

Professional Boundaries/Protection from Abuse Policy

1. Purpose

Protection from Abuse Policy

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The purpose of this policy is to safeguard all children and young people attending our provision from all forms of abuse and neglect. We are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and respectful environment where abuse is never tolerated, and concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff (permanent, temporary, and agency).
- Volunteers, governors/trustees, contractors, and placement students.
- Any individual or organisation acting on behalf of the provision.

It covers all forms of abuse, including:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Exploitation (including criminal or sexual exploitation, trafficking, and online harm)

3. Principles

- **Child-centred:** The welfare and voice of the child are paramount.
- **Zero tolerance:** Abuse of any form will never be tolerated or excused.

- **Preventive approach:** We will take proactive steps to minimise risks and educate children about safety.
- **Accountability:** All staff share responsibility for recognising, responding, and reporting concerns.
- **Partnership:** We will work closely with children, families, local safeguarding partners, and external agencies.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **All staff and volunteers** must understand this policy, recognise the signs of abuse, and take appropriate action.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** has lead responsibility for child protection, ensuring concerns are managed in line with statutory guidance.
- **Managers** are responsible for safe recruitment, staff training, supervision, and monitoring practice.
- **Governors/trustees** oversee safeguarding arrangements and ensure compliance with the law and CQAF.

5. Safe Recruitment and Training

- Safer recruitment procedures will be followed, including DBS checks, references, and safeguarding questions at interview.
- All staff will receive safeguarding training at induction and regular updates thereafter, including recognising abuse and maintaining professional boundaries.
- Volunteers and contractors will receive proportionate safeguarding guidance before starting work.

6. Preventing Abuse in Practice

- Promote a safe environment where children feel able to speak up.
- Establish clear professional boundaries (see Professional Boundaries Policy).
- Ensure supervision and visibility in all areas where staff and children interact.

- Provide education and awareness to children about their rights, consent, and personal safety.

7. Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Staff must remain vigilant to signs of abuse, which may include:

- Unexplained injuries or inconsistent explanations.
- Changes in behaviour, mood, or performance.
- Fear of certain individuals or reluctance to go home.
- Signs of neglect, such as poor hygiene or lack of medical care.
- Risk indicators of exploitation, such as unexplained gifts or missing episodes.

Procedure if a child discloses or abuse is suspected:

1. Listen carefully, reassure the child, and avoid making promises of confidentiality.
2. Record the concern factually and accurately as soon as possible.
3. Report immediately to the DSL (or deputy DSL).
4. DSL will assess and, if necessary, refer to Children's Social Care, the police, or LADO.

8. Protection from Abuse for Staff

- Staff will be protected from false or malicious allegations through clear procedures, supervision, and a supportive culture.
- Allegations against staff will be managed in line with statutory guidance and referred to the LADO as appropriate.
- Whistleblowing procedures are in place to allow staff to report unsafe or abusive practices without fear of reprisal. **9. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping**
- All safeguarding records will be kept securely and shared only with those who need to know.
- Information will be shared with statutory agencies where necessary to protect children.

10. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or learning from practice.
- Safeguarding audits, staff feedback, and case reviews will inform improvements.