

The PLACE Independent School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

(Please also refer to Responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect

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Outcome

Children feel safe and are safe. Children understand how to protect themselves and feel protected and are protected from significant harm including neglect abuse and accident.

Reference guides

Working together to Safeguard children, DfE 2018¹

Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2020²

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused³

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children⁴

NPCC when to call to call the police⁵

Copies of all policies are kept within our library area on staff Share point.

What we do

The PLACE Independent school recognise that children/young people who are Looked After are particularly vulnerable to abuse both within and outside of the care system. It is the duty of EVERYONE employed within education to protect children/young people from abuse and to promote their welfare.

All staff within The PLACE Independent School are provided with safeguarding and child protection training as part of induction process and are provided with copies of Keeping children safe in education 2019 part one and Annex A. Also copies of Policies including behaviour for learning, role of the DSL, prevent and Children missing from education.

It is the responsibility of all staff to liaise with LADO to ensure this policy runs within the guidelines of the local authorities safeguarding procedures.

The PLACE Independent school safeguarding lead is the school's proprietor and The Head Teacher Cate Tumman in management.

This procedure and guidance applies whenever it is alleged that a person who works with children/young people has, in any connection with her/his employment or voluntary

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912592/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_Sep_2020.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

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<https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf>

‘activity with a child/young person’:

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

This procedure applies to situations when:

- There are suspicions or allegations of abuse by a person who works with children/young people in either a paid or unpaid capacity – as a permanent, temporary or agency staff member, contract worker, consultant, volunteer, residential staff, approved foster carer, child minder or approved adopter
- It is discovered that an individual known to have been involved previously in child abuse, is or has been working with children/young people
- If an allegation relating to a child/young person is made about a person who undertakes paid or unpaid work with vulnerable children/young people, consideration must be given to the possible need to alert those who manage her/him in that role.

Prohibited Acts in Education

- Child Abuse
- Discrimination against a child
- Child exploitation
- Violence against a child
- Corporal punishment
- Any similar acts and
- Bullying or peer abuse

Definitions of Prohibited acts

“Violence against children committed in schools” - refers to a single act or a series of acts committed by school administrators, academic and non-academic personnel against a child which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or other abuses including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. It includes, but is not limited to the following acts:

1. Physical violence
2. Sexual violence
3. Psychological violence
4. Other acts of violence

“Corporal Punishment” - refers to a kind of punishment or penalty imposed for an alleged or actual offence, which is carried out or inflicted, for the purpose of discipline, training or control, by a teacher, school administrator, an adult, or any other child who has been given or has assumed authority or responsibility for punishment or discipline.

“Bullying or Peer on Peer Abuse” – Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as a peer on peer abuse. Peer on peer abuse can take many forms. When referring to peer on peer abuse this is wilful aggressive behaviour that is directed towards

a particular victim who may be out-numbered, younger, weak, with disability, less confident, or otherwise vulnerable, this can include (but is not limited to):

- a. Bullying (including Cyber-bullying)
- b. Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- c. Physical abuse (hitting, kicking, biting, shaking, hair pulling)
- d. Sexting
- e. Initiating hazing type violence or ritual.

Definition of Vulnerable Child

A vulnerable child/young person is a person under the age of 18 and dependent on others in part of whole for their day-to-day well-being.

Additionally, they are, or might be, at risk, from mistreatment (including a criminal offence) through acts of omission, or commissioned by those they depend on, or from, whom they cannot defend themselves.

A child who has previously been “looked after” by a local authority. (see LAC & PLAC Policy)

Under this definition, therefore, vulnerable children/young people may typically include people

who are emotionally challenged, children/young people with learning, physical or sensory disabilities and children/young people who have mental health problems. Safeguarding also falls under the same guidelines for children/young people (0-18 years) under OFSTED guidance.

Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

The types and their definitions of abuse for the purpose of these procedures are as follows. Indicators of each type of abuse are also listed.

Material/Financial Abuse

Acts by others resulting in misuse, or misappropriation of money, property and possessions and/or blocking access to these and other material goods. This includes the theft of such items by another person/people.

Indicators

- Inadequate money to pay bills
- Unexplained recent money withdrawals
- Items going missing
- Inadequate clothing
- Negative responses to necessary affordable expenditure
- Extraordinary interest shown in the vulnerable child/young person’s assets or property

Physical Abuse

Acts by others resulting in misuse of medication, physical injury without satisfactory explanation; injury inflicted with intent, or through lack of care (neglect).

Indicators

- Multiple bruising inconsistent with a fall
- Black eyes, slap or kick marks, other bruises
- Abrasions particularly around neck, wrists and ankles
- Scalds especially with a well-defined edge from immersion in hot water
- Hair loss confined to one area (scalp may be sore and tender to touch)
- Frequent minor accidents without seeking medical advice
- Unexplained fractures

Neglect

Behaviours which result in the vulnerable child/young person's basic needs not being met.

This also

includes hygiene, medication, nutrition and hydration, and institutional neglect.

Indicators

- Poor personal hygiene and dirty clothing
- Ill-fitting clothes or inappropriately dressed
- Infections/pressure sores
- Weight loss/dehydration
- Unexplained failure to respond to prescribed medication
- Lack of choices: deprivation of liberty (DOL) Withdrawal/lack of eye contact

Sexual Abuse

Involvement of the vulnerable child/young person in sexual activities or relationships which they do not want or understand and to which they are unable to give informed consent

Physical Indicators

- Evidence of sexually transmitted disease or vaginal infection
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviours
- Inner thigh bruising or pain/bruising in the genital area
- Inability to sit down or walk comfortably
- Sleeping disturbances
- Eating disorders
- Extreme nervousness/agitation
- Lack of eye contact

Behavioural Signs

- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour e.g. precocious sex play including excessive masturbation. (This may be expressed in actions, words or drawings)
- Excessive need for love and affection – this may be expressed in 'seductive behaviour'
- Difficulty in trusting other children/young people and members of the peer group
- Sudden changes in behaviour/mood for no apparent reason
- Self-destruction tendencies-suicidal attempts, self-mutilation, hair pulling
- Depression or anxiety
- Aggressive behaviour including hostility, irritability and defiance of authority figures

- Withdrawal from society/peer groups/communities

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Action or neglect by others which has a harmful effect on the emotional well-being of an individual (including domestic abuse).

This could include:

- Shouting, swearing, insulting behaviour, threats and ignoring
- Deprivation of the individual's rights to choice, information and privacy
- The withholding of security and affection
- Lack of stimulation
- Deliberate humiliation or intimidation

Indicators

- Disturbed sleep pattern
- Passivity or depression
- Low self-esteem
- Confusion
- Very fearful or anxious
- Tearful or withdrawn behaviour
- Change in appetite or unusual weight loss
- Seeking to leave, or running away

Social Abuse

The vulnerable child/young person is deprived of the right to engage in activities or to see friends and relatives or to have other social contacts.

Indicators

- Loss of independence
- Lack of access to television, radio, books and magazines
- Lack of access to transport
- Limited access of other people to the Home
- Restricted access to other parts of the Home
- Non-attendance at services, clubs, social activities etc.
- Failure to provide for citizen rights (i.e. voting on elections)

All staff should be that safeguarding incidents and or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between the children outside of the school environment.

Extra familial harms- this takes a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms include (but not limited to) Sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence.

Child sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage

of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity.- See CSE & CCE Policy

‘Honour Based’ Violence (HBV)

Incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community.

This could include:

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Practices such as breast ironing.

All forms of HBV are abuse regardless of the motivation and should activate the schools safeguarding procedures.

In instances of FGM the staff should report directly to the police if there appears that any FGM has been carried out, NOT report to the DSL first.

Preventing Radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extreme ideologies and radicalisation- see Prevent policy.

Mental Health & Well being

- All staff should also be 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.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children’s experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- More guidance Preventing and tackling bullying⁶
Mental health and behaviour in schools⁷
Promoting children and young peoples emotional health and well being⁸

Procedures for responding to abuse

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

7

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools_.pdf

8

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWP_draft_20_03_15.pdf

Abuse suspected/disclosed/discovered

In following these procedures, staff must keep detailed recordings **throughout the process**. At Stage 1 this is particularly important. Information will be required for the Incident Form, so it is vital that the key facts for this are gathered at this first stage of the process.

Note down exactly what a complainant or a referrer discloses to you. Try to distinguish and separate in your recording's factual information from expressions of opinion. Complete the incident form as soon as possible.

If a disclosure is made to you by a vulnerable child/young person, accept at this stage what that person is saying. Avoid making any comments other than to be comforting and sympathetic.

Handling Disclosures

Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicion of abuse.

- If you can, write a brief note of what they are telling you while they are speaking (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said, complete incident form as soon as you can) – and keep your original notes, however rough. You must sign, date and record the time on these notes and where possible ask the person speaking to you to sign the notes as accurate. If you don't have the means to write the time, make note of what was said as soon as possible afterwards.
- Do not give a guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – if you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it (see below). If asked, explain that is you are able to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell the people who absolutely have to know.
- Don't ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (e.g. "did he do X to you?") – just ask "what do you want to tell me?" or "is there anything else you want to say?"

During the discussion you should remain calm and react by:

- Listening carefully and ensure the vulnerable child/young person knows that you are taking what he/she says seriously
- Reassure the child/young person that he/she is doing the right thing in telling you
- Do not blame or appear shocked or angry
- Show empathy and concern; do not comment or make judgements
- Assure them you will help them to stop it happening
- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator; if it is a colleague, do not mention the allegation to any person other than your manager
- If the reported incident has happened recently, do not contaminate or remove any forensic evidence.
- Write everything down and, involve the Line Manager and Responsible Individual

Do not arrange for the child/young person to have a medical examination; await instructions from the Placing Authority Child Protection Team or the duty team. In case of

emergency where medical treatment is necessary this must be discussed and agreed with the child/young person's social worker/child protection team or the duty prior to medical appointment.

Reporting Procedures

Following a disclosure or discovery of abuse, staff must inform the Head Teacher immediately, unless that person is the subject of the allegation, in the absence of the Head Teacher, the school proprietor must be contacted.

Anyone receiving the allegation about staff or Management must report the concerns and not make an early decision about whether the allegation is true. Disciplinary action may be taken if allegations are not reported and handled in accordance with the procedure.

On referral, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must immediately gather initial information as follows:

- Any initial recordings from the staff member to whom the disclosure was made including a completed Incident Form
- Any relevant information from case files on the person(s) involved
- Details from other agencies known to be involved
- At this stage the Designated Safeguarding Lead should not commence any further interviews with staff or children/young people.

This matter must then be reported to the School Proprietor/Safeguarding Lead.

This matter must then be reported to the safeguarding lead, school proprietor to alert them for possible further action and any guidance required. This matter should be discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer LADO at the local Children's Services Department (helped by your notes), the child/young person's Placing Authority Children's Service Department, their Child Protection Team. The local children's Services Department will give the service guidance on what to do next. They will set up as necessary an investigation as that is their statutory job. (If the allegation is about the Manager then you should contact the Director). Children's Services should only be contacted if the Manager, Area Manager and Directors are unavailable for advice and guidance.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or school proprietor in the absence of the Head Teacher) is responsible for making immediate contact with the relevant child/young person's Local Authority if there is an allegation/suspicion of abuse of a vulnerable child/young person.

The child/young person's social services Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) should be contacted only in emergency situations when immediate action is required to protect a vulnerable child/young person.

The social work team will take responsibility for co-ordination of the investigation/assessment of the alleged abuse.

Early Help Procedures

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) set out a clear expectation that local agencies and schools will work together and collaborate to identify those children with additional needs and provide support as soon as a problem emerges. Providing early help is far more effective in promoting the welfare of children- and keeping them safe- than reacting later, when any problems, for example neglect, may have become more entrenched. The importance of using a child-centred approach in following the child's journey is also emphasised. To achieve this, members of staff involved in the Early Help process must have a clear understanding of the needs and the views of the individual child in their family and community context.

Our school is committed to ensuring everything possible is done to prevent the unnecessary escalation of issues or problems. Children, young people and their families will be offered help when needs and/or concerns are first identified and, as a consequence of the early help offered, children's circumstances will improve and, in some cases, the need for more intrusive and intensive services are lessened or avoided.

The guiding principles of Early Help are:

- High quality early identification and intervention for all children who need it, as well as effective integrated support for children with the most complex needs;
- preventative approach: we aim to work with families to enable them to build resilience and improve their capacity to help themselves should problems arise in the future;
- early intervention may occur at any point in a child's life;
- children, young people and their families are listened to, practice is focused on their needs which is captured in the Early Help Assessment;
- The journey of the child is captured through their wishes and feelings;
- To achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families, we see early interventions and prevention as a shared responsibility, where agencies work together, jointly 'holding the baton' for children and families;
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

Staged intervention is an inclusive approach, involving parent/carers, children and young people, our school, relevant professionals and support services, which allows our school and practitioners to make informed and proportionate responses to need. There are four stages: Universal, Vulnerable, Complex and Acute. Each stage provides a solution focussed approach to meeting needs at the earliest opportunity, with the most appropriate and least intrusive level of intervention.

Our school will most likely provide support to children and their families at Stage One (Universal) and Stage Two (Vulnerable) of the staged intervention approach. This means that we will work with children and families at the earliest possible point to help them by listening to their needs and developing a support plan which takes into account any access that may be required to additional resources, expertise or to consider any adjustments that can be made in school. We will also support children and families who may need further support through the use of the "Early Help

Assessment “, and the organisation of a “Team Around the Family”, a team which consists of members of staff from the school, parents/carers, the child or children (if it’s appropriate) and other professionals from services who may be able to support the family. The diagram on the next page helps explain this process a bit further.

Initial Evaluation of Allegations

The LADO and employer should consider whether the allegation/concern is within the scope of this procedure, if further details are needed and whether there is evidence/information that establishes if there is some foundation to any allegation.

The allegation may be allegation:

- That they 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 he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

If there is cause, to suspect a child/young person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a decision should be made to hold a strategy meeting.

OFSTED is to be informed as appropriate.

Criminal offence suspected, but significant harm threshold not reached

If ‘significant harm’ is not considered an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the LADO must immediately inform CAIU and convene a joint evaluation to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion should involve the employer and other agencies as appropriate.

If the police decide to undertake an investigation, there should be consideration whether matters of disciplinary process could be taken forward in parallel with the criminal process or await the completion of police investigation and/ or prosecution.

Investigations by police/ enquiries by children’s Social Services/ Children’s Social Care not required.

If clear from the outset, following initial evaluation or from the conclusions of strategy discussions, that neither police nor Children’s Social Services/Children’s Social Care need to be involved, the LADO should discuss the next steps with the employer. This discussion must take account of any information provided the police and Children’s Social Services/Children’s Social Care.

In some cases, further investigation may be needed to enable a decision on how to proceed. The LADO should discuss with the employer how and by whom the investigation will be progressed, including any need for the employer to commission an independent investigation e.g. due to the complexity of an allegation or availability appropriate resources.

Where the Alleged Perpetrator is a member of Staff

Where the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff, the Head Teacher should assess the allegation in conjunction with a Line Manager and following consultation with the LADO, inform the subject of the allegation/s. LADO should always first consult Police/Children's Social Services /Children's Social Care if either the agency is likely to be involved/a strategy meeting discussion is needed, in order to agree the content timing of any information given.

The school safeguarding lead should be alerted by the Head Teacher/Deputy.

The co-ordinating LADO should discuss the investigation of the allegation/suspicion of abuse with the Head Teacher or directors of The PLACE Independent school and the relevant Local Authority Officer. The co-ordinating LADO will ensure that arrangements are made for the alleged victim to be properly interviewed, assessed and supported. If there is evidence that a criminal offence has been committed, the Police should be contacted, and a decision taken as to their involvement.

The appropriate Manager within The PLACE Independent school will decide (as a matter of urgency) whether to suspend the alleged perpetrator to allow the investigation to proceed unhindered. Arrangements should be made for counselling and support of a member of staff against whom an allegation has been made.

NB: This should not interfere with any investigation and should be given by a nominated person not involved in the investigation.

Where disciplinary code is invoked, an 'investigating officer' will be appointed by The PLACE Independent school to link with the co-ordinating social worker and the Police, (if involved), over the conduct and direction of the investigation and the care/protection plan for the vulnerable child/ young person.

If there is a Police investigation, this should be completed before the 'investigation officer' commences an investigation and agreement with the Police should be sought as to timing. It will not normally be necessary to await the outcome of a court case before instituting disciplinary action if sufficient evidence is available.

It will be necessary in the investigation to identify if anyone else cared for by the alleged perpetrator is likely to have been abused and to agree a message concerning the absence of the alleged abuser to colleagues, service users and relatives.

Staff subject to disciplinary proceedings should be kept informed of the allegations, progress of the investigation and given adequate support where necessary.

If there is a disciplinary hearing, it should be adjudicated by a Senior Line Manager who has not been involved in the investigation.

If the Local Authority Officers are not directly involved in the investigation, the co-ordinating

social worker should ensure they are informed of any outcome. It may be appropriate, (depending on outcome), for the Local Authority Officers to initiate a review focusing on whether management arrangements were at fault in failing to prevent an abusive incident and whether changes are needed to operational policies, staffing arrangements or service design to minimise risk of abuse in the future.

Where the Alleged Perpetrator is another Vulnerable Child/Young person

Careful discussion will be needed with the co-ordinating social worker regarding the role of the police in the investigation/assessment, where an offence appears to have been committed.

If the vulnerable child/young person is to be the subject of legal proceedings appropriate legal representation will need to be found and an 'appropriate adult' identified.

A decision will need to be taken whether the alleged perpetrator's family are to be informed about the incident.

An assessment will need to be made of the likelihood of the alleged perpetrator further abusing the alleged victim or other service users. It may be necessary to hold a separate meeting to consider the needs of the alleged perpetrator.

The PLACE Independent school Safeguarding and allegations lead is the school proprietor.

External contacts for Safeguarding

Children CYPS and First Response Duty

Team

Leicestershire

Referrals can be made to 0116 3050005

childrenduty@leics.gov.uk

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

(MASH) Referrals can be made to

0300 500 80 90

Mash.safeguarding@nottscgcsx.gov.uk

Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)

www.lrlscb.org (Leicestershire and Rutland) for further information and an electronic Agency

Referral Form. (For Working together to Safeguard children's Guide).

The electronic Agency Referral Form is secure and should be used by professionals and members of the public to report concerns regarding a child or young person to our First Response Children's Duty electronically. (Nottinghamshire Leicestershire).

Should the referring person be unable to use the secure electronic link, paper/printed versions can be faxed to 0116 305 0011 or posted to the following address:

First Response Children's Duty Leicestershire County Council, Eastern Annexe,
County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8SR.

Or

MASH, Mercury House, Little Oak Drive, Sherwood Business park, Annesley,
Nottinghamshire. NG15 0DR.

LADO

Kim Taylor and Lovona Browne

Allegations Manager

Safeguarding and Improvement

Unit Room 600

County Hall

Glenfield

Leicestershire

LE3 8RL

0116 3058161