



**THE COMPLETE
EDUCATION SOLUTION**

CREATING UNIQUE JOURNEYS FOR LIFE AND LEARNING

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures

North-West London Independent School

Approved by TCES Operational Board on
behalf of Thomas Keaney, CEO and Schools' Proprietor

Date of next formal review, September 2024

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Part One: Safeguarding

Background

This 'Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults' policy embodies the philosophy and ethos of the TCES Group, TCES North-West London and the principles of *Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023* statutory guidance. The safety and protection of children and young people educated and cared for by TCES are always, of paramount importance.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable young adults and promoting their wellbeing must run through the company like the lettering through a stick of rock. It is an attitude of mind, a belief system and a way of thinking that holds the wellbeing of our pupils at the forefront of every action, with their safety and protection at all times of paramount importance. Resolutely keeping in mind, the twin goals of safeguarding and the promotion of wellbeing informs and shapes our ways of working and will often help to resolve the many conflicts and dilemmas that can occur.

Policies and systems such as safer recruitment, behaviour management, child protection and whistleblowing procedures arise out of our belief system and are used to promote and sustain it. They are not an end in themselves but are essential tools and need to be kept 'live' to support the culture and to help maintain a commitment to best practice and legal requirements. They help clarify the actions we must take in some defined circumstances and may be useful reminders in areas where we have become hazy or are uncertain of what is expected of us. Ultimately, it is our belief that a commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and promoting their wellbeing will work to equal the safety and wellbeing of all staff members and other adults whose aim is to promote good education outcomes and future life experiences for young people.

We hope that all who share our commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and promoting their wellbeing, will find their own lives enriched by the experience. Your contributions make a significant difference in shaping a safer and brighter future for those who depend on us.

Thomas Keaney
CEO & Schools' Proprietor
TCES Group

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Safeguarding, Senior Management Team, and the School Support Partnership (School Headteacher and SLT members) and is signed off accordingly by the School Proprietor (please see – [The TCES Group Policy Sign off](#))

The Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy is available in hard copy on request and on the school web site.

Policy Legislation

The policy is based on the DfE statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (June 2023) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- [Part 3 of the schedule to the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [The Children Act 1989 \(and 2004 amendment\)](#), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- ['Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation - procedural information', Home Office \(October 2015\)](#)
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#)
- [Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers', DfE \(2015\)](#)
- [The Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2009 and Childcare Act 2006](#)
- [The Childcare \(Disqualification\) and Childcare \(Early Years Provision Free of Charge\) \(Extended Entitlement\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(Dec 2017\)](#)
- [Children Missing Education 2018](#)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017](#)
- [Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' \(February 2022\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused', DfE \(March 2015\)](#)
- [Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services \(July 2018\)](#)
- [Drugs: Advice for Schools](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [The London Child Protection Procedures](#) (as signed up to by Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)).
- [Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership \(NSCP\) local procedures.](#)

Definitions

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Abuse is often categorised in to three types of harm; physical, sexual or emotional. Further definitions can be found within [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#).

Neglect is a form of abuse and 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. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which 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.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may 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 serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can often be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

The Policy

It is the policy of TCES North-West London to create and maintain a culture of curiosity and vigilance in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and an active commitment to the promotion of their wellbeing. This is promoted through the maintenance of robust and rigorous recruitment and working practices, education, training and learning modules, child protection systems and multi-agency working.

It is therefore the responsibility of all staff to play an active role in safeguarding. All staff must actively work to ensure children and vulnerable adults are protected from possible harm. They must provide a caring, positive, safe, and stimulating environment that helps to promote young people's social, physical, emotional, and moral development as an integral part of their educational progress.

The aims of this safeguarding policy are:

- To support children's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To raise staff awareness of their own personal and professional responsibilities in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To contribute to a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm and to develop and implement a structured procedure which will be followed in all cases of suspected abuse.
- To promote good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with others, especially parents/carers, the referring authority, the Police, Children's Social Services, and other partnership agencies.
- To ensure that all adults who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability and to maintain effective supervision where it is required.
- To uphold the ethos of safeguarding children and promoting their wellbeing and to work within the framework of the overall company policy.

Procedures

Our procedures for safeguarding children are in line with current DfE statutory guidance, the London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership local safeguarding arrangements.

We will ensure that:

- We have designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and their deputies who undertake regular training in child protection and are available to staff, pupils, and external agencies. This training takes place more regularly than the recommended two years.
- All staff including DSL's will be updated annually on any additional guidance issued on safeguarding to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children and vulnerable adults effectively.
- All members of staff will be appropriately updated, , trained, and supported in implementing this safeguarding policy as well as the requirements of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures.
- All members of staff are supported to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
- All members of staff know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse.

- All parents/carers are made aware of staff responsibilities regarding child protection procedures.
- Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated.
- All staff are fully vetted according to our safer recruitment procedures before commencing work with children.
- All new members of staff will be given a copy of this Safeguarding policy and procedures as well as Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 as part of their induction. They will all be required to read and sign to confirm they understand these documents and their responsibilities contained therein.

Supporting Children

- We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses' violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- We recognise that a child in these circumstances may feel helpless and humiliated and may feel self-blame.
- We recognise that our education environment may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- We will support all children by:
 - Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying of any nature.
 - Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment.
 - Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children. Notifying Children's Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
 - Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns and who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to their new school or other education provision.

NOTE: see associated policies and procedures

Supporting Staff

- TCES recognise that staff who become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to seek further support where needed, in consultation with The People Team.
- We offer an Employee Assistance Programme that all staff can access, which offers free, confidential advice and assistance including counselling.

NOTE: for further information please refer to the TCES Staff Handbook and 'Policies and Procedures on Child Protection'

Prevention of harm

- We recognise that we can play a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children and vulnerable adults by providing them with good lines of communication with trusted adults and an ethos of safeguarding and protection as outlined in the [Munro review, 2011](#).
- We will therefore:
 - Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
 - Ensure that all children know there are adults whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
 - Include curriculum opportunities in PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help should they feel at risk/threatened or under unwelcome pressure.
 - Limit their exposure to online harms through robust filtering and monitoring systems that block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.

NOTE: see associated policies and guidance including 'Listening to Children'

Confidentiality

- TCES North West London recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential.
- The DSL or deputy DSL will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- We have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children.
- We cannot and must not promise a child that we will keep secrets.

NOTE: for further detail see TCES Group e-Safety/Acceptable Use/ICT & General Data Protection Regulation Policies

Health and Safety

- The health, safety and welfare of children are central to all educational provision and include action taken to promote good attendance, to manage behaviour and tackle bullying including harmful sexual behaviour and prejudice based bullying i.e., racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of harassment, and to provide effective personal, social, cultural and health education (PSHE), linked closely to the principles of 'Every Child Matters' and the 'Healthy Schools' initiative.
- TCES Health & Safety policy, set out separately, reflects the consideration we give to the safeguarding of our children both within the education setting and outside, to include 1 to 1 working, work experience placements and educational visits.
- Risk Assessments including any risks specific to individual children are completed and in place prior to any off-site activities or programmes in line with our TCES Off-Site Provision Policy.
- TCES North-West London has a clear administration of medication policy and procedure which should be read, understood, and adhered to. Any staff member administering medication must be suitably competent to do so.

NOTE: for further detail, please refer to associated policies

Anti-Bullying

- Our policy on anti-bullying is set out separately and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying including, prejudice-based bullying and homophobic or transphobic bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

NOTE: for further detail, please refer to the TCES policy on 'Anti-Bullying'

Racist Incidents

- Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

NOTE: for further detail, please refer to the TCES policy on 'Diversity and Equal Opportunities'

Physical Intervention

- Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in TCES Behaviour policy. It acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to the child, vulnerable adult, or another person. Any physical intervention which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

NOTE: for further detail, please refer to the TCES policy on 'Behaviour'

Filtering and Monitoring

- Our policy on filtering and monitoring is set out in TCES Filtering and Monitoring policy. It acknowledges our responsibility to ensure all staff are trained and updated on the filtering and monitoring requirements and protect children from harmful and inappropriate online content by doing all that we reasonably can to limit children's exposure to risks from the school's IT system. This is achieved through implementation of filtering and monitoring systems that block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning; and monitor internet activity with safeguarding concerns addressed through the necessary channels outlined within this policy. The effectiveness of TCES filtering and monitoring systems is reviewed regularly.

NOTE: for further detail, please refer to the TCES policy on 'Filtering and Monitoring'

Roles and Responsibilities

At TCES North West London we are committed to safeguarding children and young people, and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and vulnerable adults to talk to us about anything that worries them.

Staff at TCES North West London are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues but may notice behaviours that may be of concern. Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that may also be a safeguarding concern, they should raise the issue by informing the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy in the usual way.

Staff recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child may be more at risk than most pupils. For example, this may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and poor mental health. We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

We will always act in the best interest of the child.

TCES Head of Safeguarding will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed annually, is available publicly via our website and has been written in line with Local Authority guidance and the requirements of Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures.
- TCES North West London contributes to inter-agency working in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#);
- A senior member of staff from TCES North West London's leadership team is designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.
- All staff receive a safeguarding induction and are provided with a copy of this policy and the staff code of conduct.
- All staff undertake appropriate child protection training that is updated annually.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with statutory guidance.
- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and reviewed regularly for efficacy.
- Accurate, detailed records are maintained of all 'notifiable incidents', including actions taken, and copied on the same working day to Central Services; any follow-up action or consequences must be similarly recorded and copied to Central Services
- Safer recruitment practices are followed in line with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and the London Safeguarding Children Procedures.
- They lead on any allegations against staff in the absence of the Headteacher;
- They remedy, without delay, any weakness with regards to our safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.

At each termly meeting the Head of Safeguarding will receive a safeguarding report that will record the training that has taken place, the number of staff attending and any outstanding training requirements for the school. It will also record all safeguarding activity that has taken place, for example, meetings attended, reports written, training or induction given.

Our Headteacher will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the TCES Head of Safeguarding are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings, e.g., child protection conferences and core group meetings.
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regards to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy.
- All pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online.
- Relevant staff have completed Safer Recruitment training.
- The procedure for managing allegations against staff is known to staff and displayed in staff areas.
- Operate the procedure for managing allegations effectively and refer relevant concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Ensuring the provision of a an orderly, warm, supportive and above all safe environment for children to engage constructively with the learning process.
- Ensuring that parents/carers are aware that the full texts of the child protection and associated policies are available on request. The safeguarding policy is available on the school website.
- Acting as Designated Safeguarding Lead (where required) in relation to child protection with a senior, named colleague as deputy, and ensuring that appropriate action is taken on concerns or allegations of abuse or suspicion of harm, including the support needed for both children and staff.
- Overseeing the encouragement and support of children in contributing to the development of good safeguarding structures, including diversity and equal opportunities, behaviour policy and behaviour management procedures, anti-bullying and diversity and equal opportunities policies and feedback and complaints mechanisms.
- Overseeing the development of whole group processes such as class meetings and school councils within group education settings to promote coproduction in addressing group issues and contribution to school planning and development.
- The development and maintenance of good liaison, home/school contact and support for inter-agency working.
- Ensuring that high professional standards are maintained in all essential and required record keeping, reporting and information sharing.
- Providing termly reports to the Proprietor that covers the school's services and reports on the following; whole school/project matters, staff training and development (CPD), curriculum matters, child protection issues and all other issues or developments in relation to all aspects of safeguarding and wellbeing.
- Liaising with the Proprietor regarding the annual review of all policies and procedures relating to school/project provision and the information to be given to the LA/MASH on how the company's safeguarding duties have been fulfilled;
- Pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities, including PSHE, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

- Pupils are informed, with the support of the curriculum and good role-modelling from staff, about diversity issues and discrimination.
- There is a culture that helps to promote good attendance, to manage behaviour positively and tackle harmful sexual behaviour, bullying and other forms of harassment.
- Attention is paid to the behaviour and anti-bullying policies and procedures, risk assessment and risk management, feedback and complaints mechanisms and child protection and whistleblowing policies and procedures.
 - Pupils are helped to understand what acceptable behaviour towards them is, and how they can stay safe from harm or ask for help if they feel their safety is threatened.
- Education plans, behaviour/education contracts, curriculum topics and lesson plans are used wherever appropriate to support and reinforce the principles of personal safety, responsibility, and welfare.
- There is a commitment to the Healthy Schools initiative that “provides children/young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their lives”.
- Pupils are encouraged and supported in contributing to the development of good safeguarding structures, including the behaviour policy and behaviour management procedures, equal opportunities, anti-bullying and anti-racism policies and feedback and complaints mechanisms.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that:

- They take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in our school. The DSL will carry out their role in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.
- They provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters. Any concern for a child’s safety or welfare will be recorded in writing and given to the DSL.
- During term time, they or a deputy are always to be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, a DSL is not available on the school site in person, we will ensure that they are available via telephone and any other relevant media.
- They are aware of pupils who have a social worker and help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school and college leadership staff.
- They or a deputy at TCES North West London represent our school at child protection conferences and core group meetings. Through appropriate training, knowledge and experience our DSL will liaise with Children’s Services and other agencies where necessary, and make referrals of suspected abuse to Children’s Services, take part in strategy discussions and other interagency meetings, and contribute to the assessment of children.
- Written records and child protection files and maintained, kept confidential and stored securely.
- Filtering systems are monitored with any safeguarding concerns actioned in line with the procedures in this policy. They will also ensure that staff are appropriately trained to understand our filtering and monitoring system and their responsibilities within this.
- All staff members and volunteers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, our policy, and the procedure they need to follow. They will also ensure that all staff,

volunteers, and regular visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction and that appropriate training needs are identified.

- They lead TCES 'FAST (Families and Schools working Together)' programme ensuring that Early Help support is available to families in need being managed by the school.

Administration and Policy - the Proprietor will ensure that:

- School policies prioritise the safeguarding of children and promote their wellbeing and involve children and others in their development.
- Staff files are kept at Central Services in accordance with the recruitment, vetting and HR/Employment policies and a single central record is kept of all staff appointments, including agency supply workers, that provides secure evidence that their identity, qualifications and criminal records, eligibility to work with children and young people and eligibility to work in the UK and references (two references, one from the last employer), for teaching staff that they have not been prohibited from teaching, overseas checks for those staff who have worked outside the UK and a check for medical fitness have all been checked and their employment history has been verified (complete application forms with explainable, tight chronology). Any gaps must be investigated during the interview process and responses kept on file; this record to be held available for inspection or audit by Governors/OFSTED/Local Authority
- Those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training.
- Clear policies are in place and are consistently adhered to regarding e-safety, internet, and ICT use (including copyright laws), filtering and monitoring, the use of photographs of children, one to one working situations, visitors, off-site provision, school trips, transporting children and work experience placements.
- Staff driving license and insurance details are verified beforehand, with copies held on file, where they may have responsibility for transporting children in private or company vehicles; details to be copied to The People Team at Central Services.
- Contact details of parents/carers are kept up to date and protocols established for when contact must be made or is recommended as good practice, as part of a written policy on 'Information for Children and Parents/Carers'.
- Clear information is given to children and parents/carers on the education provision, including timetabling, procedures, contact details, requirements for information sharing, complaints and feedback mechanisms and the school's expectations of children and parents/carers and what they may expect in return.
- Children have clear access to and understand their right to use a formal complaint system and to be supported in making any complaint.
- Parents/carers are given copies of the complaints procedure and understand their right and the children's right to use a formal complaint system and to be supported in making any complaint.
- There is a clear policy on curriculum planning and curriculum development that promotes good learning skills and all-round development and encourages active child involvement in decision-making processes.
- The service is monitored to ensure that no child is discriminated against due to age, sex, gender reassignment, race, culture, religion, language, disability, or sexual orientation.
- There are clear procedures for unauthorised absences, children missing in education, children absent from education, absconding from the education setting, or where a child goes missing from the care of a member of staff.

- All exclusions take place in line with the school's exclusion policy and the terms of the contract with the Local Authority.
- Written parental consent is obtained for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises.
- Written records are kept of any injury or illness that occurs, with details of any treatment given. All treatment must comply with the TCES policy on First Aid.
- Written parental consent is obtained for all educational visits, with emergency contact details and essential health information held by staff supervising the visits.
- All staff members have an up-to-date copy of the staff handbook that sets out clearly the expectations the company has of them in regard to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare, as well as other matters relating to their TCES employment.
- All staff members are provided with details of the staff code of conduct including expectations of safer working practice.

Staff Responsibilities – as supported by the Headteacher and DSL (where relevant)

- All staff members must be familiar with the company's policies and procedures and are fully committed to the principles and good practice guidelines, as defined in the 'Safeguarding Children' policy objectives.
- There is a firm commitment within the school to promote equalities issues and to ensure that no child is discriminated against due to age, gender, race, culture, religion, language, disability, or sexual orientation.
- There is a programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in place for all staff to include the formal processes of Child Protection training and professional supervision and appraisal and all staff must ensure that they engage fully with these offerings.
- Child protection responsibilities are clear to all staff members within the school, and they know whom to go to with any concerns, including any issues around colleagues' behaviour or practice; **(See Part Two: Child Protection)**
- All staff are made aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children is unacceptable. Further information is available within the staff code of conduct. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - any form of sexual conduct, including sexually suggestive comments;
 - engaging in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games;
 - giving children inappropriate drugs or other inappropriate substances;
 - lending or borrowing of money or property;
 - giving or receiving gifts;
 - exclusive or secretive relationships;
 - giving of home/personal mobile numbers, email addresses or home address details to children;
 - taking children to a staff member's home;
 - 'Friending' or 'following' a child on any form of social media.
- It is an offence for a person over 18 (e.g. teacher/TA) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the relationship is consensual and even if they do not work directly with them [*Sexual Offences Act 2003*].
- If staff are found to have acted inappropriately towards a child, they may be referred to the Teaching Regulation Agency (where applicable) and the DBS.
- Staff understand their responsibility in checking the identity of new and temporary staff and remaining vigilant to the requirements of safe practice, including the need to

supervise visitors when they have access to children and formal checks have not been undertaken.

- There is a commitment to support the needs of 'looked after' children. This includes attending care reviews and personal education plans where requested. Staff will liaise with the virtual school where relevant to support outcomes.
- There is an understanding and commitment to good multi-agency working and information sharing, including the need for open debate and challenge.
- Staff understand and are committed to the company model of behaviour management and receive training in ways of managing difficult behaviour.
- Staff understand and comply with the company's policy on physical intervention and restraint; **(see TCES policy on 'Behaviour Management')**.
- Staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes safe practice and feel supported both in raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice and in having their own practice challenged by others.
- Concerns about poor or unsafe practice are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner and in accordance with the company's whistleblowing and allegations against staff policy and commitment to openness of practice.
- Staff are prepared in advance for children to bring up personal problems within the classroom or wider school setting. Issues such as domestic violence and abuse can be difficult to broach directly, however discussions about personal safety and keeping safe can reinforce the message that any kind of violence is unacceptable. Raising these issues may lead children to bring up problems and concerns of their own. This is an opportunity to acknowledge that it is okay for young people to talk about their own problems and to signpost sources of help.
- Staff understand TCES filtering and monitoring systems and report any concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL.
- Staff are trained to recognise and understand the boundaries and limitations of confidentiality in the context of their own safety and of child protection.
- Staff understand their responsibilities when taking children 'off site' or on education visits, including the need to have with them emergency contact details, a fully charged company mobile phone, first aid provisions and essential health information on each child in their care.
- Staff are supported effectively and protected from danger and/or the risk of violence.

NOTE: for more detailed information in any of the above areas, please refer to associated policies

The People Team (HR) department is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all agency workers have had all appropriate checks carried out on them by their agency prior to commencing a placement with the school and that written confirmation of these checks have been received by the HR department from the agency prior to arriving at the school.
- Consulting with the Head of Safeguarding and Proprietor when concerns arise that warrant risk assessment e.g., entries on a DBS or safeguarding concerns on a reference.
- Ensuring that the school has confirmed the identity of the agency worker upon arrival at the school by viewing and keeping on file original photographic ID such as a passport.
- That all permanent employees have had all appropriate pre-employment checks carried out prior to commencing work with the school as outlined in the School Staffing

Regulations (2009) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) These include but are not limited to;

- A minimum of two satisfactory written references.
- A satisfactory DBS check and a check of the DBS Barred Children List.
- If appropriate, Police checks from any country where a candidate has lived overseas.
- Qualifications, specifically those relating to Qualified Teachers, Therapists and Social Workers.
- Identity checks – proof of identity, proof of date of birth, proof of current address, proof of eligibility to work in the UK.
- Verification of the employees mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- Taking reasonable steps to establish whether the employee (applicable for “teaching work” posts only) is subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.
- Check that a person taking up a management position is not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State.

Meeting the TCES Group Safeguarding Objectives

Meeting the objectives of safeguarding children requires personal commitment and the support of systems designed to:

- prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people;
- promote safe working practice and challenge poor or unsafe practice;
- identify instances where there are grounds for concern about a child or young person's welfare and initiate or take appropriate action to keep them safe;
- create a culture of openness, tolerance and respect for self and others;
- promote personal growth and active learning, with staff and child ownership of the process, through their direct involvement in and contribution to curriculum matters and school development, including related policies and procedures and the school development plan;
- contribute to safe and effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children and young people.

Children and vulnerable adults within TCES North West London are actively encouraged and helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is, to show mutual respect for self and others, learn how to stay safe from harm and to speak out if they have any worries or concerns. They are also given encouragement and reassurance that any concerns they have will be listened to and taken seriously.

Creating a safe and enabling environment requires openness of practice, a culture of vigilance and a clear focus on the culture and shared responsibility, and commitment to wellbeing through the following practices, procedures, and policies:

- Safe working practice and recruitment, vetting and Baring Service Checks, Single Central Record and employment procedures.
- Health and Safety, Risk Assessment and Risk Management.
- Filtering and monitoring policy and procedures.
- Behaviour policy and Guidelines to Managing Challenging Behaviour.
- Anti-bullying and Diversity and Equal Opportunities policies and ethos.
- Child Welfare/Child Protection policies and procedures.
- Complaints and feedback mechanisms and procedures.
- Philosophy and ethos.
- Behaviour Policy/Code of conduct/education and behaviour contracts.
- Whistleblowing, Equal Opportunities, Anti-bullying and Diversity and Equal Opportunities policies and ethos.
- Feedback mechanisms and Complaints Procedure.
- Curriculum planning and curriculum development.
- Work experience, education visits and extra-curricular planning.
- Commitment to the principles of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda; and 'Healthy Schools' agenda.
- Taking all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised; and
- Taking all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.

Standards

"Respect has to be given in order to be received. Parents and carers, children and teachers all need to operate in a culture of mutual regard". ***Learning Behaviour - The Report of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline' October 2005 (The Steer Report).***

TCES North West London recognises the unique status of children and vulnerable adults and seeks to ensure that they are treated respectfully as individuals. Relationships between staff also need to be based on mutual respect and dignity, with a focus on active support, openness of practice, good teamwork, the sharing of practical skills and knowledge and good role-modelling for children and each other:

- It is important that we maintain vigilance in safeguarding children and a focus on the strategies and good practice requirements for ensuring the promotion of their wellbeing.
- We need to ensure that all our recruitment, management and working practices are in line with safeguarding principles and good practice, that all staff are familiar with the policies and procedures and that they receive the necessary guidance, supervision, and training to enable them to contribute creatively and effectively to the provision of a safe and enabling, high quality education experience for every child.
- We need to develop those aspects of the curriculum that support healthy growth and development in emotional and social as well as educational skills and that encourage children to 'speak out' if they have issues that are troubling them.
- We need also to ensure that we react promptly, fairly, and effectively in any instance of concern regarding safeguarding or child protection, recognising that staff and children alike may find the process anxiety-provoking or threatening and are likely to need support.
- Clear information must also be given to children, parents/carers and partner organisations on our complaint's procedures and our child protection, publication scheme and information sharing responsibilities and obligations.

There are designated staff with specific responsibility for child protection. **Nevertheless, everyone working within TCES North West London is expected to fulfil the wider requirements for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. All members of staff must accept that in all instances the welfare of the child is paramount.**

Areas of Safeguarding Focus / Safeguarding Themes

Children are most commonly abused by someone known to them or close to them within a relationship of trust, responsibility, or authority such as a relative, neighbour, family friend, teacher, group leader, peer group member or acquaintance. They may then be placed under considerable pressure not to reveal what has been happening and may feel guilty and responsible for their involvement.

Care-Experienced Children

We recognise that 'care-experienced' children (commonly referred to as 'Looked After' children) may be at particular risk, both in terms of their life experiences and vulnerability and in the difficulties, they may have in recognising, or alerting people to, forms of abuse occurring in their lives. These children and young people require additional consideration for care, support, and vigilance. Staff must be alert to behaviour that is 'unusual' or a warning sign for any child, such as self-harm, absconding, repeated illness, or non-attendance. It is essential that staff do not allow the fact that the child is 'care experienced' to be an excuse for delay or non-action.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We recognise that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges, and these are discussed in staff training. These additional barriers can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children and should include ensuring and enabling them to:

- Make their wishes and feelings known.
- Receive appropriate personal, health and social education, including sex education.
- Raise concerns.
- Have a means of communication and a range of adults with whom they can communicate.
- Disabled children must receive the same level of protection from harm as other children and the same procedures must be followed.

Migrant children and those seeking asylum in the UK

The number of migrant children in the UK has increased in recent years. Some move here with family/relatives or other adults and some arrive unaccompanied. These children may be vulnerable for a variety of reasons, which may include:

- Insecurity about their legal status, place of residence and carers.
- Separation from significant family members, sometimes against their will.
- Cultural and language difficulties.

- Trauma connected with previous experiences in countries of origin and the circumstances of their departure, including child abuse, being forced to become child soldiers, or subjected to female genital mutilation.
- The child may have been moved illegally and be under severe pressure to give a false account of themselves, or to keep secrets.
- Evidence shows that unaccompanied children or those accompanied by someone who is not their parent are particularly vulnerable.
- The possibility that some of these children may be privately fostered should also be borne in mind and if suspected referred to the MASH.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of these children must always remain paramount.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to considering risk that stems from outside of the family home. It seeks to create a response to forms of abuse that can target the contexts in which that abuse occurs, from assessment through to intervention. The approach also provides professionals with:

- A framework to address extra-familial risk through the lens of child welfare, as opposed to crime reduction or community safety.
- Reminders to utilise partnerships between children's services and agencies who have a reach into extra-familial contexts (such as transport providers, retailers, youth workers, residents' associations, parks and recreation services, schools and so on).
- Opportunities to measure success with reference to the nature of the context in which harm has been occurring, rather than solely focusing on any behaviour changes displayed by young people who were at risk in those contexts.

Work to develop contextual safeguarding happens in two tiers. The first tier involves acknowledging context more explicitly in all work with children and families. This could include talking with parents about the context in which they are trying to parent their child and engaging young people in activities where they can explore their feelings of safety in public, as well as private, spaces.

At the second tier, work is undertaken to create resources and approaches for assessing and intervening with peer groups, schools and public spaces identified as ones in which young people have experienced abuse. This ranges from thinking about how to conduct observations in neighbourhoods, as one might already do of a home during a visit, through to creating processes to refer contexts into safeguarding hubs, as one might already do for families, and holding context conferences, in place of child protection conferences, to build plans for contexts that have been assessed. At Tier 2, therefore, we not only recognise the contexts in which young people might experience harm but work actively to address them.

Further information can be found here: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

Child on Child Abuse

Child on Child Abuse is when children abuse other children. This can include but is not limited to bullying (including cyber bullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse

such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. Sexting and initiating hazing type violence and rituals.

As a school, we operate a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it should never be passed off, for example, as “banter”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. We provide accessible means for pupils to report abuse and will treat all reports seriously. Allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with robustly. We are committed to supporting victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse.

Whilst it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys’ perpetrators, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Even where there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, we acknowledge that such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.

A safeguarding issue may be considered if the allegation:

- Is being made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger or more vulnerable pupil.
- Is of a possible criminal nature.
- Puts other pupils in the school at risk, or raises the risk factor for others.
- Indicates that other pupils may have been harmed or be at risk or harm.
- Includes bullying (under the definition of emotional abuse), intimidation or harmful sexual behaviour.

Specific safeguarding issues against another student may include:

- Physical abuse:
 - Pre-planned violence
 - Physical altercations
 - Forcing other to carry out violence
 - Forcing others to use drugs, alcohol or other substances
- Emotional abuse:
 - Bullying
 - Threats and Intimidation
 - Blackmail/extortion
- Sexual abuse:
 - Sexual assault
 - Indecent exposure
 - Indecent touching
 - Showing pornography to others
 - Forcing others to create/share/download indecent images
 - Sexting
 - Upskirting
 - Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation
 - Encouraging/enticing other pupils to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour
 - Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts
 - Sharing images through social media

All allegations made by a pupil against another pupil, which is of a safeguarding nature should be reported to the DSL immediately, who will consider the need for escalation to statutory agencies. Where neither the police or social care thresholds are met, North West London will record the allegation and undertake a thorough investigation following TCES Group policies and procedures.

In cases where nudes or semi-nudes have been shared, we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes \(December 2020\)](#).

For more information in this area, staff, pupils, and parents can refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) Part 5.

Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a vulnerable adult may be LGBT is not in itself safeguarding issue, however, children who identify as LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. We are an inclusive school, and it is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with staff.

E-Safety including Filtering and Monitoring

Online safety is taken very seriously at TCES North West London and robust systems are in place to ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems (unless there is a specific approved educational purpose); are in place to identify children accessing or trying to access harmful and inappropriate content online and all staff are aware safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. Our approach to consideration of risk includes the following considerations:

Content

- exposure to inappropriate content, including online pornography, ignoring age ratings in games (exposure to violence associated with often racist language), substance abuse
- lifestyle websites, for example pro-anorexia/self-harm/suicide sites
- hate sites
- content validation: how to check authenticity and accuracy of online content

Contact

- grooming
- cyber-bullying in all forms
- identity theft (including 'frap' (hacking Facebook profiles) and sharing passwords)

Conduct

- privacy issues, including disclosure of personal information
- digital footprint and online reputation
- health and well-being (amount of time spent online (internet or gaming))

- sexting (sending and receiving of personally intimate images) also referred to as SGII (self-generated indecent images)
- copyright (little care or consideration for intellectual property and ownership – such as music and film)

Commerce

- online gambling,
- inappropriate advertising,
- phishing
- financial scams.

For full information – see TCES Group e-Safety/Acceptable Use/ICT Policy and TCES Filtering and Monitoring Policy

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is child abuse and constitutes significant harm. Child protection procedures should be followed when there are concerns that a girl is at risk of, or is already the victim of FGM, FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is important to note that the procedure has no health benefits and such practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that most cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting, or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- Spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- Frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- Prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return.

- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- Confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

TCES aims to create an 'open environment' where children feel comfortable and safe to discuss the problems they are facing – an environment where FGM can be discussed openly, and support and counselling are provided routinely. Children need to know that they will be listened to, and their concerns taken seriously.

We create an 'open' and supportive environment by:

- circulating and displaying materials about FGM;
- displaying relevant information, e.g. details of the NSPCC's Helpline and Child Line services, Careline, National Domestic Violence Helpline and appropriate black and minority ethnic women's groups;
- ensuring that a private telephone is made available should children need to seek advice from the above organisations or other relevant groups discreetly;
- informing/raising awareness about issues around FGM with colleagues – as well as including appropriate training in continuing professional development;
- ensuring that the designated safeguarding lead is well versed in the issues around FGM;
- encouraging young people to access appropriate advice, information, and support;
- making materials such as books and DVDs available;
- introducing FGM into the school curriculum within relevant classes, such as: Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) in England, – particularly in 'Sex and the Law' for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, and ensuring accurate naming of body parts in Key Stage 1 which can be the first stage in ensuring that girls are aware of their bodies and rights Citizenship, Religious Knowledge, Drama, History, Sociology.

Staff should:

- talk about FGM in a professional and sensitive manner;
- explain that FGM is illegal in the UK and that they will be protected by the law;
- recognise and respect their wishes where possible, but child welfare must be paramount. FGM is child abuse and against the law. If a member of staff believes that the girl is at risk of FGM, or has already undergone FGM, the police and social services must be informed even if this is against the girl's wishes. If you do take action against the Child's wishes, you must inform them of the reasons why;
- activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and children's or adults' social care;
- ensure that the girl is informed of the long-term health consequences of FGM to encourage her to seek and accept medical assistance;
- liaise with the designated teacher with responsibility for safeguarding children;
- refer the child, with their consent, to appropriate medical help, counselling, and local and national support groups;
- ensure that safeguarding and protection is considered for any female family members.

Staff should not:

- treat such allegations merely as a domestic issue;
- ignore what the child has told them or dismiss out of hand the need for immediate protection;
- decide that it is not their responsibility to follow up the allegation;

- approach the Child's family or those with influence within the community, in advance of any enquiries by the police, adult or children's social care, either by telephone or letter.

Remember:

- The child may not wish to be referred to a social worker, police officer or a guidance/pastoral/Headteacher from her own community.
- Consult other professionals, particularly an experienced manager/colleague, the local police child protection or domestic violence unit.
- Speaking to the Child's parents about the action you are taking may place the Child at risk of emotional and/or physical harm. Therefore, do not approach the family as they may deny the allegations, expedite any travel arrangements, and hasten their plans to carry out the procedure.

FGM Mandatory Reporting Duty

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining children, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at - *Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information*.

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead and involve children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e., where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

What to do when a child stops attending school:

If a teacher or other member of staff suspects that a child has been removed from, or prevented from, attending education as a result of FGM, a referral should be made to the local authority adult or children's social care and the police. Staff may consider speaking to the Child's friends to gather information – although they should not make clear that FGM is suspected as this may get back to the family who may hasten any plans to perform the procedure.

All Staff should be aware:

That there may be occasions when a teacher visits the family to find out why the child is not attending school. The family may tell the teacher that the child is being educated overseas. Sometimes, the family may suggest that the teacher speaks to the child on the telephone. If this occurs, the teacher should refuse to speak on the telephone and (if the Pupil is a British national) insist that the pupil is presented at the nearest British Embassy or High Commission.

Staff should not:

- remove the pupil from the school register without first making enquiries and/or referring the case to the police and local authority adult or children's social care;
- dismiss the child as taking unauthorised absence.

TCES Group ensure all staff are trained and understand that is mandatory to report all instances of the practice in girls below the age of 18.

For full information please read in conjunction with HM Government: multi-agency practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

It should be noted that there are no typical families where sexual abuse occurs but there are some factors that occur in such families more frequently. These are:

- Poor or confused parent/child relationships (especially with mothers).
- Parents unavailable (especially mothers) through absence and physical or *mental illness or.
- Families with a stepfather or *where the mother has a succession of male partners.
- Violence between the adults, *especially of a male partner towards the mother
**These are also known key factors in situations of abuse between siblings, or by a child or young person towards another child or children.*

Children under 16 years of age cannot provide lawful consent to any sexual activity, though in practice many are involved in sexual contact to which, as individuals, they may have agreed.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

Indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend.

- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant.
- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation.
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks.
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work.
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late.
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls.
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections.
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault.
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups.
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers).
- Frequenting areas known for sex work.
- Concerning use of internet or other social media.
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

For further information see [Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners 2017](#).

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including County Lines

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create

drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- (e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been, married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners or have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives. The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Older children may also experience domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships.

Barriers to disclosure for children include:

- Protective of their mother
- Protective of their abusing parent
- Extremely fearful of the consequence of sharing family 'secrets' with anyone. This may include fears that it will cause further violence to their mother and/or themselves
- Being threatened by the abusing parent
- Fearful of being taken into care
- Fearful of losing their friends and school
- Fearful of exposing the family to dishonour, shame, or embarrassment
- Fearful that their mother (and they themselves) may be deported.

Staff should not press the child for answers but instead should:

- Approach the subject with a child with a framing question so that the subject is not suddenly and awkwardly introduced.
- Explain that the disclosure cannot be kept confidential, and that the information will be shared with social care.
- Listen and believe what the child says.
- Reassure the child that the abuse is not their fault, and it is not their responsibility to stop it from happening.
- Inform the DSL in accordance with this policy.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school as per the arrangements under Operation Encompass (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day. The DSL will liaise with the school where the child is on roll in the event that we receive a referral in this area to provide support according to the child's needs, as well as update safeguarding records regarding their circumstances.

Parents/Carers can be given several telephone numbers, including the National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children

The initial response to a disclosure is important and should be reported directly to DSL. It is essential that children are reassured they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported. It should also be noted that incidents of this type can occur online and offline both physical and verbal. Our school is that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, may find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, likely, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. A distinction may need to be drawn between behaviour best dealt with by anti-bullying policies and more complex behaviour where both perpetrator and victim may need specialist help. Advice must be sought from the child protection agencies if there is any doubt.

Where behaviour is sexual, a child protection referral must be made to explore the reasons for the behaviour, as it may indicate abuse suffered elsewhere by the perpetrator and possibly the victim. The Police will be involved where a crime has been committed of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault.

Where sexualised behaviour is identified, a child may need to be placed on a treatment programme but will still need to be educated in a school setting, in these cases a full risk assessment must be carried out, the management of such situations will need to consider the likely impact on the whole school, the curriculum as well as on individuals.

Honour Based Violence (HBV)

The definition of HBV is 'A crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. There is no specific offence of HBV. It is an umbrella term to encompass various offences covered by existing legislation, and can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. It is a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual violence. There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others.

Staff should not:

- treat such allegations merely as a domestic issue;
- ignore what the child has told them or dismiss out of hand the need for immediate protection;
- decide that it is not their responsibility to follow up the allegation;
- approach the child's family or those with influence within the community, in advance of any enquiries by the police, adult or children's social care, either by telephone or letter.

Staff should:

- Report their concerns to the DSL or deputy, who may liaise with The Honour Network, which is a confidential helpline providing emotional and practical support and advice for victims and survivors (male & female) of forced marriage and/or honour-based violence and abuse. It provides advice and support to potential victims in crisis and professional agencies.
- The Honour Network helpline: 0800 5999 247
- The Honour Network website: www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Forced Marriage

Educational settings often wrongly feel it is not their place to tackle the issue of forced marriage, however forced marriage is recognised as a form of domestic violence and a serious abuse of human rights. It is not sanctioned within any culture or religion and is not the same as an arranged marriage in which both spouses can choose whether to accept the arrangement. In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent, and some element of duress is involved, including physical and emotional pressure.

Education staff should be alert to potential warning signs and consider (whilst being careful not to assume) whether forced marriage may be the reason. These warning signs can include:

- a sudden drop in performance;
- truancy;
- conflicts with parents over continued or further education;
- excessive parental restrictions and control;
- history of domestic violence in the family;
- extended absence through sickness or overseas commitments;
- depressive behaviour including self-harming;
- history of siblings leaving education early and marrying early.

This is not an exhaustive list and if concerned please report this to the DSL and follow the safeguarding policy and procedures flowchart.

Belief in 'possession' or 'witchcraft'

Belief in 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is widespread and not confined to particular countries, cultures, religions or immigrant communities. Children involved can suffer damage to physical and mental health, capacity to learn, ability to form relationships and self-esteem.

A child/ren may be viewed as different or difficult, and this attributed to their being 'possessed' or involved in 'witchcraft'. Attempts to 'exorcise' the child may be made, that may involve severe beatings, burning, starvation, cutting or stabbing and/or isolation. This usually occurs within the child's household.

Staff should look for possible indicators and apply basic safeguarding principles, such as information sharing across agencies, to be able to identify those at risk of this type of abuse.

Child Abduction

It is an offence for a parent or guardian to take or send their child out of the UK without appropriate consent. Child abduction may arise in situations where a child is the victim of a forced marriage or is forced into prostitution. It is more likely to arise however, when parents of a child divorce or separate.

When education staff become aware that parents have separated and there are issues regarding child custody, they should seek information as to whether there are any conditions covering the child's custody e.g., do both parents have parental responsibility, is there a court order etc., and whether there are any legal restrictions on either partner collecting the child from school.

Any concerns or allegations of child abduction or the threat of child abduction should immediately be brought to the attention of the DSL and be the subject of an urgent child protection referral.

Child victims of trafficking

Trafficking is defined as 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat, or use of force or other forms of coercion for the purpose of sexual or commercial exploitation or domestic servitude' (AFRUCA/ NSPCC). Trafficking in people involves crimes, spanning a variety of countries and involving an increasing number of victims, who can experience considerable suffering.

There are many factors that may indicate that a child has been trafficked, which can include:

- going missing, or missing for periods of time;
- a history with missing links and unexplained moves;
- attending for a term or so before disappearing (schools need to look out for patterns of registration and de-registration);
- has limited freedom of movement, is withdrawn or refuses to talk;
- is known to beg for money; has no money/other financial resources, but has a mobile phone or is driven around by an older male/boyfriend;

- shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, signs of sexual behaviour or language and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted disease;
- has not been registered with or attended a GP practice;

Child protection procedures should always be applied where there is suspicion that a child may be being trafficked and Police or the MASH must be informed. For helpful additional guidance see the Trafficking Toolkit. (www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits)

Child Pregnancy

The legal age for consent to sexual intercourse is 16. Assumptions should not be made that teenage pregnancies at any age are as a result of consensual sexual intercourse.

In all cases of a child's pregnancy becoming apparent to staff, consideration should be given to referring the matter to Children's Social Care in accordance with the referral procedures stated above.

Staff who have regular contact with pregnant teenagers have a responsibility to consider the welfare of both the prospective mother and her unborn baby. Appropriate risk assessments will be taken in line with the health and safety procedures for pupils on roll who are pregnant.

Prevent Duty– Anti-Radicalisation and Extremism

Effective from 1 July 2015, we have a duty in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. TCES North West London promotes fundamental British values as part of broader requirements through our curriculum relating to the quality of education and to promoting the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of children.

At TCES North West London we understand that being drawn into terrorism includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit.

Staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

We ensure that TCES North West London is a safe place in which our children can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas. We understand that the Prevent duty is not intended to limit discussion of these issues, however we are mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues as posed and placed on the proprietors of independent schools, by the Independent School Standards.

We risk assess all visiting speakers whether invited by staff or by children themselves and ensure that they are suitable and appropriately supervised.

All staff undergo relevant training including 'Prevent Training' to give them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist

ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism and are shared by terrorist groups. Staff will seek further guidance from their DSL who, if necessary, made a referral to the Channel Programme.

Our E-safety / Acceptable Use /ICT Policy is robust and sets out clear guidelines on internet use and appropriate levels of filtering and monitoring.

The Prevent lead at TCES North West London is the DSL. Please see TCES Prevent Duty Statement on TCES website.

How to spot the signs of somebody being radicalised:

The following are some signs that could mean somebody could be at risk of radicalisation or is going through a radicalisation process.

Physical changes:

- Sudden or gradual change in physical appearance
- Sudden or unexpectedly wearing religious attire
- Getting tattoos displaying various messages
- Unexpectedly shaving their head (skinhead)
- Possesses unexplained gifts and clothing (groomers will sometimes use gifts such as mobile phones and clothing to bribe a young person)

Social changes:

- Cuts ties with their friends, family or community
- Starts to become socially withdrawn
- Becoming dependent on social media and the internet
- Begins to associate with others who hold radical views
- Bullies or demonises other people freely
- Visits extremist websites, networks and blogs

Emotional and verbal changes:

- Advocates violence or criminal behaviour
- Exhibits erratic behaviour such as paranoia and delusion
- Speaks about seeking revenge
- Starts to exhibit extreme religious intolerance
- Demonstrates sympathy to radical groups
- Displays hatred or intolerance of other people or communities because they are different.

Things to consider before assuming that somebody has been radicalised:

Not everybody will share the same view or opinion. Holding a different view – religious, social, or political, does not mean that somebody is radical. The concern is when somebody with an extreme view act or intends to act upon their view(s) in a way that is harmful to themselves or others. Even if they do not intend to act upon their view, extreme views that are based on lies and misguidance can be extremely damaging to somebody's mental health.

You should always use your professional judgment about somebody and if in any doubt seek advice.

Upskirting

The Voyeurism Offences Act, which was commonly known as the Upskirting Bill, was introduced on 21 June 2018. It came into force on 12 April 2019.

- Upskirting is a highly intrusive practice, which typically involves someone taking a picture under another person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear).
- Transportation services have reported a rise in the offence however, it can occur anywhere and involve any gender.
- The new law will capture instances where the purpose of the behaviour is to obtain sexual gratification, or to cause humiliation, distress, or alarm.
- The perpetrator can face up to two years imprisonment if found guilty of the offence.
- The law protects those who are victims of the offence from being named in the media.
- Staff must report any concerns to the DSL or the Head of School.

Missing Children from Education (CME)

TCES North West London has an Attendance Policy in place detailing what to do if a child is missing from education. All staff should look out for potential indicators of abuse or neglect including:

- Repeat occasions of absence.
- FGM signs.
- Traveling to conflict zones – Prevent (radicalisation).
- Forced marriage.
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)– county lines.

Staff must report all children missing from education for 10 consecutive days to the DSL who will inform social care.

For detailed information in relation to child missing from education please see the TCES Attendance Policy'

Abusive images of children & information communication technology (ICT)

The internet has become a significant means of distributing abusive images of children and as technology develops, the internet and its range of content services can be accessed through various devices; There is a growing concern that children may be abused through:

- Taking, downloading and/or distribution of images of abuse of child/ren.
- Allowing /encouraging a child to have exposure to inappropriate material via ICT e.g., adult pornography and/or extreme forms of obscene material.
- Children engaging in text bullying and use of mobile camera phones to capture violent assaults of other children/young people for circulation.
- Images of abuse of children may be found in the possession of those who use them for personal use or distributed to children as part of the grooming process.

- Internet chat rooms, discussion forums and bulletin boards are used as a means of contacting children with a view to grooming them for inappropriate/abusive relationships. Subsequent communication may be via email, text message, instant messaging, or mobile phone.
- For the purposes of child protection, potentially abusive images of children can be divided into:
 - Unlawful material.
 - Material, which although lawful, would give cause for concern and indicate that the person possessing it may pose a risk to children.

Unlawful material

An abusive image of a child under the age of 18 years old includes images in photographs, films, negatives, video tape, data stored on computers that can be converted into a photograph and 'pseudo-photographs' (images made by computers graphics, or other means, which appear to be a photograph). This also covers electronic images used by video phones and texting. It is for a court to decide what is 'indecent' by application of recognised standards of propriety.

Possession of such material is an offence. Taking, showing, or distributing such material amounts to a more serious offence.

Lawful material

Lawful material falls outside the above definition but may involve children in an indecent or sexual context. This could include pictures, cartoons, literature, or sound recordings e.g., books, magazines, audio cassettes, tapes, CDs. The Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) can provide advice generally on matters of abusive images of children to other agencies.

Abusive images involving children in an indecent or sexual context may be found in the possession of those who use them for personal use or distributed or used with children as part of the grooming process.

Use of the Internet

The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of abusive images of children, enabling ready access to such material. It may be downloaded and printed off in picture form or stored electronically on the hard drive of a computer, CD Rom, USB etc. Some adults use it to establish contact with children with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. This may be accomplished through 'chat rooms' or contact by e-mail and may constitute an offence under The Sexual Offences Act 2003.

- Children may be encouraged to access abusive images of children themselves through using apparently innocent words in an internet search engine.
- As part of their role in preventing abuse and neglect, LSCBs or local safeguarding arrangements may offer activities to raise awareness about safe use of the internet and be a key partner in the development and delivery of training and education programmes with the Child Education and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). See www.ceop.gov.uk
- CEOP has also set up its own website which has been designed and written specifically for young people. It contains games and up to date information on having fun, staying in control and being safer online as well as details on how to report problems. See www.ceop.gov.uk/children_and_young_people.asp.

Staff should inform the DSL who will speak with the Police if they are aware that:

- A child has been the recipient of any suspicious contact through the internet or in receipt of pornographic material, as described above.
- A person may be in possession of abusive images of children or have placed/accessed abusive images of children on the internet.
- A child may have been inappropriately contacted or approached, directly or via the internet.
 - Any individual involved in the creation, distribution, or possession of abusive images of children may also be actively involved in their abuse. Police are expected to check whether anyone involved has access to children, including family and work settings, or is known to the MASH;
 - a strategy discussion must be held whenever it is suspected a parent or carer of children or someone with access to children in other contexts.
- Is in possession of child abusive images of children; and/or has taken, shown or distributed child abusive images of children; and/or has used the internet to make inappropriate approaches to children.

For full details and guidance please read TCES E-Safety Policy

Non-compliance in child protection/violence towards staff

A feature in some serious case reviews has been the lack of co-operation and/or hostile attitude of parents/carers towards professionals. When there are child welfare or protection issues, a failure to engage with the family may have serious implications and non-intervention is not an option. This can lead to difficulties for all professionals working with the various family members.

In some instances, there will be a known history of actual violence.

Where non-co-operation, hostility or violence is an issue, it is important to appreciate the significance for a child living in the family i.e., it will enhance the parent/carer's power and control and the child may fear reprisals if s/he were to speak to professionals.

Workers may feel extremely vulnerable when visiting hostile families, especially those who challenge effectively and are perceived as a threat.

Professionals may end up putting more effort into dealing with the resistance than addressing the real problems for the child/ren.

It is good practice wherever possible:

- To be clear from the outset about what is known about the family and parents/carers, so as to assess both risks and potential strategies.
- To establish trust through active engagement, acknowledgement that the family may see things differently and demonstrating a respect for their views, whilst confronting inappropriate attitudes

Hostility and violence towards staff is a multi-agency issue, involving potential risks to staff of other agencies.

If one agency has information that a parent/carer is known to be violent it has a responsibility to alert other agencies of the risks posed by that person.

Children's social care should then convene a multi-agency meeting to share strategic approaches across agencies in forming an action plan, in accordance with information sharing arrangements. All decisions and communications must be recorded clearly and shared.

Where there are actual threats or incidents of violence the incidents must be reported immediately and local procedures followed for 'Violence at work' in relation to supervision, support, recording and reporting incidents to the Police.

Drug and Alcohol Using Parents

Children of parents who abuse drugs or alcohol may be at risk of harm either directly, e.g., access to dangerous substances, or from a lack of boundaries, parental warmth and support and discipline.

70% of children taken into care have parents who are suspected of substance abuse.

Not all parents who misuse drugs or alcohol mistreat their children, however it is known that there is an increased risk of violence in families where parent/carers abuse substances and the children who are most vulnerable are those whose parents are violent, aggressive, neglectful, or rejecting.

Any concerns of this nature should be brought to the attention of the DSL and discussed with Children's social care to decide whether a referral needs to be made.

Fabricated or induced illness

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) in a child is a condition whereby a child suffers harm through the deliberate action of her/his main carer, and which is duplicitously attributed by the adult to another cause.

There are 3 main and not mutually exclusive ways of the carer fabricating or inducing illness in a child:

- Fabrication of signs and symptoms and fabrication of past medical history.
- Fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts, records, letters, documents, and specimens of bodily fluids.
- Induction of illness by a variety of means.

Harm to the child may be caused through unnecessary or invasive medical treatment, which may be harmful and possibly dangerous, based on symptoms that are falsely described or deliberately manufactured by the carer and lack independent corroboration. The child may additionally suffer emotional harm through limitations placed on her/his development and social interaction e.g., overprotection, limitation of exploration and learning, prevention from participation

Parental control issues

When children come to the attention of Police or others because of behaviour problems, this may indicate vulnerability, poor supervision, or neglect.

The Child Safety Order (CSO) is a compulsory intervention available below the significant harm threshold, designed to assist the child improve her/his behaviour and is likely to be used alongside other methods of intervention with the family. The borough can apply for a CSO where:

- A child has committed an act which would have been an offence if s/he were aged 10 or above.
- It is necessary to prevent such an act.
- A child has broken a Local Child Curfew.
- The child has caused harassment, distress, or harm to others.

A Parenting Order can be made alongside a CSO or when a CSO is breached. This is designed to engage with and support parents, whilst helping them to develop their ability to undertake parental responsibilities.

Involvement of family members in prostitution does not necessarily mean children will suffer significant harm and the risks to the children in these circumstances come from the following potential sources:

- Exposure of the child to unsuitable adults and sexual activity / materials, especially if the parent works from home.
- Being left alone whilst the parent is working.
- Being left with responsibility for younger siblings
- Inconsistent care – e.g., if the parent is imprisoned
- Factors associated with drug or alcohol misuse and/or mental health difficulty.

Parental learning disability

Parental 'Learning disabilities' or 'learning difficulties' refers to adults who are, or may become parents/carers for children and who meet the 3 core criteria which describe an individual as 'learning disabled' i.e.

- Significant impairment of intellectual functioning.
- Significant impairment of adaptive/social functioning, i.e., how an individual cope with every-day demands of community living.
- Age of onset before adulthood: for an individual to be considered as 'learning disabled', impairment of intellectual adaptive/ social functioning usually needs to have been present before the age of 18 years.

As with any parent, the ability of those who have a learning disability to provide a reasonable standard of care will depend on their own individual abilities, circumstances, and the individual needs of the child.

Learning disabled parents may also experience additional stressors e.g., having a disabled child, domestic violence, poor physical or mental health, substance misuse, social isolation, poor housing, poverty, and a history of growing up in care. Such stressors, when combined with parental learning disability, are more likely to lead to concerns about the care of children.

Parents with a learning disability may therefore need positive 'whole family' support to develop sufficient understanding, resources, skills, and experience to meet the needs of their child. With effective, sustained support over time adjusted to meet the changing developmental

needs of a growing family, learning disabled parents are potentially able to provide good enough care (see www.scie.org.uk/publications/briefings/briefing14/).

Children of parents with learning disabilities may assume some level of responsibility of looking after their parent and/or siblings, one or more of whom may also be learning disabled.

Individuals who may pose a risk to children sometimes target parents with learning disabilities. In these situations, the children could be vulnerable to neglect and/or other forms of abuse.

Parental physical and sensory disability

Though there is no evidence to suggest that physical or sensory disability should be a child protection issue, research does indicate that parents who have such impairments can experience great difficulty in performing a range of domestic and childcare tasks. Individual/personal factors, levels of support from family, poverty, and the degree of social exclusion all impact upon an individual's ability to offer 'good enough' parenting.

If a disabled parent cannot fulfil their role as parent to their own and others' satisfaction, it may affect their self-esteem and self-image and in turn generate feelings of anxiety, frustration, and guilt. Impact has been observed on a child/ren's growth, development, behaviour and/or mental/physical health, including alcohol/substance misuse and self-harming behaviour.

For further practical guidance, see: SCIE's briefing paper number 13 February 2005 'Helping parents with a physical or sensory impairment in their role as parents' www.scie.org.uk.

Self-harm

Self-harm, self-mutilation, eating disorders, suicide threats and gestures by a child must always be taken seriously and may be indicative of a serious mental or emotional disturbance. The possibility that self-harm, including a serious eating disorder, has been caused or triggered by any form of abuse or chronic neglect should not be overlooked.

This may justify a referral to Children's Social Care for an assessment as a child in need and/or in need of protection. A staff member who is in doubt about the required response should seek advice from the DSL. There also may be a requirement to provide support with accessing CAMHS Services which the DSL will advise on.

Consideration must also be given to protect children who engage in high-risk behaviour which may cause serious self-injury such as drug or substance misuse, running away, partaking in daring behaviour such as running in front of cars etc, all of which may indicate underlying behavioural or emotional difficulties or abuse.

It is good practice, when a child or young person is known to have either made a suicide attempt or been involved in self-harming behaviour, to undertake a multi-disciplinary risk assessment, along with an assessment of need.

Social exclusion

Many families are multiply disadvantaged and face chronic poverty and social isolation. Additionally, they may experience problems associated with living in disadvantaged areas, eg high crime rates and poor services, as well as limited employment opportunities. Many lack a wage earner. Racism and racial harassment may provide further stress to families in these circumstances.

Poverty may mean the children live in crowded or unsuitable accommodation, have poor diets, health problems or a disability, are vulnerable to accidents and may lack ready access to educational and leisure facilities.

Children may be indirectly affected through the association of this social exclusion with parental depression, learning disability and long-term health problems. Referrals to children's social care should be made if the cumulative impact of the child's circumstances indicates that s/he is a child in need or is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Temporary accommodation and transient lifestyles

Placement in temporary accommodation, often at a distance from previous support networks, can lead to individuals and families becoming disengaged from services and support systems. Families who have experienced homelessness and are placed in temporary accommodation by boroughs may have very transient lifestyles.

Families in which children are harmed may move home frequently and avoid contact with caring agencies, so that no single agency has a complete picture of the family. Along with other indicators of potential risk, the following circumstances associated with some mobile families are a cause for concern:

- Child/ren not consistently registered with a GP.
- Child/ren attending hospital Emergency Departments frequently for treatment, rather than engaging with primary health services.
- Child/ren missing from a school roll, or persistently not attending.
- Information 'patch worked' across a network of agencies with no single agency holding the whole picture of a family history.
- Where there are outstanding child welfare concerns, unusual extended non-school attendance may indicate that the family has moved out of the area.

Young Carers

A 'young carer' is an individual aged under 18 who has a responsibility for providing primary or secondary care on a regular basis for a relative, often a single parent, or very occasionally a friend, whose needs may arise from:

- Physical or sensory disability.
- Learning disability or mental health related difficulty.
- Chronic or terminal illness.
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol.

Young carers are frequently involved in shopping, cooking, cleaning, ironing, washing clothes, budgeting the household income, and nursing responsibilities including provision of intimate personal care, as well as emotional support.

This situation often leads the young person's needs being overlooked and may on occasions give rise to abusive experiences, which a young carer is reluctant to address for fear of intervention and breakup of the relationship.

If there is any concern that a young carer is at serious risk of neglect, abuse, or harm, this must be referred to children's social care and if appropriate, a strategy discussion held.

Part Two: Child Protection

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and how practitioners should conduct the assessment of children.

Staff must be aware that:

- It is not the responsibility of teachers and other staff in schools or other education settings to investigate allegations or suspected cases of abuse.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against staff members.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with abuse by children against other children and full details of these can be found in the school's Anti-Bullying policy.
- Staff must not take any action beyond that agreed in the procedures established by TCES, Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership, the London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Children's Social Care.
- Staff cannot promise a child complete confidentiality - instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.
- TCES North West London must ensure that parents are aware that the full texts of the child protection and associated policies are available on request.

Training

All staff within the school receive Safeguarding training, including Child Protection, and updates as appropriate that equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their responsibilities for Safeguarding and Child Protection; this training will be refreshed at two-yearly intervals as a minimum.

The Head of Safeguarding, Director of Children and Families and Schools Proprietor will refresh their training at annual intervals, to be able to discharge their duties competently, and this training will include inter-agency working. In addition, all staff will be given an annual update to ensure that they are fully informed on updated guidance and safeguarding practice.

Certificates will be placed on individual staff files on completion of any training provided.

Section I - Child Protection Procedures

Guidance on Dealing with Child Protection Welfare Concerns

It is essential that any child abuse issues are not trivialised or exaggerated and that the proper steps are followed. Please be aware that words and actions may be open to misinterpretation and therefore you should take great care to avoid situations in which your own words or actions could be misunderstood.

You are responsible for ensuring that abusive peer activities such as bullying do not occur or are actively addressed.

All steps must be taken to ensure that TCES North West London practices are safe for children, young people, staff, and visitors. Any concerns that you may have should be dealt with or reported swiftly.

You may become aware of possible abuse/child welfare concerns in various ways. You may:

- see it happening;
- suspect or have concerns because of signs such as those listed in 'Identifying abuse';
- have concerns reported to you by a child or third party.

It is particularly important to respond appropriately and to remember always that the best interests of the child or young person - and the need for any abuse to stop - come before the interests of anyone else, including TCES Group/TCES North West London or a potential abuser. Any member of staff with an issue or concern relating to Child Protection should immediately discuss it with the DSL or deputy DSL. It should also be made clear to children that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in respect of child protection issues.

NOTE: See 'Listening to Children' – Section II

Procedures - Designated Safeguarding Lead

There is a DSL based in the school and a deputy to act in their absence (see key contact details). Should they both be absent or unavailable, the matter must be referred to the Head of Safeguarding. Whilst new staff are awaiting their DSL training, the Head of Safeguarding will hold the role of DSL alongside the Headteacher.

The DSL Role includes:

- Referring cases of suspected abuse to social care.
- Working with The People Team to refer cases where a person is dismissed due to risk/harm to a child to the DBS.
- Referring cases where a crime has been committed to the police.
- Liaising with the Head of Safeguarding where S47 and/or police investigations are in process.
- Acting as a source of support, advice, and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

Immediate Action

There is a difference between immediate danger and concern for a child. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately (anyone can make a referral). Concern for a child must be raised with the DSL.

Where a concern is reported to/identified by a member of staff, the first priority is to establish whether the child is in need of medical attention and/or protection.

- If urgent action is required, medical assistance should be obtained if needed and an immediate referral made to Children's Social Care and/or the police.
- If a child is in need of protection, police can initiate a police protection order (PPO) in cases of emergency, while MASH can apply to a court for an emergency protection order (EPO).
- The law also allows staff to take all reasonable steps to offer immediate protection to a child at risk of harm, e.g., from a violent or incapacitated parent.

Action by Person Initially Identifying/Receiving a Concern or allegation

Any member of staff receiving details of a concern or allegation should:

- respond with tact and care (remembering to keep an open mind);
- listen and treat the concern seriously, avoiding expressions of shock or disbelief;
- communicate as appropriate to the age and understanding and any communication or language difficulties of the child/person reporting;
- allow the child to tell their own story. Research has shown that this initial telling can be the best therapy if they are able to 'talk it out';
- avoid leading questions;
- avoid expressions of sympathy that may pre-judge issues of potential abuse;
- avoid any promise of confidentiality but reassure the child/young person that the information will only be passed to those who 'need to know'.

Staff should be aware that:

- the way in which you talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings;
- while information must be gathered as accurately and thoroughly as possible when recording an allegation made by a child or young person, it is important to attempt to minimise the number of times they have to repeat themselves;
- TCES North West London employees are only the first in a series of people who will talk to them in the course of an investigation. Having to repeat themselves unnecessarily may be traumatic for the child or young person. While child protection procedures are being followed, the needs of the child/young person may be overlooked and the procedure itself may be experienced by them as abusive.

If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about possible abuse, there are a number of things that can be done to support the child:

- stay calm and be available to listen;
- listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying, and check with them that you have heard what they have said correctly;
- question normally without pressurising;
- don't put words in the child's mouth but note the main points carefully;

- reassure the child and let them know that they were right to inform us;
- inform the child that the information will have to be passed on.

The person receiving the concern should not:

- interrupt the child/person reporting when he/she is recalling significant events;
- make assumptions or interpretations;
- make suggestions or offer alternative explanations; this could be construed as 'coaching' or attempting to dismiss or minimize what is being said;
- use leading questions e.g., 'Did they do to you?' or 'What did they do next?' Use open questions only, such as 'What happened?' or 'Do you have anything else to tell me?'
- Do not attempt to investigate any suspicion of abuse. Only sufficient information should be sought to clarify whether a concern should be referred to Children's Social Care and that decision lies with the DSL in consultation with the Headteacher and Head of Safeguarding.
- Do not criticise an alleged abuser. The child may love him/her and be very protective of the relationship or confused about their own role in the abuse. There may also be the possibility of reconciliation;
- Do not ask the child to repeat it all for another member of staff.

The person receiving a concern should:

- record in writing the information (if applicable, in the child's own words), including times, dates, place of incident(s), persons present and what was said;
- make a note of any accompanying non-verbal behaviour and how the information was imparted;
- be careful to differentiate between fact, observation, allegation and opinion;
- sign and date the written record.

Staff should be aware that the notes you make may be disclosed in any subsequent prosecution. You may also be called to give evidence in court proceedings and may be asked to refer to your notes.

Any member of staff identifying or receiving details of a concern, must immediately:

- Report the matter to the DSL their deputy or appropriate substitute.
- Make a written record of decisions made and action taken.
- Always act in the best interest of the child.

Initial Action by the DSL

- Obtain written details, signed, and dated, from the person who initially identified or received the concern (not from the child/person reporting the concern) and signed and dated by that person. This should be entered on to MyConcern by the reporting person as soon as possible and by the end of the school day;.Record any information about times, dates and location of incident(s) and details of any potential witnesses.
- Do not attempt to investigate. Inappropriate questioning at this stage could jeopardise child protection or criminal investigation and may cause immediate distress to the young person/child.

Initial Consideration of Concern

The member of staff identifying or receiving the concern and the DSL should:

- Discuss the concern and all available information to decide on the most appropriate course of action.
- If there is any doubt about the action to be taken, the DSL should seek advice internally from the Head of Safeguarding.

Consent

- In general, any concerns about a child's welfare should be discussed with the family and, where possible, agreement sought to make a referral to Children's Social Care, provided this does not increase the risk of harm to the child or lead to the potential withdrawal of a statement or destruction of evidence.
- The child's views should also be considered in deciding whether to inform the family, particularly where he or she is sufficiently mature to make an informed judgment, with the same provisos of due care.
- Where there is doubt about involving the child's family, the DSL should clarify with the Head of Safeguarding and Children's Social Care whether, and if so when and by whom, the parents/carers should be told about the referral and what action to take where consent is refused. It will not be necessary to disclose personal details of the child and family unless the advice confirms that a referral is needed. In either case, the DSL must keep a record of the advice received and who provided it.
- Action to ensure the safety of children must respect the rights, privacy, and dignity of parents/carers as far as possible without jeopardising the child/ren's safety, recognising the stress that such interventions can cause and seeking to ensure that families are supported and services to support parenting/care are put in place.

Referral to the relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Where the DSL / Headteacher / Head of Safeguarding / School Proprietor decide that a concern needs to be referred to Children's Social Care, he/she should provide as much information as possible about the nature of the suspicions, the child, and the family, including:

- Full names, date of birth and gender.
- Family address.
- Name(s) of person(s) with parental responsibility or primary carer(s).
- Names and dates of birth of other household members, if known.
- Any need for an interpreter, signer or other form of communication.
- Any special needs.
- Any current and previous concerns, significant events or involvement of other agencies in the child's life.
- Developmental needs and parents'/carers' ability to respond to these needs.

If urgent action or referral is required, the collation of such information must not be allowed to cause delay.

- The DSL must telephone Children's Social Care where the child lives or is at the time.
- The referral should be made immediately if urgent action is required but within the same day as the allegation was reported regardless. The DSL should agree with the person receiving the referral, what the child and parents/carers should be told and by whom.
- Where the referral is taken by a member of the MASH administration team, the DSL should seek to discuss the issue with someone from MASH.

- The referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Children's Social Care should then acknowledge the written referral within one working day of receipt.
- The DSL must record the decisions taken and reasons, together with the names of those involved in making those decisions. This record needs to be timed, dated, and signed by all parties.

It should always be remembered that formal referrals from professionals cannot be treated as anonymous, and a parent/carer will ultimately become aware of the identity of the referrer.

Concerns Identified or Reported out of Office Hours

If a concern is identified or reported outside normal office hours, the DSL should contact the Local Authority Emergency Duty Team or the local police station. Written confirmation of the referral should be sent to Children's Social Care the next working day.

Action After Referral

Following referral, Children's Social Care / the MASH should, within one working day, consider the next course of action, record their decision on a referral and information record and notify the DSL.

Outcome of referral to MASH or subsequently to the Child protection Team

The decision by MASH or Child Protection team will be either:

- No further action.
- A recommendation for an 'Early Help' intervention.
- The DSL should record the reasons for this decision and discuss who is best placed to inform the child if age appropriate and/or parent/carer.
- A Social Worker to conduct an assessment (pursuant to s.17 of the Children Act 1989)
- This assessment may require further information from and discussion with the school. The outcome will be recorded on an assessment record.
- Strategy discussion/meeting - an immediate multi-agency strategy discussion should take place where the information clearly indicates that the child has suffered or is at risk of significant harm.

Children's Services (Social Work) Assessment

The outcome of an assessment will be either:

- No further action.
- A recommendation for an 'Early Help' intervention.
- The DSL should record the reasons for this decision and discuss who is best placed to inform the child, if age appropriate and/or parent/carer.
- The child is in need of additional services - this may require a 'CIN' plan in which education is likely to be asked to assist.
- A strategy discussion/meeting where the child has suffered or is believed to be at risk of significant harm.

Strategy Discussion / Meeting

If a strategy discussion/meeting is required, it may take the form of a meeting or a series of telephone calls. This should be convened by the relevant Local Authority, who will consider involving the following:

- Representative from the appropriate police child protection unit(s) (usually the Child Abuse Investigation Team or 'CAIT').
- DSL and/or other member of staff with knowledge of child.
- Social worker for the child.
- Other authorities/agencies as appropriate in cross border cases.
- Other authorities/agencies as appropriate e.g., health.

The strategy discussion/meeting should consider:

- the information provided about the circumstances and context of the concern;
- whether any child or children is/are likely to be at risk;
- whether it is necessary to review any previous concerns;
- whether it is necessary to interview any child(ren), including ex-children of the school or any other schools;
- the response to the child's parents/carers and to the child (if age appropriate);
- appropriate support for the child and family.

The strategy discussion/meeting should decide whether there should be:

- enquiries by the Local Authority Children's Services under section 47 or section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and in accordance with local child protection procedures;
- related police investigations into possible criminal offences;
- no further action.

If the strategy discussion/meeting concludes that there should be an investigation by police and/or the Local Authority Children's Services, timescales and dates for future meetings should be agreed and tasks allocated.

If the decision of the strategy discussion/meeting is that there should be no further action under child protection procedures, the concerns may be referred to alternative agencies, including the school, for consideration of providing services to the child and family as part of an 'Early Help' intervention.

Minutes of the strategy discussion/meeting should be given to those taking part either immediately or as soon as possible thereafter. The DSL and/or other member of staff involved in the discussion/meeting should make a note of any actions required by the school / TCES Group.

Notification of Interested Persons

The Police or a strategy discussion may decide that child protection enquiries or criminal investigation would be hindered by an approach to parties at an early stage or that certain information should not be divulged to them. The DSL should agree who is to be informed, by whom and what information should be given.

Notifiable Incidents

There are some incidents which are classed as "Notifiable". This means in addition to the Head of School/Service, The Executive Headteacher, and the DSL must be immediately informed via phone calls. The notifiable incident form must be completed and shared with the Head of Safeguarding as soon as possible and before the end of the working day.

Staff should refer to the internal TCES 'notifiable incidents' procedure as outlined within TCES Behaviour policy.

Action by DSL/Staff during Child Protection and/or Criminal Investigation

- The MASH and/or the Police may ask for assistance, including the release of relevant information to assist their enquiries/investigation.
- Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on schools to assist a borough exercising their duty to provide support and services to children in need.
- Section 47 places a duty on schools to assist boroughs in making enquiries into cases of children believed to have suffered or be at risk of significant harm.
- The DSL should check that the MASH and/or Police have requested consent for the information to be shared when a request is received for any personal or sensitive information about the child, other children, or members of staff.

Consent will not be needed where:

- It is likely to increase the risk of harm to a child or other person.
- Consent is refused but the child/adult welfare concerns override the duty of confidentiality.
- Seeking consent is likely to impede a criminal investigation.
- The DSL should keep a record of all information collected, decisions made (including whether the decision to override consent to share information) and actions taken. This record will include minutes of any strategy discussions/meetings attended. It should be noted that all records may need to be disclosed under the rules on disclosure in criminal investigations.
- The DSL should monitor the progress of the case, by seeking regular updates from the Police and/or the Local Authority and record those updates.
- Where the DSL is unsure about the legality of sharing information with any agency, advice should be sought from the Head of Safeguarding who will provide advice or seek the relevant legal advice.

Police Interviews with Students – Appropriate Adults

Where pupils are requested to be interviewed by the Police, staff should inform the DSL and/or Headteacher. The DSL/Headteacher should be aware of the requirement for children to have an 'Appropriate Adult' present during interview and assure themselves that this requirement is in place.

An 'Appropriate Adult' may include the parent/carer for that student or, if the pupil is a 'looked after child', a person representing that Local Authority. It could also include a social worker of a Local Authority.

Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#).

Challenging Responses to Concerns/Allegations

If at any stage a member of staff believes that a child protection concern is not being dealt with properly, he/she should report their concerns to the DSL / Head of Safeguarding / Schools Proprietor (where appropriate) and to challenge the response given to those concerns if they remain unsatisfied. Should barriers to help and support for a particular student believed to be at risk stem from multi-agency working, consideration will be made around implementing escalation procedures as issued by the relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Media

Child protection issues, including allegations against staff, may attract local and/or national media attention, depending on the seriousness of the matter or issues of interest at the time. This needs to be managed in a sensitive manner to minimise any distress to those involved.

Where a matter has attracted or is likely to attract media attention advice must be sought from the Proprietor, who will consult with the borough press office and other agencies as appropriate e.g., the Police, the MASH, etc. No staff member may make an informal or formal response to a media enquiry without the express permission of the Proprietor.

Record Keeping

It is essential that accurate records are kept where there are any concerns about the welfare of a child (e.g. referrals, conference minutes, reports). These must be kept securely and separately from a child's educational records. These are exempted from the list of records which are available for examination by parents or children, unless subject to a Court order.

Staff must keep the DSL informed of concerns regarding students (in addition to clear safeguarding and welfare concerns). This includes:

- poor attendance and punctuality;
- concerns about appearance and dress;
- marked changes in, or unusual behaviour;
- concerns about health and emotional wellbeing;
- deterioration in educational progress;
- discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child;
- concerns about home conditions or situation;
- concerns about child-on-child abuse (including bullying);
- concerns such as unknown adult(s) meeting a child regularly after school, or issues raised by a child about involvement in illegal drug use, crime, or street gangs.

This recording system must be regularly maintained by the DSL. When a student no longer receives a service from TCES North West London, the records must be sent under separate cover to the relevant Local Authority or receiving school (where appropriate). The designated safeguarding lead should ensure any safeguarding file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the student arrives. Photocopies of the records may be retained until receipt is confirmed by the student's new school.

All information written about children, or allegations made by children, must be kept to objective comments, verbatim accounts, and factual information.

Keeping Parents/Carers Informed

Parents/carers have a right to know that their child is being referred to external agencies, unless it is reasonable to assume that this will place the child, or a member of staff, in danger or lead to the destruction of evidence.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, any student who has a safeguarding file has a right to access it unless to do so would affect their health or well-being or that of another person or would be likely to prejudice an ongoing criminal investigation.

Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to see all the information held in safeguarding records. Information can be withheld if disclosure:

- Could cause serious harm or is likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health or condition of the child or another person; or
- Could reveal that the student or another person has been a subject of or may be at risk of abuse, and the disclosure is not in the best interests of the student; or
- Is likely to prejudice an ongoing criminal investigation; or
- The information about the student also relates to another person who could be identified from it or the information has been given by another person who could be identified as the source, unless the person has consented to the disclosure or the person providing the information is an employee of the establishment or the Local Authority.

If an application is made to see the whole safeguarding file, advice should be sought from the DSL who will discuss with the Head of Safeguarding.

When an agreement is reached to disclose information, all third-party information must be removed, or consent sought for its disclosure from the person concerned. For example, all identifying information about other children or members of the public who have shared information about the child must be removed before disclosing information.

Parents/Carers (i.e., those with parental responsibility in law) are entitled to see a child's safeguarding file, on behalf of their child, with the same exceptions applying as to the child's right to access. An older child may be entitled to refuse access to their parents. The school should take advice about information sharing with parents if they have particular concerns about doing so.

If a parent makes a request to access the file on the child's behalf, it should be done in writing.

Section II – Managing Allegations against Staff

Introduction

Our aim is to provide a safe environment which secures the wellbeing of students in receipt of a service from our organisation. We do, however, recognise that sometimes allegations of abuse are made. When they occur, allegations are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that some allegations are genuine and that there are individuals who deliberately seek to harm others.

For all staff, the most important consideration is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Any allegations of abuse must be taken seriously. It is important to remember that the best interests of children and vulnerable adults - and the need for the abuse to stop - comes before the interests of TCES, the school or a potential abuser.

We will always ensure that procedures outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the relevant LADO in the area that the individual who is working or volunteering with children is working / volunteering.

Abuse of Trust

We know that some people seek access to children in order to abuse, and that abused children very often do not disclose the abuse at the time. We also know that some allegations of abuse made against professionals are substantiated, and there continue to be a number of cases every year in which professionals in all sectors are convicted of criminal offences involving the abuse of children.

All staff need to know that inappropriate behaviour with or towards students is unacceptable. Staff are provided with clear guidance on keeping children safe as well as guidance on safer working practice to keep themselves safe as outlined in this policy and the staff code of conduct.

Procedure

All allegations or suspicions of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect by staff, including the use of restraint, other than permitted by law or guidance issued by Government and professional bodies and in line with TCES policy, will be considered under child protection procedures initially and steps taken to ensure the welfare of the child/ren or vulnerable adults concerned.

The person receiving the concern or allegation should not attempt to investigate any allegation or suspicion of abusive behaviour yourself but assure the individual reporting it to you that what they have said to you will be passed on to someone whose job it is to deal with it.

The person receiving the concern or allegation should:

- Make a written record of the information (if applicable, in the child or vulnerable adult's own words), including the time, date and place of incident(s), persons present and what was said.
- Sign and date the written record.

- If any personal views are expressed about the information given, these must be recorded separately and clearly identified as such, signed and dated.
- Report the matter immediately to the Headteacher.
- In the absence of the Headteacher, the matter should be reported to the Head of Safeguarding.
- If the concern/allegation is against the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher, report the matter to the Head of Safeguarding and Proprietor.
- If the concern/allegation is against the Proprietor, this must be reported to the Head of Safeguarding and the Director of People, who will consult with the LADO and Lead Safeguarding Governor on how to proceed.
- If the concern/allegation is against the Head of Safeguarding, this must be reported to the Proprietor and the Director of People, who will consult with the LADO on how to proceed.
- The Headteacher should always advise The People Team (HR) when an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Initial Action by the Headteacher

On being informed of the concern/allegation, the Headteacher/Head of Serve should:

- Obtain written details of the concern/allegation, signed, and dated by the person receiving (not the child/person making the allegation) and being careful to differentiate between fact, supposition and feeling.
- Countersign and date the written details.
- Record any information about times, dates and location of incident(s) and names of any potential witnesses.
- Record any discussions about the child and/or member of staff, decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.
- Seek advice from the Head of Safeguarding or LADO, prior to the commencement of any further investigation.

The Headteacher should not interview the member of staff, pupil, or any potential witnesses until such time as advised by the LADO or Head of Safeguarding. No attempt should be made to investigate an allegation as inappropriate questioning could jeopardise a child protection or criminal investigation.

Allegations received outside of normal office hours

In the event of an allegation being received outside normal office hours, the Head of Safeguarding should consider where there is an immediate risk involving children and if this is perceived to be the case, contact the Local Authority Emergency Duty Team or the local Police. Written confirmation of a referral should be sent to the LADO during the next working day.

Trivial Allegations

The Headteacher will need to use their professional judgment to identify at the outset an allegation which is trivial in nature. It will then be appropriate for it to be dealt with at that level. It is important to record the reasons for this judgment and how the matter was dealt with, e.g., notifying the parent/carer. The child or person making the allegation may also consider the incident significant enough to report the matter directly to the LADO and/or Police or to some other agency such as Childline.

The Head of Safeguarding should be contacted if there is any doubt, and in all cases a written record must be made of the incident and copied to the Head of Safeguarding and The People Team within 1 working day.

Initial Consideration

Where allegations are not perceived to be trivial from the outset, the Headteacher and the Head of Safeguarding should conduct an urgent initial consideration of the information available to establish the most appropriate course of action. If there is any doubt about action to be taken, advice can be sought from the LADO.

Where there are welfare concerns or concerns that an individual may be at risk of harm, a referral will need to be made to the relevant Local Authority Children's/Adult's Service in line with this policy.

The Headteacher and the Head of Safeguarding must keep a written record of any decisions made, the reasons for those decisions and any action(s) taken, both formal and informal.

Reasonable Force

Where the allegation relates to the use of reasonable force to restrain a child, a full report must be made, and a copy sent to Central Services within 1 working day. The Head of Safeguarding will review any relevant information and provide written agreement to the Headteacher/Head of Safeguarding at the earliest opportunity as part of these procedures.

Referral to the Designated Officer for the Local Authority (LADO)

We will always ensure that procedures outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children and Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education are adhered to, alongside our local procedures (Chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures) and will seek appropriate advice from LADO.

Where the threshold to consult with the LADO is met, this will be undertaken by the Headteacher. The Ealing LADO can be contacted to request a consultation or to make a referral via email: asv@ealing.gov.uk or by phone on: 07980 940 241

Allegations that require a LADO consultation include allegations where an individual working or volunteering with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Any staff who do not feel confident to raise their concerns within TCES North West London or the TCES Group should initially consider speaking to the TCES Safeguarding Lead Governor, Kirstie Harvey, prior to contacting the LADO directly on: 0208 5453187 / 07814642728.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Harm / Risk of Harm Threshold

Where the matter is deemed to meet the harm/risk of harm threshold, the LADO will convene an Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) meeting in line with Chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures. The Headteacher will attend this meeting (alongside a representative from the People Team and the Head of Safeguarding) and agree next steps alongside the LADO.

If the ASV meeting concludes that there should be an investigation by Police and/or Children's Social Care, roles, timescales, and dates for future meetings should be agreed and tasks allocated.

The Headteacher/Head of Safeguarding should canvas the views of the LADO, Police and Children's Services about whether:

- the accused member of staff needs to be suspended or alternatives to current work arrangements found (however the final decision will always rest with TCES 's Proprietor and SMT);
- there are any constraints or limitations on the information that can be provided to the member of staff about the concern/allegation;
- the response to the child/ren's parents/carers and to the child/ren;
- appropriate support for the child/ren and parents/carers;
- the response to the accused member of staff;
- appropriate support for the accused member of staff and colleagues;
- the identity of the contact person to keep the member of staff informed of the progress;

It will be the final decision of TCES as to whether any internal disciplinary investigation will be held in abeyance pending the completion of Police, LADO, and Children's Social Care investigations. TCES will work in partnership with the multi-disciplinary team in line with Chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures, but the final decision will always rest with TCES.

Where the matter is deemed not to meet the threshold of harm/risk of harm, the matter will be for TCES to manage internally. The Head of Safeguarding alongside the Headteacher will agree how the matter will be investigated, with advice from The People Team. For more details on concerns not meeting the harms threshold, please see guidance regarding 'low level concerns' in Section III.

Suspension

When an allegation against a member of staff is made, and deemed serious enough, the member of staff may be suspended following an immediate risk assessment completed with advice from The People Team. This measure, if deemed necessary, will be undertaken without prejudice pending further enquiries during the initial consideration stages. During this time the member of staff will receive full pay and any company benefits they may be entitled to. During

suspension any contact with students or communication with relevant individuals is prohibited and may lead to further disciplinary procedures. Contact with other employees must be discussed with and authorised by the Head of Safeguarding.

For further details on the Disciplinary process please refer to the Disciplinary Proceedings section of this policy, or to the Disciplinary and Grievance policy.

Record Keeping

The Headteacher and the Head of Safeguarding keeps a separate written record of decisions made in relation to allegations against staff. These are stored confidentially and will include a comprehensive chronology of the allegation, how the matter was followed up and resolved and notes of any action taken, and decisions reached (and justification for these), both formal and informal. If an allegation or concern is not found to have been 'malicious', The People Team will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file and provide a copy to the individual. TCES Group will retain these records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious. We will also not refer to any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious.

Allegation Outcomes

The following are formal allegation outcomes along with their definitions that have had LADO oversight:

- **Substantiated**

There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that a child has been harmed or there is a risk of harm.

- **Malicious**

There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive. The police should be asked to consider what action may be appropriate in these circumstances.

- **False**

There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation, however, there is no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive. False allegations may be an indicator of abuse elsewhere which requires further exploration. If an allegation is demonstrably false, the employer, in consultation with the LADO, should refer the matter to local authority children's social care to determine whether the child is in need of services, or might have been abused by someone else.

- **Unsubstantiated**

There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

- **Unfounded**

There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.

Where an allegation is shown beyond doubt to be demonstrably false, e.g., where there are objective witnesses to say that an incident could not have occurred, or the person accused was not present at the time, the Headteacher, in consultation with the Head of Safeguarding and The People Team, must:

- inform the member of staff orally and in writing of the allegation and that there is no cause for further action to be taken under disciplinary or child protection procedures;
- consider whether counselling and/or informal professional advice to the member of staff is appropriate and how this might be provided;
- inform the parents/carers of the child/ren of the allegation and the outcome in writing
- consider appropriate counselling and support for the child or children who made the allegation(s) and, where appropriate, their parents/carers;
- consider the advisability or otherwise of the member of staff concerned having to work with that child again, and how that may be affected and supported;
- In particular consider what follow up action should be taken in regard to a person or child who has made an allegation that is shown to be false, especially if it is shown to have been made maliciously;
- where a person other than the alleged child victim has made the allegation, consider informing the parents/carers and child/ren and providing support as appropriate.

Disciplinary Procedures

TCES firmly believes that the fairest way to resolve any problems relating to conduct or performance is to have a well-structured disciplinary procedure. The procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain the Company's standards of conduct, attendance and performance and should be looked upon as a corrective process.

Employees have the following rights in relation to disciplinary action:

- to be informed of the allegations of misconduct or poor performance to be addressed at any disciplinary hearing;
- to be accompanied by a work colleague or by a trade union official;
- to appeal against any disciplinary action.

Employees will always be given as much information as possible regarding the allegations of misconduct, or any documentation detailing the shortfall in performance or capability that will form the basis of the disciplinary hearing. Employees will also be given fair and reasonable notice of the date and time of the hearing and whenever possible the disciplinary hearing will be held during normal working hours. Any disciplinary action will only be taken after a full investigation of the facts, and if it is necessary to suspend employees for this period of time, they will receive their normal rate of pay.

The Company reserves the right to vary the disciplinary procedure dependent on either the seriousness of the allegations of misconduct or capability to be addressed, or if employees only have a short amount of service. Short service employees or those still within the probationary period, may not be issued with any warnings before dismissal.

NB: The Company reserves the right to deduct from pay the cost of any damage or loss to property or goods, which after a disciplinary hearing was found to have been caused by an employees' negligence or vandalism.

Inappropriate Conduct Towards Children

In the case of inappropriate conduct towards children, disciplinary action will consist of a minimum of a final written warning and may lead to dismissal for gross misconduct.

Final written warnings will be issued in situations where it is sufficiently serious to warrant only one warning but is not sufficiently serious to justify dismissal.

Employees will be informed in the final written warning that any further misconduct or failure to meet the required standard will result in dismissal.

Dismissal will normally result if an employee still fails to achieve the standard of conduct or performance required by the Company, or for matters of gross misconduct. Employees will be given every opportunity to offer an explanation for any failure to meet the required standards at a final disciplinary hearing. As with all previous stages of the disciplinary procedure employees will be offered the right of a witness and the right to appeal against the decision.

Dismissed employees will be provided, as soon as is reasonably practicable, with the reasons for dismissal, the date on which their employment will terminate and details of how they may appeal.

Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct will result in summary dismissal, and employees lose their right to notice or pay in lieu of notice.

Below is a list of offences that are normally regarded as "gross misconduct". It is not exhaustive, but it describes the kind of offence that can result in summary dismissal:

- Deliberate failure to comply with the published rules of the Company, including those covering safeguarding, child protection, security, health and safety, equal opportunities, the Internet, etc.
- Deliberate falsification of records.
- The committing of offences against current discrimination legislation whilst acting on behalf of the Company.
- Fighting or assaulting another person.
- Using threatening or offensive language towards children, customers, or other employees. Making yourself unfit to work by solvent abuse, drinking alcohol, taking of illegal substances, or failing to follow medical instructions on prescribed drugs.
- Being in possession of illegal drugs and substances or alcohol whilst on Company premises.
- Obscene behaviour.
- Behaviour likely to bring the Company into disrepute.
- Conviction on a criminal charge that is relevant to your employment with the Company.
- The misuse including use for personal gain, of confidential information in the course of working for the Company.

Disciplinary Appeal Procedure

At each stage of the disciplinary procedure, employees will be given the right of appeal. If an employee wishes to exercise their right of appeal, they should put their reasons in writing to The People Team within five working days of receiving written confirmation of the disciplinary decision taken against them. The employee will need to explain why they feel the decision is unfair, or inappropriate in relation to the matters addressed at the disciplinary hearing.

If the employee has any new information or evidence to support their appeal, they should give the details in full and include the names of any witnesses they may wish to call to support them in their appeal. This is in order that there will be sufficient time to investigate any additional information before the appeal hearing. Employees are entitled to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a work colleague or by a trade union official.

Although the purpose of the appeal is to review any disciplinary penalty imposed, it cannot increase the disciplinary penalty. The decision of the person dealing with the appeal is final.

Details of the full disciplinary procedure can be found in the TCES Disciplinary and grievance policy.

Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Regulated activity providers and personnel suppliers are required by law to refer a person to the DBS when the following criteria are met:

- The individual is removed from regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults. This includes situations when TCES would have taken the above action, but the person was re-deployed, resigned, retired, or left.
- TCES believes that the staff member has engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or harm or;
- Satisfied the harm test in relation to children and / or vulnerable adults. E.g. there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable still exists. Or;
- Been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

Referrals should not be made whilst a member of staff is suspended without prejudice pending an investigation as there would be no evidence at this point to support the thought that a person has engaged in relevant conduct or that the *harm test* is satisfied. A person satisfies the harm test if they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm. It is something a person may do to cause harm or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

- Any referral must be made by the Headteacher/Head of Safeguarding by completing the DBS referral form in consultation with the DBS referral Guidance.
- The DBS will acknowledge the referral within three working days of receipt.
- The DBS will commence the decision-making process, and may request additional information or documents.
- Following DBS consideration, if the DBS is 'minded to bar', the individual will be written to and provided with all the evidence, they will then be given 8 weeks to make

representations to the DBS on why they should not be barred. Current employers and bodies or individuals with a registered interest in the individual concerned will be notified that the DBS is 'minded to bar'.

- Following representation, the individual and any parties with a registered interest in the individual will be notified of the DBS's decision. If the individual is barred it is an offence for that individual to work in regulated activity which they are barred from, or for an employer to allow them to work in regulated activity which they are barred from.

Learning Lessons

At the conclusion of any case in which an allegation is substantiated, the Headteacher should review the circumstances of the case with the Head of Safeguarding, Proprietor and The People Team, and consultants and/or ASV meeting attendees to determine whether any improvements can be made to the company's or the school or service's practice or procedures to help prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Section III – ‘Low Level Concerns’

Introduction

This procedure enables all staff to share any concerns, not matter how small, about their own or another member of staff’s behaviour with the Headteacher/Head of Safeguarding (or Head of Safeguarding in their absence) with a view to ensuring that pupils are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted.

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is important. If implemented correctly, this should:

- Create and embed an open and transparent culture.
- Enable the identification of inappropriate, problematic, or concerning behaviour early.
- Minimise the risk of abuse, and;
- Ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with our ethos and values.

Who does this policy apply to?

All staff who work with the school either in an employee, volunteer or contracting capacity.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour which are set out in the code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored, and reinforced by staff.

To achieve this purpose the school will;

- Ensure that staff are clear about, and confident to distinguish, expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour- in themselves and others, and the delineation of professional boundaries and reporting lines.
- Empower staff to share low- level concerns with the Headteacher and to help all staff to interpret the sharing of such concerns as a neutral act.
- Address unprofessional behaviour and help the individual to correct such behaviour at an early stage.
- Identify concerning, problematic, or inappropriate behaviour- including any patterns- that may need to be consulted upon with (on a no-names basis if appropriate), or referred to, the LADO.
- Provide for responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised; and
- Help identify any weakness in the Headteacher’s safeguarding processes.

Concerns should be reported as soon as reasonably practical but within 24 hours.

Definitions

Appropriate conduct is the behaviour which is entirely consistent with the TCES staff code of conduct, policy and procedures and the law.

The distinction between an allegation and a low-level concern:

Allegation

The term 'allegation' means that it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concerns about an adult's behaviour towards a child that does not meet the allegation threshold set out above or is not otherwise serious enough to consider a referral to LADO. These are also known as minor concerns.

A low-level concern is any concern- no matter how small, and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt'- that an adult may have acted in a manner which;

- Is not consistent with TCES staff code of conduct, policy, and procedures (including conduct outside of work); and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to LADO.

Staff members should feel encouraged to self-report concerns to foster a culture of transparency. Staff, when reporting concerns, do not need to be able to determine in each case whether it is a low-level concern or a concern that meets the threshold of an allegation. The determination should be made by the Headteacher in conjunction with the Head of Safeguarding.

Responding to a Concern

The Headteacher will review the information and consult with the Head of Safeguarding to determine whether;

- the behaviour is entirely consistent with TCES staff code of conduct, policy and procedures and the law;
- constitutes a low-level concern;
- a referral to LADO is required;
- when considered with any other low-level concern(s) that have previously been raised about the same individual, should be re-classified as an allegation and referred to the LADO.

In cases where the low-level concern is about the Headteacher, the staff member should approach the Head of Safeguarding directly.

If it is decided that the low-level concern amounts to behaviour which is entirely consistent with the TCES staff code of conduct, policy and procedures and the law, it is important the Headteacher informs the individual in question what was shared about their behaviour and give them the opportunity to respond. The Headteacher should also speak to the person who shared the low-level concern to provide them with feedback about how and why the behaviour is consistent with TCES staff code of conduct, policy and procedures and the law. This type of

situation may indicate the code of conduct is not clear, the training has not been clear, or the low-level concern policy is not clear enough. If the same or similar low-level concern is subsequently shared by the same individual, and the behaviour is consistent with the TCES staff code of conduct, policy and procedures and the law, then an issue may need to be addressed about how the subject of the concern's behaviour is being perceived, if not about the behaviour itself and or the implementation of low-level concern policy. In these instances, the Headteacher should discuss this with the Head of Safeguarding so appropriate policies can be reviewed.

Low-Level Concerns Procedure

Once the Headteacher has determined the matter to be a low-level concern, they will speak to the individual about whom the low-level concern has been raised (unless advised not to do so by the LADO/ other external agencies, where they have been contacted)

Make appropriate records of;

- All internal conversations, including the person who initially shared the low-level concern, the adult about whom has been shared, and any relevant witnesses.
- All external conversations (LADO/ external agencies).
- Their determination, the rationale for their decision and.
- Any action taken.

It should be responded to in a sensitive and proportionate way. Maintaining confidence that such concerns when raised will be handled promptly and effectively whilst on the other hand maintaining confidence that such concerns when raised will be handled promptly and effectively, whilst on the other hand, protecting staff from any false misunderstandings or allegations. Any investigation of low-level concerns should be done discreetly and, on a need, to know basis. Typically, this will be the Headteacher, the Head of Safeguarding, the individual themselves and The People Team, although this will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Most low-level concerns are likely to be minor concerns, and some will not give rise to any ongoing concern and accordingly, not require any further action. Others will most appropriately be dealt with by means of management guidance and/ or training.

Any conversation should include being clear with the individual as to why their behaviour is concerning, problematic or inappropriate, what change is required in their behaviour, enquiring what if any support they might need to achieve and maintain that, and being clear on the consequence if it fails to reach the required standard or repeat the behaviour in question.

Ongoing and transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour may be appropriate. An action plan or risk assessment, which is agreed with the individual and regularly reviewed with them, may also be appropriate.

Some low-level concerns may raise issues of misconduct or poor performance. The Headteacher should consider whether this is the case taking into account advice from the Head of Safeguarding and The People Team. It is important that there is close liaison and appropriate information sharing between the Headteacher, the Head of Safeguarding and Human Resources so a holistic view of the individual can be taken.

Where a low-level concern does not raise misconduct or poor performance issues, it will not be subject to a formal process however it may still need to be discussed with The People Team.

When considered with any other low-level concerns that have been shared about the same individual and the issue should be re classified as an allegation, due to the harm/risk of harm threshold being perceived to require consideration then the allegation should be dealt with in accordance with the managing allegations policy.

Record Keeping

The Headteacher keeps a separate written record of decisions made in relation to allegations against staff which is accessible by the Head of Safeguarding. These are stored confidentially and will include a comprehensive chronology of concerns, how the matter was followed up and resolved and notes of any action taken, and decisions reached (and justification for these), both formal and informal. Records will be reviewed to ensure they have been dealt with promptly and appropriately. Reviews should consider any potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. These reviews will be recorded as evidence they have happened.

References

Low-level concerns will not be included in references. References will only include substantiated (LADO) safeguarding allegations.

Part Three: Safer Recruitment (Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure)

Introduction

TCES North West London adopts a consistent and thorough process of safe recruitment to ensure that those recruited to work with our students are suitable. This includes ensuring that safe recruitment and selection procedures are adopted which deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuitable to work with them.

Our safer recruitment practice includes those persons who may not have direct contact with children, but because of the nature of their role will be seen as safe and trustworthy.

We follow Safer Recruitment Practices to:

- Ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on their competencies, values, abilities, and suitability, compared to the role's person specification.
- Ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently, not discriminated against on any protected personal characteristic, including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance regularly reviewed and published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) and the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Ensure that TCES meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults by carrying out all pre-employment checks required by this policy.

Permanent Staff Recruitment Procedure

Stage 1 Advertising

The Headteacher should complete a Request to Recruit form with details for the role requesting to be filled, and once it is authorised, collaborate with The People Team to decide a timetable for the recruitment process of the role required. The job description, person specification and other documents to be sent to applicants should be reviewed and updated as necessary. It should be ensured that the application form seeks all relevant information and includes relevant statements about references etc. The application form should also include whether the candidate currently has a DBS disclosure on the Update Service.

All recruitment advertising material should contain a policy statement to the effect that Safer Recruitment practice is followed.

If the role is to be advertised through agencies, then those suitable agencies on the approved agency list will be contacted by The People Team and provided with the timetable, job description and person specification and asked to source suitable candidates.

All information given to an interested applicant should highlight the importance placed by TCES on rigorous selection processes and should stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly, and that where a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is appropriate, the person will be required to complete an application for a DBS disclosure straight away. Adverts will also state whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974.

The job description should clearly set out the extent of the relationship with, and the degree of responsibility for, children and adults at risk with whom the person will have contact. To this effect, the advert will include the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description.

The person specification should explain:

- The qualifications and experience needed for the role.
- The competencies and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate.
- How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process.

The application form should ask for:

- Full personal information, including any former names by which the person has been known in the past, current address and national insurance number; and
- A full history of employment, both paid and voluntary, since leaving school, including any periods of further education or training and the reasons for any gaps in employment; and
- Details of any relevant academic and / or vocational qualifications; and
- Details of referees/reference; and
- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

Stage 2 Referencing

The application form should request both professional and character references, one of which should be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Additional references may be asked for to cover the past 5 years. For example, where the applicant is not currently working with children and/or adults at risk, but has done so in the past, a reference from that employer should be asked for in addition to that from the current or most recent employer if this is different.

Wherever possible references should be obtained prior to the interview so that any issues of concern raised by the reference can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate during interview. Gaps in employment should also be discussed during interview.

References should contain objective verifiable information and to achieve this, the TCES reference pro-forma with questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children and/or adults at risk should be provided. This includes the referee being asked to confirm whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the applicant has had any allegations made against him / her or concerns raised which relate to either the safety or welfare of children and young people or about the applicant's behaviour towards children or young people. Details about the outcome of any concerns or allegations should always be sought.

If the applicant claims to have specific qualifications or experience relevant to working with children which may not be verified by a reference, the facts should be verified by contacting the relevant body or previous employer and any discrepancy explored during the interview.

For contractors, the above approach will be taken prior to offering work.

Stage 3 Shortlisting

All applicants should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

Safer recruitment means that all applications should additionally be:

- Checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed. Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned to the candidate for completion.
- Scrutinised for any anomalies or discrepancies in the information provided.
- Considered with regard to any history of gaps, or repeated changes, in employment, or moves to supply work, without clear and verifiable reasons.

Shortlisted candidates should be contacted to arrange a mutually suitable time for interview. Once this is agreed an interview pack should be sent to the candidate. This pack should include:

- An invitation to interview letter including the list of documents to bring.
- ID requirements, specifying that 3 forms of ID are required with at least 1 of:
 - photographic ID,
 - proof of Date of Birth
 - proof of address (dated within the last 3 months)
- Job description and person specification
- Self-disclosure form
- Details on the company and specific site
- A map and directions of how to get to the interview location
- Policy on employment of ex-offenders
- Policy on Diversity and Equal Opportunities

Candidates should also be asked to bring original or certified copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his / her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

With the guidance of The People Team, the interview panel should consider carrying out an online search (including social media) as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which TCES North West London might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Stage 4 Interviewing

A panel of interviewers should be arranged with available times and dates agreed. The panel should consist of at least one person who has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training (ideally all panellists should have undertaken the training, and Safer Recruitment training must be updated every 2 years) and the authority to appoint, as well as appropriately qualified senior staff (e.g. for a SENCo role, one panellist must hold a NASENCo qualification) and for more senior roles the panel should consist of 3-4 people. The panel should meet before the interviews and agree the interview format, issues and questions, assessment criteria and standards.

Questions should be set which test the candidate's specific skills and abilities to carry out the job applied for.

The candidate's attitude towards working with children and/or adults at risk in general should be tested and their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of service users in particular.

Any gaps and changes in employment history should be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from information supplied by the candidate or by the referee.

TCES has a two-section interview with the first stage being standard questions regarding suitability of the candidate to work with children and young people. This section specifies that the application form should be scrutinised as a check for gaps in employment and any gaps should have the reason for them written on the form including any breaks for raising a family.

The first part of Section 1 asks the candidate to confirm that they are physically and mentally fit to perform the role, and to confirm that they are able to fully understand all questions put to them in the interview process both verbally and in written form, or if there is anything that would affect their ability to do so.

It also informs them that they will be required to complete a medical questionnaire and may be required to complete a medical with a medical professional if successful. Another question asks for confirmation that the candidate has completed the self-disclosure form and understood the need for disclosing any previous convictions, cautions, reprimands, warning, police arrests or Schedule 5 notices including those with no further action taken.

It is TCES policy that any non-disclosure at interview of any such information is a potential case of gross misconduct and may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment or termination of the contract of employment at a later date.

If appropriate, the candidate should be asked for details to enable The People Team to carry out a DBS disclosure application.

The second part of the Interview consists of competency-based questions specific to the role and separately tasks (e.g., literacy and numeracy tests or written questions on curriculum or finances) may be set depending on the role.

Stage 5 Offers of Appointment / Contract

The Hiring Manager should inform The People Team as soon as a decision is reached after the interview process, completing a Request to Appoint form, and send over all completed tasks and interview documentation. Deciding whether to appoint an individual to a role must be based upon the entire selection process. Appointments are made on the overall suitability of the candidate, not on the urgency of the appointment.

The People Team will then make a conditional offer of employment to the suitable candidate following discussions with the recruiting manager and receipt of the interview summary sheet.

The offer of appointment is made conditional on the satisfactory completion of the following pre-appointment checks and should be tailored specifically according to which checks are outstanding:

Verification of Identity, address, and qualifications

All candidates are required to provide photographic identification to prove their identity, as well as documents to prove they are eligible to work (right to work) in the UK. As standard we require 3 forms of identification, including photographic ID and proof of address, in turn this satisfies the requirements of ID verification for DBS applications. Candidates are asked to submit their documents prior to interview, with administrators taking verified copies to provide to TCES People Team.

All candidates appointed for a qualified role (teacher, therapist, social worker) require the verification of their qualifications before starting the role.

- Qualified Teachers must hold qualified teacher status (QTS) or qualified teacher learning and skills status (QTLS). QTS is checked with their Teacher Reference Number (TRN) and Date of Birth through the DfE Teacher Services – Employer Access; QTLS is checked through the Society for Education and Training’s (SET) online register.
- Therapists must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), with their Surname and/or Registration Number checked against the HCPC online register.
- Social Workers must be registered with Social Work England (SWE), with their name and/or Registration Number checked against the SWE online register.

References

Candidates are required to provide reference details to cover a minimum period of the last five years. The People Team will contact these referees to gain written references. TCES require a minimum of two references and cover all employment dates during this period. TCES send out specific reference forms for referees to complete, ensuring that references confirm dates of employment, absences, safeguarding, appropriateness for the role.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All TCES staff and volunteers who undertake “regulated activity” will have an enhanced DBS check carried out for them by TCES and our third-party DBS partners. This will include a Children’s Barred List check, ensuring that no one barred from working with children (Under 18s) is able to work at TCES. All employees, regular contractors (i.e., Governors) will have a new DBS applied for every 2 years as part of our policy.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update Service

When applicants are appointed into a role, they may already have a DBS through another provider. If this DBS is on the Update Service, then TCES are able to use this in lieu of a TCES DBS being completed and returned.

The Update Service ensures that, although the printed certificate is immediately out of date, any new information is added to the candidate’s DBS. The Update Service is provided for an annual subscription and is valid as long as the individual continues to pay the fee.

Applicants who have lived or worked outside of the UK

For applicants who have worked or been a resident outside of the UK in the previous five years, we are required where possible to check the applicant’s criminal record from the relevant authority in those countries; this guidance stems from the Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance, found [here](#).

The specific Home Office guidance for applying for overseas police checks is found [here](#). If the applicant is not able to gain an overseas police check due to the legislation of the country they were in, then a letter of good conduct should be obtained instead from their employer in that country.

Prohibition from teaching check

For qualified teaching staff, The People Team undertake checks using the applicants’ Teacher Reference Number (TRN) through the Teaching Regulation Agency to confirm qualified teacher status (QTS), induction status and status of any prohibition or interim prohibition orders. Teachers who gained Qualified Teacher Learning & Skills (QTLS) are checked against the register of the Society for Education and Training and must have valid current membership attached to their status. Prohibition from “teaching work” checks will be completed on any member of staff identified to be completing “teaching work”.

Prohibition from education check

The People Team carry out checks through the [Government website](#) search function to determine whether or not the individual has been barred from working in an education setting.

Prohibition from management check

Through the Teaching Regulation Agency, appointed applicants to Senior Leadership roles in our schools and services, and all senior members of the Central Services team, are checked against the Section 128 list. Individuals on this list are subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, which prohibits, disqualifies, or restricts them from being involved in the management of an independent school, academy or college. This check is completed on all school based senior leaders (part of the SLT team) as well as Central Services staff.

Medical Fitness

All staff are required to confirm they are mentally and physically fit to fulfil duties of their role under the Teacher Regulations 1999. As we are not occupational professionals, we require a third-party service to provide determination on whether an individual is fit to work and/or what reasonable adjustments might be required only once a post has been offered. TCES is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments. Our current provider ensures that standard online medical questionnaires from candidates are reviewed by a registered nurse and suggested reasonable adjustments provided within a fitness to work certificate.

Temporary Staff Recruitment Procedures

Stage 1 Choosing Candidates

1. Planning

The Headteacher should collaborate with The People Team to confirm that the role is in the budget and then to decide a timetable for the recruitment process of the role required. The job description, person specification and other documents to be sent to agencies should be reviewed and updated as necessary.

2. Vacancy Advertisement

The role is given to agencies on the approved agency list for the relevant area, provided with a timetable and relevant documentation and asked to source candidates.

3. CVs on receipt

All CVs received should be scrutinised with any anomalies or gaps in employment noted to explore if the candidate is considered for the short-list. *If the post is urgent, then as much information as possible should be found out on the possible candidates from the agency.*

4. Shortlisting

Once all the applications have been scrutinised a short-list should be drawn up of the most suitable candidates.

Stage 2 Pre- Interview & Interview

NB – For urgent placements the suitable candidate will need to be chosen from discussion with approved agencies. To be an approved agency the agency must have been approved by HR, with agreements made on compliance, the rates for staff, plus any possible buy-out fees.

1. Interview arrangements

A panel of interviewers should be arranged with available times and dates agreed. The panel should consist of at least one person who have undertaken the Safer Recruitment training and have the authority to appoint and for more senior roles should consist of 3-4 people. The panel should meet before the interviews and agree the interview format, issues and questions, assessment criteria and standards.

2. Invitation to Interview

Once the available times have been set, each candidate's relevant agency should be contacted by The People Team to arrange a mutually suitable time for interview. The agency should be reminded that candidates must bring as a minimum, photographic ID with them.

3. Interview

At the start of the interview the identity and qualifications of the candidates should be verified by scrutiny of the appropriate original documents. Copies of the original documents should be taken and placed on file. The interview should explore the candidate's suitability for working with children as well as their suitability for the post.

Stage 3 Post Interview

4. Conditional offer of temporary employment

The Headteacher should inform the agency as soon as a decision is reached on the candidate. The Headteacher will contact the agency and ask them to complete the agency vetting checklist for the worker. This form asks the agency to confirm all the relevant vetting checks have been completed on the worker. All completed forms are sent to The People Team. No temporary worker involved with children can start work until this form is complete and authorised by The People Team. This vetting covers all the same checks as expected for a permanent member of staff.

Upon arrival of the chosen candidate on their first day, their photographic ID and DBS should be checked and verified. Each candidate must read through and confirm their understanding of an induction pack that covers Health and Safety, Child Protection, Behaviour Management, Confidentiality, and the Emergency Reporting Structure.

Starting work pending Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments are completed when required in collaboration with the hiring manager, The People Team, and applicant, before starting work within the job role. Risk Assessments are completed as a last resort, due to delays in the compliance process, where previous checks have been made recently but are not current.

Risk Assessments are used to determine risks, the severity of those risks, and make decisions on how to mitigate those risks to some degree, or completely, within the bounds of TCES policies and procedures, and allow an individual to start in a role when safe, practical, and necessary. There may be risks to our pupils or other staff by not having an individual start prior to full completion of pre-employment checks.

All risk assessments must be agreed and signed by the Director of Children and Families and/or Schools Proprietor.

Starting work pending the receipt of enhanced DBS

A risk assessment must be completed for an individual to start work with TCES before receipt of a TCES DBS, or when the individual does not already hold a DBS on the Update Service. Individuals are likely to have a recent DBS (less than 12 weeks since issue date), which is not on the update service, through an alternative supplier. Previous DBS disclosures, references and work history will be taken into account. Risk assessments can be completed for individuals who have a TCES DBS in process. There must be suitable justification for requiring the member of staff to start pending the completion of the DBS, and an agreed plan for minimising any risk to pupils.

Starting work pending information on enhanced DBS

In the event that relevant information, whether in relation to a previous conviction or otherwise, is provided by an applicant voluntarily during the recruitment process or through the checking of a DBS, TCES will consider the following before reaching a recruitment decision on the individual: relevance of the conviction or information to the position being applied for; the type and seriousness of any offence or information; the length of time since the offence or information occurred; patterns of offending behaviour; circumstances surrounding the offence / explanation offered by the individual; changes in circumstances / work completed since the conviction or information; remorse and actions of the individual since the conviction or information.

Due to the high-risk nature of our pupils and the regular contact with children and their personal information, it is TCES' policy to consider the risk to be too high to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences (taken from Home Office Circular 16/2005):

- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Infanticide
- Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) or other serious acts of violence
- Rape, or other serious sexual offences
- Kidnapping or false imprisonment
- Class A drug related offences
- Robbery, burglary, or theft.

A full list is attached to each risk assessment during completion of the form.

For roles involving access to money or holding budget responsibility, TCES considers it to be high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception, or fraud.

Individuals may wish to dispute any information contained within a DBS disclosure; they must take this up directly with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Where practical TCES will defer a final decision upon the appointment.



Appendix 1: Key Contacts

TCES CEO & Proprietor:

Thomas Keaney
Tel: 020 8543 7878
Thomas.Keaney@tces.org.uk

TCES Head of Safeguarding:

Tashanna Egbochue
Tel: 020 8543 7878
Tashanna.Egbochue@tces.org.uk

TCES Create Primary Executive Headteacher:

Katrina Medley
Tel: 0208 543 7878
Katrina.Medley@tces.org.uk

TCES North West London Headteacher:

Carley Stephenson
Tel: 0208 749 5403
Carley.Stephenson@tces.org.uk

TCES North West London Designated Safeguarding Lead

Roza Sheikani
Tel: 0208 749 5403
Roza.Sheikani@tces.org.uk

TCES North West London Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:

Sandra Bennett (SENCO) – Sandra.Bennett@tces.org.uk
Petrece Stern (Lead Therapist) – Petrece.Stern@tces.org.uk

Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (MASH)

Consultation line – 0208 825 5236 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)
Referrals – 0208 825 8000 (24 hours)

Ealing LADO Service

asv@ealing.gov.uk
0208 825 8930/07890 940 241

CHILDLINE: 0800 11 11

This contact number is displayed prominently in a number of locations within the school for easy access for our children. A private telephone will be made available for any child who requests to call Childline.

Appendix 2: Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Flow Chart

Procedure to follow when you have reason to suspect that a child or young person is suffering, or likely to suffer, some form of significant harm, or when an allegation of abuse has been made.

If at any time a pupil gives you information about being harmed, or the prospect of being harmed, you must tell them that the information he or she has given to you will have to be shared with more senior members of staff and **cannot be kept confidential**. They are likely to need your support with this.

Immediately make a note of what the pupil has said (using their own words). If possible, this should be with another suitable adult present, but not the person against whom an allegation has been made. Listen carefully and do not ask leading or probing questions. Allow the pupil to clearly explain what has happened.

You must inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy(s) or the Head of Safeguarding in their absence immediately and seek their guidance. You must make direct contact with one of the above options – leaving messages is not acceptable.

Following discussion with the Head of Safeguarding, and if agreed, the **DSL must contact the appropriate Children's Services / MASH team, and direct the reporting staff member to record the concern on MyConcern** before the end of the school day.

For allegations regarding external person in position of trust (non-TCES) contact the LADO department in the borough where the individual is working / volunteering following agreement from the Head of Safeguarding.

Any allegation of child abuse against any member of TCES staff, including an allegation against yourself, must be treated with the utmost seriousness and passed immediately to the Headteacher. This should not be shared with the DSL. In the absence of the Headteacher, the matter should be reported to the Head of Safeguarding.

The Headteacher will inform the Head of Safeguarding as a matter of urgency. The Headteacher will manage the process alongside the Head of Safeguarding and The People Team and:

- Agree with MASH/LADO/Police what information can/cannot be shared with parents/carers.
- Contact the allocated Social Worker/Local Authority SEN Officer (where appropriate).

If the concern/allegation is against the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher, report the matter to the Head of Safeguarding and Proprietor.

If the concern/allegation is against the Proprietor, this must be reported to the Head of Safeguarding and the Director of People, who will consult with the LADO and Lead Safeguarding Governor on how to proceed.

The DSL must provide the following notifications within the timescales given below:

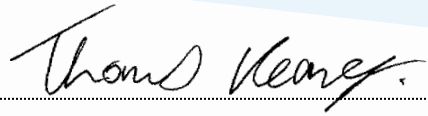
- A written report to the relevant Local Authority and Head of Safeguarding at the earliest opportunity on the day of the concern/allegation.
- A chronology of actions, including meetings, discussions, referrals and decision rationale must be added to MyConcern within 1 working day of the concern being raised.
- It is a statutory duty to inform the Secretary of State and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) within one month of the person leaving the school if a person ceases to work for the school and there are grounds for believing s/he may be unsuitable to work with children or may have committed serious misconduct.

Remember: If at any time you have concerns about a pupil, and especially if you suspect that they are suffering, or likely to suffer, some form of significant harm, you must tell the DSL immediately and record your concerns clearly and in writing. Not to do so would be considered a disciplinary offence.

Policy Sign Off

This policy was agreed and implemented by Thomas Keaney on behalf of TCES:

Signed:



Thomas Keaney

CEO & School Proprietor

Date of next formal review:

September 2024