



## Safeguarding Policy for Learning Grove Education

### 1. Introduction:

Learning Grove Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who attend our Forest School alternative provision. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we strive to create a safe and nurturing environment where all children and young people can thrive. This policy outlines our commitment to protecting children and young people from harm, including abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

### 2. Principles:

Our safeguarding policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation, have the right to be protected from harm.
- We have a duty to act promptly and appropriately in response to any concerns about a child's welfare.
- We will work in partnership with parents/carers, schools, and other agencies to safeguard children.
- We will ensure that our staff are trained and equipped to safeguard children effectively.

### 3. Aims:

This safeguarding policy aims to:

- Prevent abuse and neglect from occurring.
- Identify children who may be at risk of harm.
- Provide support to children who have experienced abuse or neglect.
- Create a safe and supportive environment for all children.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to safeguard children.

### 4. Legislation and Guidance:

This policy is informed by relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education



## 5. Responsibilities:

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Cheryl Cooper  
learninggroveeducation@gmail.com is responsible for overseeing all safeguarding matters at Learning Grove Education.
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):** Samantha Glenn supports the DSL and acts in their absence.
- **All Staff:** All staff have a responsibility to be vigilant for signs of abuse or neglect, to report any concerns to the DSL or DDSL, and to follow this safeguarding policy.
- **Learning Grove Management:** Management is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively, providing training to staff, and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

## 6. Procedures for Reporting Concerns:

Any concerns about a child's welfare, including suspicions of abuse or neglect, should be reported immediately to the DSL or DDSL. If the DSL is unavailable, staff should follow the local safeguarding children board's procedures.

- **Record all concerns:** Keep a written record of the concern, including the date, time, nature of the concern, and any information provided by the child.
- **Do not investigate:** Do not attempt to investigate the concern yourself. Your role is to report the information to the appropriate person.
- **Follow the DSL's guidance:** The DSL will provide guidance on the next steps, which may include contacting social services or the police.

## 7. Responding to Disclosures:

If a child discloses abuse or neglect, staff should:

- Listen carefully to the child.
- Acknowledge the child's disclosure.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Record the disclosure in detail.
- Report the disclosure to the DSL or DDSL immediately.

## 8. Recruitment and Training:

Learning Grove will ensure that all staff are safely recruited, including appropriate background checks (e.g., DBS checks). All staff will receive regular safeguarding training, including training on:



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- Recognising the signs of abuse and neglect.
- Reporting procedures.
- Responding to disclosures.
- Safeguarding legislation and guidance.
- Online safety.
- SEND needs and adaptations.

## **9. Online Safety:**

Learning Grove is committed to keeping children safe online. We will:

- Educate children about online safety.
- Implement appropriate filtering and monitoring systems.
- Have clear policies and procedures for dealing with online safety incidents.

Due to the nature of setting computers are not usually accessed by students. Staff will have secured passwords for shared information and documents and should not share these with anyone.

## **10. Working in Partnership:**

Learning Grove will work in partnership with parents/carers, schools, social services, and other agencies to safeguard children. We will share information appropriately and attend multi-agency meetings when necessary.

## **11. Confidentiality:**

Information about a child's welfare will be kept confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis. We will comply with data protection and GDPR legislation.

## **12. Equality statement:**

Learning Grove recognises our obligations under the Equality Act 2010; that we must not unlawfully discriminate against children because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation.

Some children have an increased risk of harm, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. We give special consideration to children who:

- have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities.
- are young carers.
- may experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.



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- Have English as an additional language.
- are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation.
- where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence.
- are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation.
- are asylum seekers.
- are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.
- are looked after or previously looked after.

## 13. Recruitment:

Our Directors have strategic leadership responsibility for Learning Grove's safeguarding arrangements, ensuring compliance with all duties under legislation. We have regard to Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE), ensuring policies, procedures and training in our school is effective and comply with the law at all times.

We will ensure that:

- All staff will hold an enhanced DBS check.
- Leaders subject to a Section 128 check.
- There is a named safeguarding officer who assured that the Single Central Record is checked and in line with KCSIE.
- The school has an effective Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures in place, and the policy is available publicly via the school website or other means. The policy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis or earlier if required.
- The school has a staff behaviour policy or code of conduct and that this is provided to all staff and volunteers on induction. The policy includes acceptable use of technology, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.
- The school operates safer recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children; and that any panel involved in the recruitment of staff has at least one member who has undertaken the Safer Recruitment Training in line with Children's MARS Standards of Safer recruitment.
- Any shortlisted candidates will be informed that we may conduct an online search as part of due diligence checks in the recruitment process.
- Learning Grove has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the local authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- Learning Grove is doing all they can to limit children's exposure to risks from the IT system, ensuring appropriate electronic filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly reviewing their effectiveness. There is limited need for IT within the Learning Grove setting, but this is still taken seriously.
- All staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training.



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- The leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified
- Online safety policy and procedures are in place and training and support are provided for staff and pupils to ensure that there is a good understanding of child protection issues related to electronic media.
- A senior member of the school's leadership team is appointed to the role of DSL who will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, this is Cheryl Cooper.
- The school has one or more deputy DSLs who are trained to the same standard as the lead DSL, this is Samantha Glenn.

Directors will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Directors are fully implemented, and followed by all staff.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the DSL and other staff to discharge their responsibilities including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings and contributing to the assessments of children.
- There are arrangements in place for safeguarding supervision for the DSL and the Deputy DSL(s).
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle blowing policies and use of the Children's MARS Professional Resolution & Escalation Protocol. The NSPCC's 'What you can do to report abuse' dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8am-8pm Mon-Fri and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- The DSL and DDSL are supported in providing a contact for the school to provide a report and attend Initial Child Protection Case Conferences, reviews and Looked After Children Reviews out of school term time when needed.
- Allegations regarding staff or any other adults in school are referred to the Local Authority Designated.
- Officer (LADO), as set out in the Managing Allegations procedure.
- Staff undertake appropriate safeguarding training.
- Individuals are referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child).
- There is always adequate DSL cover during the school day.

The DSL is expected to refer cases:



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- Of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care.
- To the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- Where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required.
- Where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

## **14. Supporting the child and partnership with parents**

Learning Grove Education recognises that the child's welfare is paramount, however good child protection and safeguarding practice and outcomes rely on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents/carers. Whilst we may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect any child.

Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age and understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why, ensuring we will always hear and listen to the child's voice.

We will endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents.

The DSL will determine which members of staff "need to know" personal information and what they "need to know" for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child. Information sharing and managing the child protection file. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

The DSL should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in Part one and Part two of KCSIE. When children leave the school or college (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection 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. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as



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designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN in colleges, are aware as required.

## **15. Computing; filtering and monitoring.**

There is a complete policy for this that should be followed.

Learning Grove will ensure that an appropriate filtering and monitoring systems is in place and regularly review their effectiveness. The leadership team and relevant staff will have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

Our Directors and proprietors will consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

All staff are clear on:

- The expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, which is included in their safeguarding training. For example, part of their role may be to monitor what's on pupils' screens.
- How to report safeguarding and technical concerns, such as if:
  - They witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed.
  - They are able to access unsuitable material.
  - They are teaching topics that could create unusual activity on the filtering logs
  - There is failure in the software or abuse of the system.
  - There are perceived unreasonable restrictions that affect teaching and learning or administrative tasks .
  - They notice abbreviations or misspellings that allow access to restricted material.

## **16. Staff responsibilities**

Our staff are particularly important, as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating. All our staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

Our staff are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help, which means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life and understand their role in it. From the foundation years to the teenage years.

All staff know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality,



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only involving those who need to be involved such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and local authority children's social care.

Our staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child but will be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

All our staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences are harmful. Eg children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened this could be due to their vulnerability, disability and or sexual orientation or language barriers.

This will not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to DSL/DDSL if they have concerns about a child. Our staff will determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

All staff are aware of policies and processes which support safeguarding, which includes the:

- Child protection policy (which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse).
- Behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct) should amongst other things, include low level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing
- Safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods.
- Role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction. The training is regularly updated.

In addition, all our staff receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least



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annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

All our staff are aware of the process for making a referral to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

All staff should :

- Read and sign to say that they understand and will fully comply with the school's policies and procedures.
- Read and sign to say that they understand parts 1 and 5 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
- Identify concerns as early as possible and provide help, to prevent concerns from escalating and identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.
- Attend annual whole school safeguarding training and other appropriate training identified.
- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Inform the DSL/DDSL of any concerns about a child immediately and before the end of the school day at the latest.
- Inform the Director/SLT of any concerns regarding an adult within school at the earliest opportunity.
- Act on the concern and make the referral themselves if they feel the concern is not being taken seriously or escalate concerns to the appropriate person.
- Ensure that timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- Ensure that fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.
- Ensure that the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.
- Never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.
- Will speak to the DSL (or deputy) if they are in any doubt about sharing information.

## **17. Organisations or individuals using school premises**

If we receive an allegation relating to an incident that happens when an individual or organisation is using our school premises for the purpose of running activities for children (ie community groups, sports associations, service providers that run extra-curricular activities), we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

## **18. Pupil information**



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In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names, contact details and relationship to the child of any persons with whom the child normally lives.
- Names and contact details of persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Emergency contact details (if different from above). We encourage all parents/carers to provide more than one emergency contact, providing the school with additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school (if different from above).
- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (eg Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc).
- If the child is or has been supported on a Child Protection Plan.
- If the child is or has been supported through an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Child in Need (CIN) process.
- If the child is Looked After Child (LAC) or previously looked after.
- Name and contact details of GP.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child

Learning Grove Education will collate, store and agree access to this information, ensuring all information held electronically is stored securely with due regard to meeting the data protection and safeguarding requirements.

## **19. Transfer of files**

When a child leaves the school, the pupil record, including child protection file which is separated from the main pupil record, is transferred to the new school as soon as possible. The child protection file is clearly marked Child Protection, confidential, for the attention of the DSL and a receipt of this transfer will be retained.

This information should be added to a record of transfer which the sending school keep until the child reaches their 25th birthday and must contain:

- Name and DOB of child.
- Name and address of receiving school.
- Date file(s) transferred with name and role of person who received it.
- Date sending school received confirmation of receipt of files from receiving school.
- Summary of case at the time of transfer eg Child Protection Plan: Neglect.

In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For



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example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Electronic documents that relate to the pupil file also need to be transferred, or, if duplicated in a master paper file, destroyed. Sending schools do not need to keep copies of any records in the pupil record except if there is an ongoing legal action when the pupil leaves the school. Custody of and responsibility for the records passes to the school the pupil transfers to.

The school which the pupil attended until statutory school leaving age is responsible for retaining the pupil record until the pupil reaches the age of 25 years. This school retains a copy of the child's chronology and any documents that the school created e.g. risk assessment in an archive, until the child reaches the age of 25 years, the receipt of the transferred file is kept alongside this archive. Any archived files are stored securely in the same way as an active file. If any records relating to child protection issues are placed on the pupil file, it should be in a sealed envelope and then retained for the same period of time as the pupil file. (DOB + 25 years). The Admissions Officer is responsible for sending such files.

The school can access further support from:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-in-schools>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>
4. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-in-schools>

## 20. Child protection procedures

Definitions:

- **A child:** any person under the age of 18 years.
- **Harm** means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- **Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.
- **Health** includes physical and mental health; maltreatment includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.
- **Extra-familial harm** - risks to the welfare of children that arise within the community or peer group.
- **Providing help, support and protection** (Early Help) means to 'support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chances of a problem getting worse.'



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All staff follow the school's child protection procedures which are consistent with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', Keeping Children Safe in Education and the North Lincolnshire Children's MARS guidance.

All staff will also have an awareness of specific safeguarding issues, in particular Domestic Abuse, Child Exploitation (CE), Radicalisation and the Prevent Duty, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Attendance and Children Missing from Education (CME) and Risk of Abuse Outside The Home (ROTH).

Staff will also be aware that behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger. All staff will also be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender-based violence/sexual harassment and sexting. Staff are clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.

Staff must act immediately and report concerns, including;

- any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered har (e.g. worrying drawings or play)
- any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
- any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present)
- any potential indicators of Child Exploitation (CE)
- any potential indicators of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- any potential indicators of radicalisation
- any potential indicators of living in a household with domestic abuse
- a referral to Children's Services and/or police must be made immediately if a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm or in immediate danger.

## **Responding to a disclosure**

Learning Grove staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.



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The DSL will ensure that the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Child protection processes will operate with the best interests of the child at their core.

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm.
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of school staff.
- clarify the information.
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. using TED technique – 'Tell me, Explain to me, Describe to me...'
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise.
- not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child.
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the DSL. Children need to know that staff may not be able to uphold confidentiality where there are concerns about their safety or someone else's
- reassure and support the person as far as possible.
- explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told.
- explain what will happen next and who will be involved as appropriate.
- record details including date and what the child has said in the child's words and pass to the DSL, or on an electronic system e.g. Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) and record any visible signs, injuries or bruises on a Body Map.
- record the context and content of their involvement, and will distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay.

## **Action by the DSL (or Deputy DSL) in their absence**

Following any information raising concern, the DSL will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child
- whether the child is subject to a child protection plan/Child In Need/Early Help
- information sharing guidance
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
- consulting with appropriate persons e.g Single Point of Contact
- the child's wishes

Then decide:

- to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/ or place the member of staff or others at risk.



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- whether to make a child protection referral to Children's social care because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately.

## Information sharing

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes. Learning Grove Education have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes. It would be legitimate to share information without consent where: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; and, if to gain consent would place a child at risk.

Arrangements are in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within Learning Grove Education and with local authority children's social care, the safeguarding partners and other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.

Information can be found at:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

## Actions following a child protection referral

The DSL or other appropriate member of staff will:

- make regular contact with the social worker involved to stay informed.
- wherever possible, contribute to the strategy discussion.
- provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent child protection conference.
- If the child or children are made the subject of a child protection plan, contribute to the child protection plan and attend core group meetings and review conferences.
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings.
- where in disagreement with a decision and concerns still remain will follow the Children's MARS escalation and resolution procedure.

## 21. Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if there are changes in legislation or guidance.

## 22. Visibility:

This policy will be made available to all staff, parents/carers, and volunteers.



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **1. Types of abuse**

**Abuse:** 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.

#### **Types of abuse**

**Physical abuse:** 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.

#### **Recognising Physical Abuse**

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a “cry for help” and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

**Emotional abuse:** 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 from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or



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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.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment.
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scape-goated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – difficulty relating to others.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 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 sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as peer on peer abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of sexual abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child’s age. Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties).

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed



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- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

**Neglect:** 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, for example, 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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

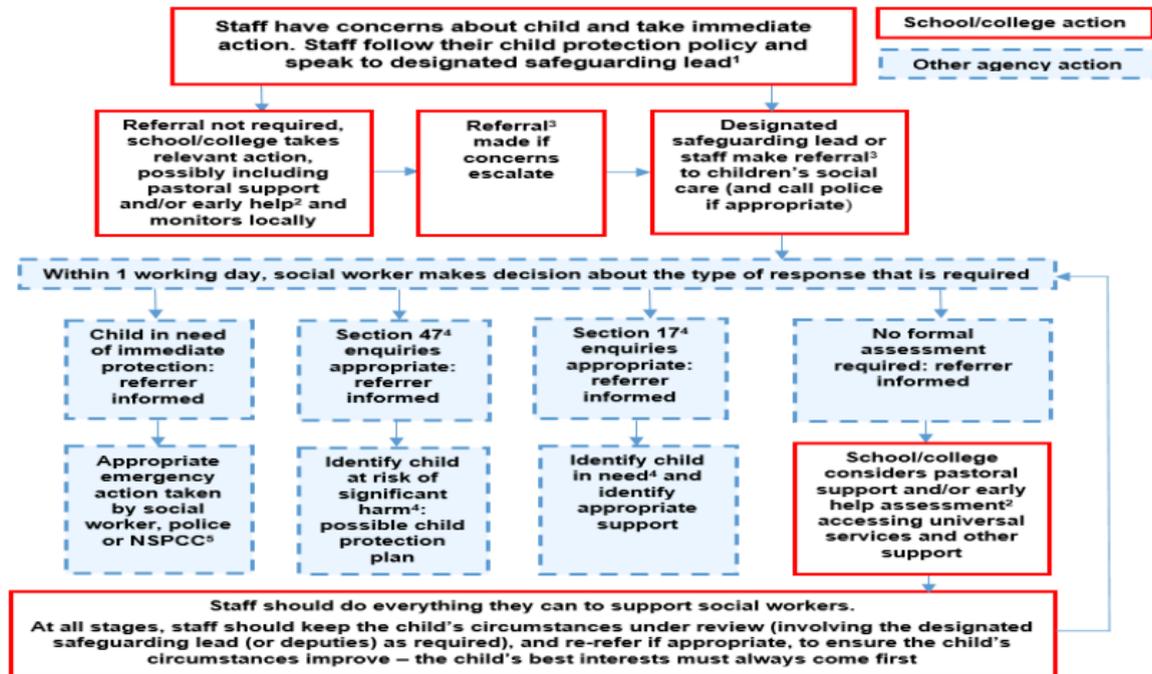
- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive period

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Allegation of Abuse**

Our staff maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned. When we are concerned about the welfare of a child, we will always act in the best interests of the child. When a member of staff suspects that any child may have been subject to abuse, or a child has disclosed that abuse has taken place, either to themselves or another child, the allegation must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy DSL, if the DSL is off site – unless it relates to these people. The DSL (or Deputy DSL if the DSL is off site) will ensure the allegation is acted on immediately, in accordance with the locally agreed Children's MARS procedures. If required a risk assessment will be carried out to determine the timescales and escalation of the allegation.

Actions when there are concerns about a child:



Further information can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What\\_to\\_do\\_if\\_you\\_re\\_worried\\_a\\_child\\_is\\_being\\_abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

## Guidance for all Staff on Dealing with Disclosure / Suspected Abuse / Neglect

### I. Dealing with disclosures of abuse:

- Always listen carefully and quietly – do not press for any evidence at all
- Remain calm and reassuring – do not dismiss the disclosure – do not show distress or concern
- Do not refute the allegation
- Show that you care through open and reassuring facial and body language
- Do not interrogate or ask leading questions (it could later undermine a case). Use of the TED questions; (Tell me, Explain, Describe)
- Ensure you take a written verbatim account of the child's disclosure using the appropriate Disclosure Form.

### II. At this point, take the following steps:

- Explain to the student that the disclosure must be reported – emphasise your trust in them
- Do not promise to keep the allegation secret or that 'everything will be alright'
- Reassure by telling the student that they have done the right thing in telling you, do not offer physical reassurance
- Do not admonish in any way e.g. 'I wish you had told me sooner'



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- Inform the DSL initially verbally
- Under no circumstances discuss the matter with any other person - if the allegations prove to be untrue, any such discussion would be deemed defamatory. Information to staff is on a 'need to know' basis at the discretion of the DSL
- If the child agrees, take them with you to the DSL

With the DSL, prepare a detailed report itemising:

- the information revealed by the student with absolutely no opinion
- actions taken by yourself, including when the suspicions were reported, to whom the suspicions were reported, and follow-up action taken within the School/Academy
- date and sign any written record of events and action taken and keep confidential and secure.
- you must keep, in absolute confidence, a copy of the report, as will the DSL
- The DSL keeps Child Protection records centrally and securely, and are not kept in the child's file.
- All staff are under a duty to report all suspicions of abuse to the DSL
- The DSL is responsible for passing on these concerns to Children's Services
- Accurate records are essential in the event of further investigations.

III. If you see or hear something that concerns you:

- Don't ignore it
- Write up on the School/Academy chronology sheet and seek advice immediately from your DSL
- Don't feel silly – if it worries you, someone else needs to know
- If it is something related to safeguarding, but not a child whose safety is immediately at risk – inform the appropriate person with your setting.
- If it is related to a child being at risk – see the DSL, or Deputy DSL immediately and definitely before the child goes home that day
- All staff may raise concerns directly with Children's Services, if they feel an incident is not being dealt with appropriately, or they are unable to locate relevant staff
- Concerns about adults in the School/Academy should be made directly to the Head Teacher/Director.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Body Map guidance**

Body maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries. Always use a black pen (never a pencil) and do not use correction fluid or any other eraser. Do not remove clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment. At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school take photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person. The body map below should be used. Any concerns should be reported and recorded without



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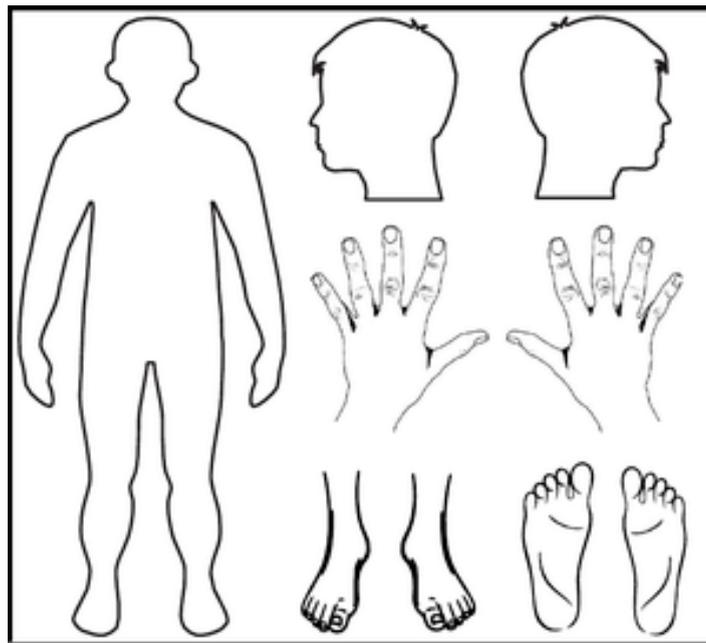
delay to Single Point of contact or the child's social worker if already an open case to social care.

When you notice an injury to a child, try to record the following information in respect of each mark identified e.g. red areas, swelling, bruising, cuts, lacerations and wounds, scalds and burns:

- Exact site of injury on the body, e.g. upper outer arm/left cheek
- Size of injury - in appropriate centimetres or inches
- Approximate shape of injury, e.g. round/square or straight line
- Colour of injury - if more than one colour, say so
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc.?
- Is mobility restricted as a result of the injury?
- Does the site of the injury feel hot?
- Does the child feel hot?
- Does the child feel pain?
- Has the child's body shape changed/are they holding themselves differently?

Importantly the date and time of the recording must be stated as well as the name and designation of the person making the record. Add any further comments as required. Ensure First Aid is provided where required and then recorded appropriately.

A copy of the body map should be kept on the child's concern/confidential file.





## **APPENDIX 4**

### Child-on-child abuse

All our staff are aware that children can abuse other children and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. Our staff play an important part in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. They will challenge inappropriate behaviours between children, that are abusive in nature and will not down play certain behaviours as “just banter”, having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” 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.

If there are no reports in school, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be that case that it is just not being reported. It is essential that all staff have a role in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos<sup>11</sup> (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

It is important to note that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a



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report or a member of school or college staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school or college should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or DDSL) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- whether there may have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator(s); and
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harm.

Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic) and will be kept under review, actively considering the risks posed to all students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The DSL/DDSL will ensure they are engaging with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. The school or college risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals and will be used to inform the school's or college's approach to supporting and protecting students and updating the school risk assessment.

The DSL response will include:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's or college's duty and responsibilities to protect other children
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behaviour has been displayed
- the ages of the children involved



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- the developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature)
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers
- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff and
- other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

The starting point regarding any report will always be that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated.

There are four likely scenarios for Learning Grove Education to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. It will be important in all scenarios that decisions and actions are regularly reviewed and that relevant policies are updated to reflect lessons learnt, with potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour being identified. Where a pattern is identified, Learning Grove Education decides on a course of action, considering whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur and where appropriate extra teaching time and/or staff training could be delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

The four scenarios are:-

- Manage internally
- Early help
- Referrals to children's social care
- Reporting to the Police

Further information:

<https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/clients-and-sectors/safeguarding/addressing-child-on-child-abuse.pdf>



## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Allegations against staff that may meet the harms threshold**

We will manage cases of allegations that might indicate a person may pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It will be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or member of staff (including volunteers) 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 he/she is unsuitable to work with children
- Behaved in way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

We will follow guidance in Keeping children safe in education and Children's MARS guidance see Children's MARS procedures "Managing Allegations Against People Who Work With Children". Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt seek advice from the local authority designated officer (LADO). Where it is identified that a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, we will contact children's social care and as appropriate the police immediately.

We have a duty of care to our employees. We will ensure we provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in a school or college is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is subject to the allegation.

We will:

- apply common sense and judgement
- deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently and
- provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation

### **Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold**

Learning Grove Education will promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of school are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Low level concerns does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold but that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:



- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

## **APPENDIX 6**

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm.

### **Child abduction and community safety incidents**

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff. It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at:

- <https://www.actionagainstabduction.org/>
- <https://clevernevergoes.org/>

### **Children and the court system**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds. The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Further information can be found:

- <https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/looking-after-children-divorce>



## **Children who are absent from education**

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. Our response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

## **Children Missing from Education (CME)**

All our staff are aware that children going missing Children missing education , particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff are aware of their school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

For the full Children's MARS Protocol visit:

<https://www.northlincscmars.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/1-Children-who-Runaway-or-go-Missing-from-Home-Care-Protocol-Jan-2024.pdf>

## **Children with family members in prison**

School understands that children with a parent(s) in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. They may require specific services and support. This may take the form of early help assessment and/or a referral to Student Welfare. Families and children of people in prison will be seen as families first and school will work to ensure their needs are appropriately met. This will include providing support to ensure the voice of the child is considered when seeking contact with a family member in prison.

The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.



## **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Learning Grove Education is aware that CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation. In some cases the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim. Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

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

## **Child-on-child abuse**

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children (including online). All staff should be clear about their school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse. Child-on-child abuse can take different forms, such as:-

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse)
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- consensual and non-consensual sharing nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- upskirting (which is a criminal offence) which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their



genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm

- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

## **Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

All staff will challenge the inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. It will be recorded, investigated and dealt with and the victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer-on-peer abuse will be supported. Ultimately, it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Learning Grove Education have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, it is never acceptable.

## **Children potentially at greater risk of harm**

Whilst all children should be protected, it is important to recognise that some groups of children, are potentially at greater risk of harm than others (both online and offline). They could be

- children who need a social worker (CIN or CP plans)
- children who are absent from education
- electively home educated children
- children requiring mental health support
- looked after children and previously looked after children
- care leavers



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- children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues
- children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT)

## County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

## Cybercrime

Children with skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing.



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It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

## **Domestic abuse**

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. Experiencing 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.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of peer-on-peer abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Further information can be found here:

<https://safelives.org.uk/resources-for-professionals/spotlights/spotlight-young-people-and-domestic-abuse/>

## **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

Learning Grove Education will follow the guidelines from the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) which has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage.



Further information can be found:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage>

## **So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)**

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take.

All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

## **FGM**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Further information can be found:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/female-genital-mutilation>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>

## **Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)**

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context. When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.



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However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. Mental health 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. We identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies.

Further information can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1069687/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_behaviour\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069687/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf)

## **Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism**

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. More information can be found at [Modern slavery](#).

## **Online Safety**

We ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology. It can include:

- bullying
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- sexual exploitation
- sexting (request for nudes).

## **Operation Encompass**

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the DSL in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

More information can be found here: <https://www.operationencompass.org/>



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## **Peer on peer/ child on child abuse**

Children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse) and it can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer on peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. This can include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate partner relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

## **Preventing radicalisation**

Children may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach.

**Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

**Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

**Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology, there are possible indicators that should be taken into consideration alongside other factors and contexts. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

However, it is possible to protect people from extremist ideologies and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism. As with other safeguarding risks, staff



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should 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 a deputy) making a Prevent referral. Although not a cause for concern on their own, possible indicators when taken into consideration alongside other factors or context may be a sign of being radicalised.

## **The Prevent duty**

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The Prevent duty is part of schools' wider safeguarding obligations. The DSL and other senior leaders are familiar with the Prevent duty guidance.

Further information can be found:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/theprevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation>

## **Kinship - Private fostering**

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 for children with a disability) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home.

A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of school staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children. Where the arrangements come to the attention of the school or college we will notify the local authority to allow the local authority to check if the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

Further information can be found:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-private-fostering>

## **Radicalisation**

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Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.



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The DSL is aware of the local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

## **Risk outside the home (ROTH)**

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online.

These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including:

- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups (such as county lines) (CCE)
- trafficking
- online abuse
- teenage relationship abuse (peer on peer abuse)
- influences of extremism leading to radicalisation

The Humberside Community Partnership Intelligence (CPI) Form (formerly known as PIF) allows professionals to share information that is putting a child at risk of ROTH.

<https://www.reportingcrime.uk/HPPartnershipIntelligence/>

## **Sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college.



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Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk.

## **Sexual violence**

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college.

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

**Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a



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report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment for a report of sexual violence should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- whether there may have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator(s)
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms, and
- the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Risk assessments should be recorded (paper or electronic) and should be kept under review. At all times, the school or college should be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

## **What is consent?**

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Further information can be found here:

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/about-sexual-violence/sexual-consent/>

## **Sexual harassment**

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- sexual "jokes" or taunting



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- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
  - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos. Further information available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>
  - sharing of unwanted explicit content
  - upskirting (is a criminal offence)
  - sexualised online bullying
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
  - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

Refer to Keeping children safe in education (Part 5) for full statutory guidance.

## Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any sex, can be a victim.

## APPENDIX 7

### Contact Details:

<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	Cheryl Cooper learninggroveeducation@gmail.com
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead (DDLs)</b>	Samantha Glenn
<b>North Lincolnshire’s Children’s Services Point of Contact (SPOC)</b>	01724 296500 (office hours) 01724 296555 (out of hours)



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<b>Allegations against/concerns about adult(s) working with children</b>	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) LADO@northlincs.gov.uk 01724 298293
<b>Police (emergency)</b> <b>Police (non emergency)</b>	999 101
<b>School Improvement Officer (Safeguarding)</b>	Sarah Stokoe 07385 005271 sarah.stokoe@northlincs.gov.uk
<b>Head of Service – Education Standards</b>	Karen Hackett 07385 410798 karen.hackett@northlincs.gov.uk
<b>Safeguarding Education Officer</b>	Helen Parker 07717 586534 helen.parker@northlincs.gov.uk
<b>NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline</b>	0800 028 0285
<b>NSPCC helpline</b>	0808 800 5000
<b>Prevent</b>	Stuart Minto 07717 588137 stuart.Minto@northlincs.gov.uk Karen Hackett 07385 410798 Sarah Stokoe 07385 005271 karen.hackett@northlincs.gov.uk

## Useful links

1. Children's MARS website <https://www.northlincscmars.co.uk/>
2. Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
3. Teacher standards  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1040274/Teachers\\_Standards\\_Dec\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040274/Teachers_Standards_Dec_2021.pdf)
4. What to do if you're worried a child is being abused  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419604/What\\_to\\_do\\_if\\_you\\_re\\_worried\\_a\\_child\\_is\\_being\\_abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)
5. Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info\\_sharing\\_advice\\_content\\_May\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf)
6. Children's act 1989 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>
7. Children's act 2004 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
8. Prevent duty guidance  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>



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## 9. Channel and Prevent multi-agency information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance>

This policy is intended to provide a framework for safeguarding children at Learning Grove Education. It is essential that all staff are familiar with this policy and follow it at all times. If you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding, please contact the DSL or DDSL.