****

**Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

**Original: August 2022**

**Updated: January 2024**

**Reviewed Annually**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Policy agreed by staff | September 2024 |
| Frequency of review | Annually |
| Allocated group/Person to review | Catherine WiddringtonLaura Frain |
| Headteachers  | Catherine Widdrington |
| Laura Frain |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead | Tracy Chapman-Ward |

**Introduction**

This policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC. Everyone working in or for our provision service shares an objective to help keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by contributing to:

* providing a safe environment
* identifying individuals who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our provision

This policy is available on the website and all staff are required to read it and confirm they have done so in writing.

**Tree of Life commitment**

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services is committed to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of all of its service users. Each individual's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some individuals and particularly those with SEN and disabilities may be especially vulnerable to abuse. We recognise that individuals who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all of our service users and ensure the wellbeing of individuals is at the forefront of all action taken.

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC aims to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all children and adults feel safe, secure and valued and know they will be listened to and taken seriously. Our provision is committed to the principles outlined in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023’ and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and implements policies, practices and procedures that promote safeguarding and the emotional and physical wellbeing of children, young people and staff.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults goes beyond implementing basic protection procedures. It is an integral part of all activities, functions, culture and ethos of Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC. The provision has a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2024.

Safeguarding and working together to safeguard children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

* Protecting individuals from maltreatment
* Preventing impairment of an individual's mental and physical health or development
* Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* Taking action to enable all individuals have the best outcomes

THE PROVISION WILL ALWAYS ACT IN LINE WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Under the Education Act 2002 schools and educational provisions have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils and, in accordance with statutory guidance set out in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023’ and ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024’ (KCSIE 2024).

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC will work in partnership with other organisations where appropriate to identify any concerns about child welfare and take action to address them. All staff at Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC are required to read Part 1 of the KCSIE 2024 guidance and sign to say that they have done so. Safeguarding training will be provided for all staff with regular updates provided as appropriate.

Tracy Chapman-Ward, or in her absence Catherine Widdrington, has the ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children, young people and vulnerable adults that use our provision.

The provision recognises that Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the provision and/or can occur between children outside the provision. All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) will consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. The provision will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process to Children’s Social Care and Adult Social Care.

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC will be aware of and take account of the latest advice and guidance provided to help address specific vulnerabilities and forms of exploitation as described in Part 1 KCSIE 2024 e.g. CSE, Grooming, Radicalisation and Extremism, Forced Marriage, Child-on-Child Abuse, so-called Honour -based Violence. All staff have up-to-date training on each of these.

All individuals will know that there are adults in the provision who they can approach in confidence if they are in difficulty or feeling worried and that their concerns will be taken seriously and treated with respect. All staff will be prepared to identify those who may benefit from “Early Help” which means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life. Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC will promote quick referrals and implement more efficient services to families in the first instance as a preventative measure.

**Keeping Records**

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC will keep and maintain up to date information on all individuals accessing the provisions facilities, including where and with whom the individual is living, attainment, attendance, referrals to and support from other agencies.

All instances of a safeguarding nature will be recorded by staff on the safeguarding paper-based form, inclusive of all Alternative Provisions’ substantial educators safeguarding checks. This will be passed onto the management team, who will decide on any follow up action required.

**Taking action to ensure individuals are safe**

All staff follow the LEA Safeguarding Partners Child Protection Procedures which are consistent with ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023’ and ‘What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, neglected or exploited’.

It is not the responsibility of the provision staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of a child, will be recorded and discussed with the designated senior person with responsibility for safeguarding (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated person) prior to any discussion with parents/careers.

1. Staff must immediately report:

* any suspicion that an individual has witnessed or is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play or domestic abuse purposes
* any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
* any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that an individual may have suffered harm (e.g. significant changes in behaviour, worrying drawings or play)
* any concerns that an individual may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
* any concerns that an individual is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
* any significant changes in an individuals’ presentation, including non-attendance
* any hint or disclosure of abuse or neglect received from the individual, or from any other person, including disclosures of abuse or neglect perpetrated by adults outside of the family or by others
* any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. staff in school or person living in a household with children present) including inappropriate behaviour e.g. inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images
* any concerns relating to peer abuse
* any concerns relating to youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)
* any concerns relating to an individuals engagement with extremist groups or ideologies
* any concerns regarding upskirting
* an unexplained delay in seeking treatment that is needed
* a child behaving in a way that is inappropriate to his/ her age and stage of development
* reluctance to give information or failure to discuss previously known injuries
* any concerns relating to inappropriate behaviour towards any gender curious individuals
* any concerns relating to exploitation or radicalisation

2. Responding to Disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from the individual, parents/carers or other members of the public. Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity. Staff have roles, training and support to ensure pupils with autism are able to discuss issues and concerns with staff in safety and with confidence.

Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated person and make a detailed record. Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the designated person in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Staff will:

* listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a individual may be at risk of harm
* give the individual full attention and make sure body language is open and encouraging
* try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of staff
* clarify the information
* try to keep questions to a minimum and of an ‘open’ nature e.g. ‘Can you tell me what happened?’ rather than ‘Did x hit you?’
* try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
* not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the individual
* explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person
* reassure and support the person as far as possible
* explain that only those who ‘need to know’ will be told
* explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate
* record the incident on the safeguarding paper form
* complete a safeguarding concern form

3. Action by the Designated Senior Person- Tracy Chapman-Ward (or Catherine Widdrington in her absence) Following any information raising concern, the senior designated person will consider:

* any urgent medical needs
* making an enquiry to the MASH team to find out if the individual is subject to a Protection Plan by ringing – 0300 303 0440
* discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
* consulting with appropriate persons e.g. ESW service, Social Care
* the child‘s wishes

Then decide:

* wherever possible, to talk to parents/carers, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk
* whether to make a child protection referral to the Children Assessment Team because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken ***immediately***

OR

* not to make a referral at this stage
* if further monitoring is necessary
* if it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (e.g. CAF) and/or make a referral for other services

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to social care will be accompanied by a standard referral/disclosure form.

Note: Any member of staff may make a referral to or obtain advice from Social Care in the absence of DSL’s

4. Action following a child protection referral

It is the responsibility of all staff to safeguard.

It is the role of the DSL (or appropriately trained Deputy DSL.) to attend multi-agency meetings and provide reports for these. Other staff, however, may be asked to contribute.

The designated senior person or other appropriate member of staff will:

* make regular contact with the Social worker involved to stay informed
* provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent conferences
* if the child or children are placed on the Child Protection Register, contribute to the Child Protection Plan and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Child Protection Conferences
* where possible, share all reports with parents/carers prior to meetings
* where in disagreement with a decision made e.g. not to apply Child Protection Procedures or not to convene a Child Protection Conference, discuss this with the Safeguarding Officer for Learning or the Manager of the Child Protection and Review Unit
* where an individual on a protection register moves from the school or goes missing, immediately inform the key worker in Social Care

5. Recording and monitoring

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable using the Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC disclosure form and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded verbatim where possible and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All Child Protection documents will be retained in a ‘Child Protection’ file, separate from the child’s main file. This will be locked away and only accessible to the directors. These records will be copied and transferred to any school or setting the child moves to, clearly marked ‘Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Person Child Protection.’ This should be shared securely, and within 15 days of confirmation that the individual will be registered at another school. If the child goes missing from education or is removed from roll to be educated at home, then any Child Protection file should be copied and the copy sent to the Education Social Work Service. Original copies will be retained until the child’s 25th birthday. After that ,records should be destroyed.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The DSL’s, through consultation with the Director will ensure that:

* The policies and procedures adopted by the Management team to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are fully implemented and followed by all staff including volunteers.
* Safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers is practised.
* Designated Senior Members of staff for child protection are identified and receive appropriate on-going regular training.
* Sufficient time and resources are made available to enable the designated member of staff to discharge their responsibilities, including attending inter-agency meetings, contributing to the assessment of children and young people, supporting colleagues and delivering training as appropriate.
* All staff and volunteers receive appropriate training which is regularly updated.
* All temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school’s safeguarding policy and arrangements including Part 1 KCSIE 2024.
* All staff and volunteers feel safe about raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to the safeguarding and welfare of the individual such concerns will be addressed sensitively and effectively.
* Parents/carers are aware of and have an understanding of the school’s responsibilities to promote the safety and welfare of its pupils by making its obligations clear.
* Ensure that the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is available on request.
* Ensure that the provision is pro-active and co-operates with appropriate agencies and risk based approaches to ensure young people and venerable adults are safeguarded against any potential grooming activities which may attempt to draw them into harmful activities eg CSE and radicalisation and extremism.

The Designated Person will:

* Act as the first point of contact with regards to all safeguarding matters.
* Attend up-dated training every two years.
* Provide relevant information to the LA on how the provision carries out its safeguarding duties.
* Provide support and training for staff and volunteers.
* Ensure that the provisions actions are in line with the OSP Inter-Agency Procedures.
* Support staff to make effective referrals to the Children and Families Services and any other agencies where there are concerns about the welfare
* Keep copies of all referrals to Children and Families Services and any other agencies related to safeguarding
* Ensure that all staff and volunteers receive information on safeguarding policies and procedures from the point of induction.
* Ensure that any staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding receive the appropriate training to undertake this role.
* Manage and keep secure the provision’s safeguarding records.
* Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand and are aware of the provisions reporting and recording procedures and are clear about what to do if they have a concern about a child or an adult; including that they pass all concerns on to the DSPs central record, for consideration of patterns and themes
* Liaise with the proprietors about any safeguarding issues.
* Ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is regularly reviewed and up-dated.
* Keep up to date with changes in local policy and procedures and are aware of any guidance issued by the DfE concerning Safeguarding.
* Send a pupil’s child protection or safeguarding file separately from the main file to a new establishment if a pupil leaves the provision. Keep a copy of the file.

**Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff**

The provision’s recruitment and selection policies and processes adhere to the DfE guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.” Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of recruitment checks. When outside individuals or organisations use Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC premises, they will follow safeguarding policies and procedures including informing the Local Authority Designated Officer LADO. See Safer Recruitment Policy for more detail.

**Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

When sharing confidential information about a member of staff or pupil, the provision has regard to the data protection principles, which allow them to share personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018, and the GDPR provided that there is a lawful basis to process any personal information required and where relevant, the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Act 2011 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The provision notes that Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), paras 94-97;

“The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Act (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they child safe and secure. “Staff ensure that confidentiality protocols are followed and information is shared appropriately. All staff will ensure that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development and must operate with the best interests of the child.” “Policies must be transparent, clear and easy to understand for all staff, pupils, students, parents and carers. Systems should be in place and well promoted so children can easily report any form of abuse and neglect knowing they will be treated seriously and where they can safely give their views and feedback.” All staff and volunteers must understand that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff and volunteers must be clear with children that they cannot promise to keep secrets. Information sharing is paramount in regards to children and the professionals that surround them. Therefore, any information that is received about a child must be shared with other services that also work with them so a whole picture of the individual is clear and nothing is missed.

**Training for Staff and Volunteers**

All staff should be made aware of the provisions safeguarding systems as part of their induction.

All staff should receive appropriate safeguarding training which includes the following:

* basic safeguarding information about the school’s policies and procedures
* signs and symptoms of abuse, (emotional and physical) neglect and exploitation
* indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation
* training in E Safety

In accordance with “Keeping children safe in education 2024” all staff will receive training at induction. The Designated Person for Safeguarding (Tracy Chapman-Ward) will receive refresher training every two years as well as annual updates. All staff will receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated. All staff will be supported to recognise warning signs and symptoms in relation to specific safeguarding issues and will receive training or briefings on for example, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control, Child Sexual Exploitation, Grooming, Child-on-Child Abuse, Trafficking, Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation, So Called-Honour violence and Fabricated or Induced Illness, as listed in Annex A “KCSIE 2024.”

**Informing Parents/ Carers**

Our approach to working with parents/carers is one of transparency and honesty and our responsibility is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the children in our care. We aim to do this in partnership with our parents/carers. In most cases parents and carers will be informed when concerns are raised about the safety and welfare of the individual. Parents and carers should be given the opportunity to address any concerns raised.

Parents and carers will usually be informed if a referral is to be made to the Children’s Social Care Service or any other agency. Parents/carers will not be informed if it is believed that by doing so would put the child at risk. In such cases the Designated Persons will seek advice from Social Care.

**Different forms of abuse Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control**

The provision is aware that children and young people’s development, as well as their social and emotional resilience, is affected by many factors including exposure to domestic abuse within the family situation and is a safeguarding issue.

Children and young people react to domestic abuse in similar ways to other types of abuse and trauma.

Information about domestic abuse and coercive control and its effect upon children and young people will be incorporated into staff Safeguarding and Child Protection training and briefings and the provision’s Safeguarding and Child Protection’s Policies and Procedures will be used to protect children and young people exposed to, and at risk from, domestic abuse. This also includes children that have witnessed abuse of another individual.

Any child, young person or vulnerable adult thought to be at immediate risk will be reported without delay to the police service as a 999 emergency and the OSP will be contacted as soon as possible.

**Forced Marriage**

Forced Marriage became a criminal offence in June 2014. It is a form of child, adult and domestic abuse and, in line with statutory guidance, is treated as such by this provision. The provision is sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles and child-rearing patterns that vary across different racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Abuse and Child abuse cannot be condoned for religious or cultural reasons. Information about Forced Marriage will be incorporated into staff Safeguarding and Child Protection training and briefings and the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies will be used to protect a victim or potential victim of forced marriage.

If a case of forced marriage is suspected it will be viewed as a safeguarding concern, parents and carers will not be approached or involved about a referral to any other agencies.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is an illegal in the United Kingdom and is a violation of human rights of girls and women. In 2008, the World Health Assembly passed resolution WHA61.16, on the elimination of FGM, emphasising the need for concerted action in all sectors. Information on FGM will be incorporated into staff Safeguarding and Child Protection training and briefings.

**Preventing Radicalisation and Violent Extremism**

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC values the fundamental rights of freedom of speech, expression of beliefs and ideology and tolerance of others which are the core values of our democratic society. However, all rights come with responsibilities and free speech or beliefs designed to manipulate the vulnerable or which advocate harm or hatred towards others will not be tolerated. Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC seeks to protect its service users and staff from all messages and forms of violent extremism and ideologies including those linked to, but not restricted, to the following: Far Right/Neo Nazi, White Supremacist ideology, extremist Islamic ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups and extremist Animal Rights groups.

In order to fulfil the Prevent duty, it is essential that staff are able to identify individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting individuals from the risk of radicalisation is seen as part of the provisions’ wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting individuals from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences. Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC ensures that robust procedures are in place to protect individuals from radicalisation and Extremism and are clear that exploitation and radicalisation will be viewed as a safeguarding concern and will be referred to the appropriate safeguarding agencies. Staff are also trained to ensure this is upheld.

**E-Safety**

The internet is an essential element in 21st century life for education, business and social interaction and Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services has a duty to provide children and young people with quality access as part of their learning experience. All staff will undergo training in E-Safety on an annual basis. It is the duty of Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC to ensure that filtering and monitoring legislation is adhered to and that the designated Safeguard Lead oversees reports, concerns and checks to filtering and monitoring systems. The DSL and directors will work with the IT provider to procure systems, identify risks and carry out reviews and checks. This should be reviewed annually and part of the filtering and monitoring review process, as stated in “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023”.

Filtering and Monitoring needs to take into consideration;

* the risk profile of your pupils, including their age range, pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND), pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
* what your filtering system currently blocks or allows and why
* any outside safeguarding influences, such as county lines
* any relevant safeguarding reports
* the digital resilience of your pupils
* teaching requirements, for example, your RHSE and PSHE curriculum
* the specific use of your chosen technologies, including Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)
* what related safeguarding or technology policies you have in place
* what checks are currently taking place and how resulting actions are handled

The filtering and monitoring review will inform;

* related safeguarding or technology policies and procedures
* roles and responsibilities
* training of staff
* curriculum and learning opportunities
* how often and what is checked
* monitoring strategies

**Child on Child Abuse**

Child-on-Child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others. All staff will be made aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence, sexual assaults and sexting. Child-on-Child abuse can be motivated by perceived difference e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences. Child-on-Child abuse can result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim, (vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm). Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of all staff. Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse, educational underachievement and/or involved in crime.

**Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC does not tolerate any forms of bullying**, including that of Child-on-Child abuse. All allegations of Child-on-Child abuse will be investigated and dealt with accordingly. Pupils are able to report all forms of bullying by talking to any member of staff.

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC understands the importance of explaining to individuals that the law is in place to protect, rather than criminalise them. It is important to understand the intra-familial harms and the support necessary for siblings following incidents.

**Cyberbullying and Sexting**

This happens ‘online’ through information technology with a widespread audience and devices to communicate through. This form of bullying can occur at any time in or outside of school or college but should be assessed by staff if it involves an individual. Information on cyberbullying and sexting will be incorporated into staff Safeguarding and Child Protection training and briefings.

**Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children**

The provision recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers, that this can manifest itself in many ways and may reflect gender issues. Where there are concerns or allegations of peer abuse, the procedures and guidance in this policy will be followed, in the same way as if the matter was in respect of abuse by an adult.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment involving children at the school is a form of child on child abuse. Sexual violence involves the criminal sexual offences defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Sexual Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and can include online behaviour. Neither is acceptable and will not be tolerated by the school.

**‘Upskirting’**

‘Upskirting’ is also recognised as a form of Child-on-Child abuse and typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.’ It is a criminal offence and may also constitute sexual harassment. Staff becoming aware of incidents of Child-on-Child abuse must follow the normal safeguarding procedures

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC take all such reports seriously and they will receive the same high standard of care that any other safeguarding concern receives. A multi-agency approach will be undertaken when responding to all such complaints; however the school will always take immediate action to protect individuals despite the actions of any other agency. These actions may include an immediate risk assessment in respect of the needs of the victim and will address any risks identified in respect of an alleged perpetrator of sexual violence or sexual harassment to ensure children are protected from harm. Any risk assessment will be fluid and may change to reflect any developments during the management of the case.

All such reports will be managed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. There are a number of options the school may consider in respect of the management of a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment and each case will receive an appropriate bespoke response once all the facts are known. Irrespective of any potential criminal outcome, the provision has a duty to safeguarding all and may deal with any such report on a balance of probability basis when considering the outcomes for the individual involved.

Concerns or allegations of all forms of peer abuse must be reported to the DSL, who will have regard to the OSP child protection guidance and procedures and make referrals in respect of both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate. Groups at particular risk include girls, students who identify as LGBT+, or are perceived by peers to be LGBT+, and pupils with SEND.

The guidance is clear that victims and alleged perpetrators can be kept apart in classrooms and other shared spaces, and that consideration should be given about travel to and from school. The emphasis should be on ensuring that the victim can continue their normal routines. Schools can consider the conduct of the alleged perpetrator as part of their behaviour policy on the 'balance of probabilities' and apply appropriate and proportional consequences.

It is important that schools record incidents across the whole spectrum of sexual violence and sexual harassment, so that they can understand the scale of the problem in their own schools and make appropriate plans to reduce it.

Further information on the following safeguarding areas can be found on the www.gov.uk website:

* Bullying/ Child-on-Child abuse including cyberbullying and sexting
* Children missing education
* Children missing from home or care
* Domestic violence
* Coercive control
* Drugs
* Fabricated or induced illness Faith abuse
* Forced marriage
* Gangs and youth violence
* Gender-based violence/ (FGM) / violence against women and girls (VAWG)
* Hate crimes
* Mental health
* Online Safety
* Missing children and adults
* Private fostering
* Relationship abuse
* Trafficking

**Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

These can include:

* assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration;
* being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
* the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
* communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC leads and directors ensure that all staff have extensive knowledge of each pupil and their autism presentations as well as excellent relationships with pupils. This helps staff to be able to recognise signs of abuse or neglect in pupils.

**Allegations regarding person(s) working in or on behalf of school (including**

**volunteers)**

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the school, that he or she has:

a. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child

b. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or

c. Has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

We will apply the same principles as in the rest of this document and we will always follow the LA Safegaurding Partners procedures. Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be retained securely in staff files. Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

Initial Action

* The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the DSL and make a record.
* In the event that an allegation is made against the DSL the matter will be reported to the DDSL who will proceed as the DSL
* In the event that an allegation is made against both the DSL and the DDSL, the matter will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer.
* The DSL will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical needs
* The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children
* The DSL may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation,
* No person will be interviewed at this stage
* The DSL will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
* (See Contacts Appendix) in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by school or if there needs to be a referral to social care and/or the police for investigation
* Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of pupils, parents and staff
* The DSL will inform the proprietor of any allegation.

CONTACTS

Safeguarding Partners (Children)- Lancashire (MASH): 0300 123 6720

Local Authority Designated Officer : (LADO) 0300 303 0350

EDUCATION

Children Missing Education: (Pupil Tracking Team): 020 7332 3621

Emergency out of hours: 020 8356 2710

cme@manchester.gov.uk

SOCIAL CARE

Duty and Assessment Team (Duty Social Workers) 0300 303 0440

Children With Disabilities: 01706 925900

Emergency Duty Team Social Care (Out of Hours): 0300 303 8875

ehash@rochdale.gov.uk

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE:

Child Protection Units: 0161 8566137 /135 OR 0161 8563707

The NSPCC whistle-blowing helpline number: 0800 0280285

**Definitions**

As in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday. The following definitions are from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023 and NSPCC Website. Harm is the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health and development of the child. Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person is also a form of harm. Harm can be determined as significant by comparing a child’s health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child. Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; Health includes physical and mental health; Ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

Local authorities have a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Abuse and Neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child, or through their actions, causes them to be unwell.

There are many ways to look for signs of physical abuse, but mainly they may show out of character behaviour and have unexplained marks or bruises in unusual places on their bodies.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. There are two types of sexual abuse, Contact and Non-Contact.

The signs a young person may show if they are being sexually abused are changes in their emotional and behavioural patterns and physical signs.

**Statutory definition of Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child sexual exploitation is a very complex form of abuse and it can be hard for the young person to acknowledge they are being exploited, or that they are being abused at all.

Emotional Abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mis-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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 serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Neglect is where the child is not given adequate shelter, food, clothing or supervision and is not given the correct medical care or treatment and from this is at risk.

Types of neglect are;

* Physical
* Educational
* Emotional
* Medical

Children and young people suffering from neglect might have;

* Poor appearance and hygiene
* Health and development problems
* Housing and family issues
* Show changes in behaviours