abandonment; humiliation; blaming; intimidation; coercion; harassment; verbal abuse, bullying (including cyberbullying) and being prevented from receiving services or support are all forms of emotional abuse (DoH 2000). Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- Sexual: such as rape, sexual assault or sexual acts occurring through force or enticement and which a child, young person or vulnerable adult could not have consented to, or to which they were pressurised into consenting. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities such as involving the child, young person or vulnerable adult in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. (DoH 2000).
- Neglect or Acts of Omission: this includes the persistent failure to meet a child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psycho-social needs, and which are likely to result in a serious impairment of the individual's health or development. This may include failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or educational services and/or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs (DoH 2000).
- Financial or Material: this may include theft, fraud, and exploitation, pressure in connection with money or material possessions. This may also include loss of jewellery or personal property, loss of money from a wallet or purse (DoH 2000).
- Discriminatory: this may include abuse, bullying and harassment based on the individual's age, sex, disability, religion, race or sexual orientation (DoH 2000).
- Specific Issues and Further Information: specific advice should also be sought in relation to specific situations including forced marriage, the effects of domestic violence on young people, female genital mutilation, children and young people who sexually abuse or who are exploited and those affected by drug and alcohol abuse in families.
- Abuse of Trust: under the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over 18 to have a sexual relationship with a young person under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that young person, even if the relationship is consensual. This includes teaching and a range of support staff within educational establishments.
- Radicalisation: The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism (Prevent Strategy.Gov.uk).

- Online Abuse: any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing games online or using mobile phones (NSPCC 2015) The institution uses an appropriate filter and monitoring system in place, which both learners and employees cohorts are aware of. We have a whole group approach to online safety where learners and employees are regularly updated about processes in place. Where learners have been asked to work from home, they have been provided with advice and guidance around online safety. Refer to Online safety policy.
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. This can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online (KCSIE).
- Female Genital Mutilation: FGM is the total or partial removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons (NSPCC 2015). Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police (KCSIE).
- Honour Based Abuse : So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take (KCSIE).
- Domestic abuse: witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, Teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships (NSPCC 2015).
- Child trafficking: Is a type of abuse where children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold (NSPCC 2015)
- Harmful sexual behaviour: Children or young people develop sexual behaviours that harm themselves or other (NSPCC 2015).
- County Lines Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns (KCSIE).
- Child on child abuse - Children can abuse other children and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual

violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting (also known as Youth Produced Sexual Imagery) and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (KCSIE).

- Homelessness Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property (KCSIE).
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges  
Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children (KCSIE).
- Up skirting The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim (KCSIE).
- Serious Violence – everyone should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs (KCSIE).

## 9.0 Further information

### *Use of personal devices in relation to safeguarding*

In terms of our compliance with GDPR, we have legitimate interest in using a personal device to capture data as it enables us to evidence the work of our learners. If you are using a personal device to film/ take photos of learners, then you must adhere to the following points as they are paramount in ensuring the safeguarding of everyone. It is important to note that anyone found to be in breach of the requirements will face disciplinary action under failure to safeguard.

- Your device is password protected.
- Any data must be uploaded to the correct systems within seven days.
- All data on the personal device must be deleted.
- You must not share any photos / videos with learners or their parents/ carers/siblings from your personal device.
- You must not show the photos / videos to learners from your personal device.
- You must not upload any photos / videos to another personal device in your home or a memory stick.
- You must not upload any photos/ videos to your own social media sites.
- Where possible please use a group device.



## **Appendix One – Safeguarding Responsibilities within Education and Skills**

Additional to group wide responsible roles, within education and skills we have key roles with clear accountability:

**Group Board** – delegated to Enterprise Committee (a sub group of the board with overall responsibility for all enterprise services, including education and skills)

The Board is committed to ensuring that we:

- raise awareness of issues relating to safeguarding and promotes the welfare of all learners
- provide a safe environment for everyone, including children, young people and adults at risk
- identify those who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm and takes appropriate action to ensure they are kept safe
- have procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against team members and volunteers
- operates safe recruitment procedures
- designates a member of the team within education and skills with sufficient authority to take ownership of lead protection for safeguarding
- remedy any weaknesses and areas for improvement relating to safeguarding that are brought to their attention
- ensure all employees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated
- ensure that online safety is a central theme within safeguarding

All Board members are required to undertake safeguarding training at the point of induction to ensure they understand the importance of their strategic role as well as their legislative responsibilities.

### **Designated Lead from Enterprise Committee (Board-level responsible person)**

The designated person will be a member of the enterprise committee and is responsible for liaising with the Head of Education and Skills and the DSL for Education and Skills regarding safeguarding matters including:

- Ensuring that we have policies and procedures consistent with those of the Local Safeguarding Boards.
- Ensuring that a review of the Group and service area specific Safeguarding policy is carried out annually.
- Ensuring that the group is given an annual update on compliance to the policy. The update should include a report on training during the year.
- The designated lead is responsible for overseeing the liaison with external agencies in connection with any allegations with senior members of the team that also have lead responsibility. This will include providing information and ensure good communication between the parties but will not involve investigation of any kind.

The designated lead shall receive appropriate training in order to carry out these duties effectively.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** are those with lead responsibility across our sites for day-to-day management of safeguarding issues.

The DSL has responsibility to lead on raising awareness across Education and Skills about safeguarding, and to promote a safe and caring environment for learning. They have received the appropriate training as required by the Local Safeguarding Partner's and will ensure their knowledge on safeguarding issues remains current.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for;

- Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations
- Giving advice and support on matters relating to safeguarding
- Maintaining a proper record of any safeguarding referral, complaint or concern received
- Ensuring that parents/carers of children, young people and adults at risk are aware of our safeguarding policy
- Liaising with agencies as necessary
- Liaising with previous providers to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for them
- Ensuring there is liaison with employers and training organisations providing learner placements to ensure proper safeguarding arrangements are in place
- Ensuring that all teams receive training about safeguarding matters and our procedures
- Work as part of the safeguarding team, supporting each other, dealing with cases appropriate to their expertise and sharing knowledge, learning and best practice where possible
- Work with the safeguarding team to review cases quarterly, providing reports annually to enterprise committee
- Reporting any changes in procedure required to the Head of Education and Skills as soon as possible. In the absence of the DSL, a DDSL will carry out the responsibilities of the DSL. In the absence of both of these, the Operation Manager and/or Head of Education and Skills will carry out their responsibilities.
- Dealing with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate
- Knowing how to consult with a statutory safeguarding agency to test out any concerns
- Knowing how to make an appropriate referral to the appropriate statutory protection agency or the police
- Liaising with and supporting Social Workers and other agencies following any referral
- Having received training in safeguarding issues and inter-agency working, as required by the Local Safeguarding Board, and will receive refresher training at least every two years
- To follow up all referrals and disclosures made directly by learners or via sour people in accordance with the policy, the guidelines and procedures and, as appropriate, to the specific circumstances of the referral. This will involve:
  - Receiving information from, and offering advice to, our teams, volunteers, children and young people, adults at risk, parents and carers, employers about concerns relating to vulnerable adult or child protection issues
  - Assessing this information promptly, taking action and referring on to support teams/DSL as appropriate


- Maintaining secure records of this information and ensuring these are stored in group safeguarding files.
- To be trained in safeguarding as required by the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP formerly LSCB) and receive regular refresher training
- To maintain confidentiality regarding safeguarding cases at all times Referrals to external support agencies will only be made by members of the designated safeguarding team

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is responsible for:

- Working with the DSL on matters of safeguarding
- Being available to provide advice and support on issues relating to safeguarding, policy, procedures and record keeping
- Being available to listen to children, young people and vulnerable adults studying at any site
- Receiving information from any team members, volunteers, children, parents and/or carers who have safeguarding concerns and record it.
- Being able to assess information promptly and carefully, clarifying and obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate.
- Recording rigorous reports and/or statements.
- When required, will act on behalf of the DSL.

Everyone will receive training to familiarise them with safeguarding issues and our policy and procedures, with refresher training at least every two years. All E&S teams receive a safeguarding induction as part of their induction process before commencing their post. This also covers online safety and appropriate use of IT. Everyone who comes into contact with children are to read Part 1 and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education along with any updates that take place thereafter.

All E&S teams should know what to do if a child tells them he or she is being abused or neglected. For those that do not have direct contact with children and young people, can now read the condensed version of KCSIE part 1 Annex A.

  
 Greg Bacon (Mar 1, 2024 17:06 GMT)

Greg Bacon

01/03/2024