

# TreeHouse School Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policy

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## 1. Purpose

TreeHouse School has zero tolerance of all forms of abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults and the purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for adult protection and safeguarding for all staff working in TreeHouse School. The term 'staff' includes staff, governors and volunteers, including beneficiaries who receive involvement fees and/or expenses. This policy should be read in conjunction with the adult safeguarding procedures.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Procedure to prevent and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect to all adults who may be at risk.

## 2. Background and need

This policy and its associated procedure are mandatory for all staff, as they must be aware of their individual and collective roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting adults at risk from abuse and neglect.

At TreeHouse School we recognise our responsibilities as set out in the [London Multi Agency Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures updated \(June 2019\)](#).

The legislative and regulatory requirements that TreeHouse School has to comply with in their safeguarding policies and procedures regarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect are set out in the Care Act 2014, the [Care Act factsheets and specifically factsheet 7: \(Safeguarding\)](#) and in [Chapter 14 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#) issued under the Care Act 2014.

### Link to Mission and Beliefs

TreeHouse School exists to help autistic young people and adults to learn, thrive and achieve. This can only be attained if young people and adults are safeguarded and protected from abuse and neglect and, where appropriate, prevented from becoming at risk of abuse.

## 3. Outcomes

As a result of the policy and associated procedure being followed, adults at risk will be better protected from the impact of abuse and neglect. Staff will take the necessary steps to safeguard and protect adults at risk where outlined in procedures, by contacting statutory agencies and/or, if appropriate, discussing concerns with the adult at risk (and on occasions when appropriate their parents/carers or advocates).

## 4. Key Principles

- This policy and corresponding procedures aim to achieve a culture in TreeHouse School, in which a proactive approach is taken to safeguarding, promoting, and protecting the rights of autistic students.
- All students attending TreeHouse School have the right to live a life free from abuse, harm, and neglect regardless of age, disability, sex identification, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity.
- All allegations, concerns or suspicions of abuse or neglect are taken seriously and responded to within the steps laid out in the corresponding procedure.
- To work in partnership with students at TreeHouse School and their families/carers.

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- To work in partnership with the local Safeguarding Teams and comply with the Pan London multi-agency Safeguarding Procedures.
- All staff have a responsibility to ensure they are informed, trained, and understand their duty to operate within this policy and procedure.
- All staff have a shared responsibility to take appropriate steps to protect students at risk.
- Trustees, Governors, the Executive Leadership Team, and the Senior Leadership Team have responsibility for ensuring effective governance and safe services and will achieve this through:
  - Effective, comprehensive Policies and Procedures
  - Implementation of Safer Recruitment principles and requirements
  - Effective monitoring of safeguarding
  - The provision of effective and comprehensive training.

## 5. The Policy Statement

This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff of TreeHouse School.

- TreeHouse School has **zero tolerance** of all forms of abuse, exploitation and neglect of adults.
- TreeHouse School is committed to the prevention of, and protection from, abuse and neglect of all adults at risk of abuse or neglect who come into contact with the organisation through its staff or representatives, in whatever capacity that contact occurs.
- TreeHouse School is committed to taking all necessary steps to stop abuse happening, whether that abuse is perpetrated by staff, family members, members of the public or other students.
- TreeHouse School is committed to its duty of care to all adults it has contact with. If there are concerns about staff perpetrating abuse, it will facilitate any action required to address this without delay. This will include actions required to address abusive behaviours and attitudes.
- When staff have been dismissed because of concerns about abuse, or neglect, they will be referred to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and professional bodies.
- TreeHouse School is committed to ensuring that adults at risk of abuse or neglect are given information, advice, and support in a form that they can understand, and have their views included in all forums where decisions are made about their lives.
- TreeHouse School is committed to challenging and investigating student on student abuse within local Safeguarding of Adults Frameworks.
- TreeHouse School is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. That partnership will be with their consent when this is required and appropriate.
- TreeHouse School will publish online the Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. In addition, it will inform, in an appropriate format, all adults who use their services, that TreeHouse School has a duty to contact the home and host Local Authority Adult Social Care department if there are concerns that an adult at risk may be being abused.

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- TreeHouse School is committed to providing a curriculum that enables adults and other users of its services to learn to keep themselves safe and how to raise concerns if they do not feel safe in all aspects of their lives.
- TreeHouse School is committed to ensuring that senior members of the organisation will be without delay fully briefed and consulted with by staff on any concerns about abuse or neglect: the process for this is detailed in the procedure.
- The Assistant Head of School of TreeHouse School is the DSL, with the Head of School being the Deputy DSL. The DSL takes lead responsibility for both students and adult protection and wider safeguarding arrangements and will advise on situations where students may need the support of an Appropriate Adult under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).
- The Director of Education (Organisational Lead) has overall responsibility for all safeguarding matters within the charity. See Appendix 3 for a full chart of DSLs and Deputy DSLs.
- TreeHouse School is committed to working within the London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures (June 2019) and the procedures of any other local authorities where any adult at risk may reside.
- TreeHouse School is committed to working with all home Local Authorities where its students reside, which includes the host London Borough of Haringey Local Authority Designated Officer and/or Adult Social Care department and the police if there are any concerns about, or perceived risks, in respect of staff at the school.
- TreeHouse School is committed to ensuring all staff, including those with designated responsibilities, have received appropriate levels of up-to-date safeguarding training.

## 6. Risk Assessment

Should this policy and associated procedure be ignored or disregarded, the possible outcomes are:

- **For adults at risk of abuse or neglect** – being placed at further risk of harm and neglect;
- **For staff** – may be subject to inquiry, investigation internally or externally for failing to take appropriate steps, internally may then be subject to a disciplinary process;
- **For the DSLs, Organisational Lead, the Chief Executive and Board of Trustees and the Governing Bodies** – possible inquiry and report from the Charities Commission and regulators or recommendation from local authorities to regulators;
- **For TreeHouse School** – possible risk of public scrutiny and ultimately risk of prosecution and/or additional inspections from regulators and ultimately deregistration. All the above can lead to negative media attention and damage to the reputation of the school.

## 7. Definitions

**Safeguarding Adults at risk of abuse, exploitation or neglect** means protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse, exploitation or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action, taking into account their Mental Capacity at the time.

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### The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- is a student at treehouse school at the age of 18 or over; and
- has need for care and support (whether or not a local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Most adults that use TreeHouse School services are likely to fall within these definitions should they be at risk of abuse or neglect, generally, though not always, as a result of a lack of capacity within the meaning of the [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#).

**Abuse and Neglect:** Refers to: 'ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment that are not physical); the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development'. (*Who Decides?" Law Commission, 1997*). Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Abuse** was defined by 'No Secrets' (2000, DH and Home Office) as: '...a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons'.

## 8. Legislation, Regulatory Requirements and Guidance.

For TreeHouse School to meet their regulatory and statutory responsibilities, the following legislation and associated guidance are of significance (N.B. This is not an exhaustive list).

- The principal source (since 2015) is the Care Act 2014 (section 42). This defines abuse and sets out the statutory duties and the institutional responsibilities for those duties.
- The (Care Act) Care and Support Statutory Guidance provides the detail in relation to both the meaning of wellbeing and safeguarding. Chapter 14 sets out in detail the duties found in sections 42 to 46 of the Care Act, including definitions of the aims and objectives of adult safeguarding activity and a representative range of types of adult abuse and neglect.
- Following publication of the Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding in 2011, the pan-London Adult Safeguarding Editorial Board issued Protecting Adults at Risk: London multi-agency policy and procedures to safeguard adults from abuse, in conjunction with Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). This document was updated and reissued in June 2019.
- SCIE has published a range of advice on Safeguarding, specifically guides on the Care Act 2014, and e-learning resources on adult safeguarding.
- Making Safeguarding Personal LGA/ADASS 2019.

TreeHouse School services that are regulated must comply with service-specific regulations, which include ensuring there are measures in place for the prevention of abuse.

- [Use of Reasonable Force in schools: Advice for Head Teachers, Principal, Staff and Governing Bodies \(DfE 2013\).](#)
- [Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Students with Severe Behavioural Difficulties \(DOH/DfES 2002\)](#)
- [Disclosure and Barring Service 2012 \(last updated guidance 2018\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.](#)

### Also relevant:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008

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- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Regulated Activities Regulations 2014
- The Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009 (as amended, March 2015)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice 2007 (*both to be updated when the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 come into force in 2020/21*)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Moving and Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (2002)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Making Safeguarding Personal 2019
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- [Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)

## 9. Equality Statement

Some students have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some students with respect to recognising or disclosing it. Autistic students may be more vulnerable to abuse than their neurotypical peers due to their autism. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise students' diverse circumstances. We ensure that all students have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to students who:

- have special educational needs or disabilities.
- are young carers.
- may experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, sex identification or sexuality.
- have English as an additional language.
- are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or 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 or have been in care, foster homes or adopted.

Appendix 2 gives detailed information regarding specific safeguarding issues including FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Procedure
- Restrictive Physical Intervention
- Code of Conduct
- Selection and Recruitment
- Attendance
- Compliments and Complaints
- Health and Safety
- Attendance
- E-safety

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- PSHE and RSE
- Healthcare and First Aid
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Curriculum Statement
- Privacy notices
- Data Protection
- Whistleblowing
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation
- Mental Health and Wellbeing of Autistic Children and Young People.

## 11. Monitoring arrangements

This procedure and the linked Procedure will be reviewed **annually** by the Director of Education. At every review, it will be approved by the Education Committee and will be provided to the Governing Body for information.

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## Appendix 1: Types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a student. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a student.

**Psychological/Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a student such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the student's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a student, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- conveying to a student that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- not giving the student opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on student. these may include interactions that are beyond a student's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the student participating in normal social interaction.
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- serious student on student abuse (including cyberbullying), causing student frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of student.

### Financial abuse

Financial abuse is a crime. It is the use of a person's property, assets, income, funds or any resources without their informed consent or authorisation. It includes:

- theft.
- fraud.
- exploitation.
- undue pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance, or financial transactions.
- the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- the misuse of an enduring power of attorney or a lasting power of attorney, or appointeeship.

### Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses sexual exploitation, forced labour, child slavery, forced criminality, domestic servitude, forced marriage, organ harvesting and human trafficking.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a student or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the student is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.
- non-contact activities, such as involving student in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging student to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a student in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

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Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can another student. The sexual abuse of one student by another student is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a student's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the student's health or development.

A student may be neglect by a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- protect a student from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a student's basic emotional needs.

### **Self- neglect**

Is defined as behaviour that results in neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and may include such behaviour as hoarding.

**Domestic abuse** can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional. It can impact on a student through seeing, hearing, or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it through their own intimate relationships.

### **Discriminatory abuse**

Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs, or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. It can be a feature of any form of abuse of an adult at risk, but can also be motivated because of age, sex identification, sexuality, disability, religion, class, culture, language, 'race' or ethnic origin. It can result from situations that exploit a person's vulnerability by treating the person in a way that excludes them from opportunities they should have as equal citizens, for example, education, health, justice and access to services and protection.

### **Organisational abuse**

Organisational abuse is the mistreatment or abuse or neglect of an adult at risk by a regime or individuals within settings and services that adults at risk live in or use, that violate the person's dignity, resulting in lack of respect for their human rights. Institutional abuse occurs when the routines, systems and regimes of an institution result in poor or inadequate standards of care and poor practice which affects the whole setting and denies, restricts, or curtails the dignity, privacy, choice, independence, or fulfilment of adults at risk. Institutional abuse can occur in any setting providing health, education, and social care. A number of inquiries into care in residential settings have highlighted that institutional abuse is most likely to occur when staff:

- receive little support from management.
- are inadequately trained.
- are poorly supervised and poorly supported in their work.
- receive inadequate guidance.

The risk of abuse is also greater in institutions:

- with poor management.
- with too few staff.
- which use rigid routines and inflexible practices.
- which do not use person-centred care plans.
- where there is a closed culture.

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## Appendix 2: Specific Safeguarding Issues

### Missing from Education

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing student is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a student goes missing from school, we will invoke the school's absconding policy and procedure.

A student going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and such students are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation.

There are many circumstances where a student may become missing from education, but some students are particularly at risk. These include students who:

- are at risk of harm or neglect.
- come from Gypsy, Roma, or traveller families.
- come from the families of service personnel.
- go missing or run away from home or care.
- are supervised by the youth justice system.
- cease to attend a school.
- come from new migrant families.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a student is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local adult protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the home and host Local Authority adult social care team, and the police, if the student is in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

### Radicalisation/ Prevent

Radicalisation refers to the process through which people may be drawn into extremism and ultimately into terrorist activities. It is recognised that vulnerable adults can be more at risk of radicalisation. Radicalisation is comparable to other forms of grooming and exploitation. Through the Prevent and Contest strategies and the passing of the [Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) radicalisation has now been included within the Safeguarding definitions for vulnerable adults. It is part of the Safeguarding function to identify those at risk of being drawn into radicalisation and act in accordance with the [Channel Duty guidance 2015](#), by working with the local Channel panels to assess and protect individuals wherever possible. For more information refer to Ambitious about Autism/Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy.

### Modern Slavery

This encompasses slavery, sexual exploitation, forced labour, child slavery, forced criminality, domestic servitude, forced marriage, organ harvesting and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave masters use coercion and deception to force people into a life of abuse or servitude. There have been a number of cases where the victim has been an adult with learning disability.

### So-called honour-based abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to students affected by or at risk of FGM or other forms of so-called honour-based abuse.

The Adult Safeguarding Procedure document outlines the steps to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a student is at risk of FGM. Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

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- a student confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place.
- a mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out.
- having difficulty walking, sitting, or standing, or looking uncomfortable.
- finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously).
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- avoiding physical exercise or missing physical education (pe).
- being repeatedly absent from school or absent for a prolonged period.
- demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour.
- being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations.
- asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

Potential signs that a student may be at risk of FGM include:

- the woman’s family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider).
- FGM being known to be practised in the woman’s community or country of origin.
- a parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out.
- a family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other forms of so-called honour-based abuse.
- having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM.
- having limited level of integration within UK society.
- confiding to a professional that she is to have a “special procedure” or to attend a special occasion to “become a woman”.
- talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the woman out of the country for a prolonged period.
- arrangements being made for a ‘party’ involving only female members of the family or community.
- requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM.
- talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a woman may tell other students about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion).
- being unexpectedly absent from school.
- having sections missing from her ‘red book’ (student health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication.

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Other forms of so-called honour-based abuse include breast ironing, whereby a girl’s breasts are regularly beaten with hot stones, paddles or similar in an attempt to prevent the breasts from developing. It also includes the tight binding of a girl’s chest to prevent breast growth.

### **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into marriage is a form of so-called honour-based abuse and is a crime. 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.

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Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e., we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a student is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the student about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- speak to the student about the concerns in a secure and private place.
- activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer.
- seek advice from the forced marriage unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk).
- refer the student to a pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or counsellor, as appropriate.

### Low level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – 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 harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with students.
- having favourites.
- taking photographs of students on their mobile phone, contrary to school/college policy.
- engaging with a student on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.

Low level concerns must always be discussed with the DSL and a decision must be made as to the appropriate course of action to be taken. This might include discussion with the home and host Local Authority if there is any doubt about the status of the concern.

### Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification. Visitors are expected to sign in using the automated system and wear a visitor's badge.

All visitors to our settings, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using School facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise students or staff. For more details see TreeHouse School's Visitors' Policy.

### Mental Illness

Mental illness, like physical illness, can range from having a few mild symptoms and feeling a bit 'under the weather' to being seriously ill. Mental illness is usually classified as mild, moderate, or severe and is characterised by a combination of abnormal emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and relationships with others.

These problems can be worsened for those with greater support needs, particularly if they are unable to communicate about their feelings or communicate their distress.

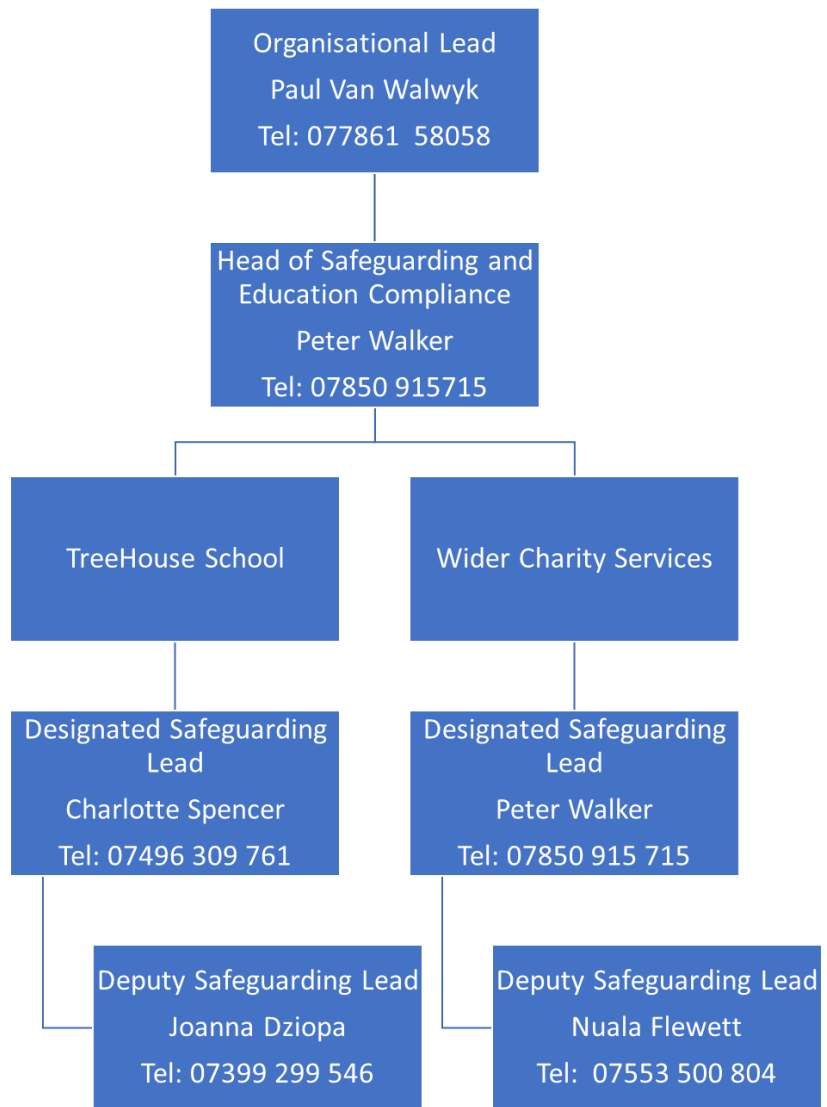
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Most mental illnesses can be successfully treated by self-management, talking therapies and/or medication. Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a learner/pupil should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the learner/pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal adult protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or Head of School/College.

For further information on Ambitious about Autism/Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust approach to mental health and wellbeing, refer to the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Autistic Children and Young People.

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### Appendix 3: Designated Safeguarding Leads



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