

Treehouse School

Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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1. Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for all staff and volunteers within Treehouse School. It should be used in conjunction with the child protection and safeguarding procedures which form part of this document, to prevent and reduce the risk of abuse to all children who may be at risk and who use TreeHouse School's services or come into contact with staff or volunteers.

Ambitious about Autism and The Autism Schools Trust aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting child protection and safeguarding issues.

2. Background and need

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

At Treehouse School we recognise our responsibilities as set out in the Pan London Child Protection Procedures and Guidance (5th edition) which can be found on the [London Child Protection Procedures website](#).

3. Link to Mission and Beliefs

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

4. Outcomes

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

5. Key Principles

- This policy and corresponding procedures aim to achieve a culture within Treehouse School, in which a proactive approach is taken to safeguarding, promoting and protecting the rights of children with autism.
- All children that use TreeHouse School's services have the right to live a life free from abuse, harm and neglect regardless of age, disability, gender, 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 children and their families/carers who receive a service as much as is possible and appropriate.
- To work in partnership with the local Safeguarding Children Teams and comply with the Pan London multi-agency Safeguarding Children Procedures.
- All staff have a responsibility to ensure they are informed, trained, and understand their duty to operate within this policy and procedure.

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- All staff and volunteers have a shared responsibility to take appropriate steps to protect adults at risk.

6. The Policy Statement

- This policy and associated procedure apply to all staff, volunteers, governors, trustees, representatives of TreeHouse School, including agency, temporary and volunteer staff.
- TreeHouse School has Zero Tolerance to all forms of abuse and neglect of children.
- TreeHouse School is committed to the prevention of, and protection from, abuse and neglect of all children who come into contact with the organisation through its staff, volunteers 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, volunteers, family members, members of the public or other service users.
- TreeHouse School is committed to its duty of care to all children it has contact with. If there are concerns about staff or volunteers perpetrating abuse, it will facilitate any action required to address this without delay. This will include actions required to address abusive behaviours and attitudes. On occasions, when staff have been dismissed because of concerns about abuse or neglect, they will be referred by Ambitious about Autism to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and professional bodies.
- TreeHouse School is committed to ensuring that children at risk of abuse or neglect are given information, advice and support in a form that they can understand and also have their views included in all forums where decisions are made about their lives.
- TreeHouse School is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers of service users. In respect of children who use the services of the charity, that partnership will be with their consent, when this is required and appropriate.
- TreeHouse School will publish online the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure. In addition, it will inform, in an appropriate format, all users of their services, and their parents or carers, that Ambitious about Autism has a duty to contact the local authority Children's Social Care Department if there are concerns that a child may be being abused or neglected.
- All parents/carers will be reminded annually that TreeHouse School has a duty to contact the local authority Children's Social Care Department if there are concerns that a child may be being abused or neglected.
- TreeHouse School is committed to providing a curriculum that enables all 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.

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- The Assistant Head (Pastoral) of Treehouse School is the DSL, with the Head of School being the Deputy DSL. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding arrangements.
- The Director of Education is the overall DSL/Operational Lead (OL) for Ambitious about Autism with responsibility for safeguarding. In the absence of the Director of Education the role will be delegated to another trained member of the Executive Leadership Team.
- During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. See Appendix 1 for a full chart of DSLs and Deputy DSLs.
- When the DSL is absent, the Head of School will act as cover for the school.
- If the DSL and the Head of School are not available, the Director of Education will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out-of-term activities).

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to the assessment of children.
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (Local Authority children's social care, Channel programme, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.
- Be aware of, and follow, the NPCC guidance on [when to make a direct referral to the police](#).
- Where learners have an allocated social worker as a result of concerns about abuse or neglect, ensure relevant staff are aware of this so that additional learning and/or pastoral support can be offered to the child.
- Liaise with the School's mental health lead.
- Liaise with HR to ensure appropriate referrals are made to the Disclosure & Barring Service, Teaching Regulation Agency and / or other regulatory bodies.
- The DSL will also keep the Organisational Lead informed of any issues and liaise with Local Authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate. The Organisational Lead in turn will brief and keep updated the Chief Executive and/or Chair of Trustees as appropriate.

TreeHouse School is committed to working within the Pan London Multi Agency Safeguarding Children policy and procedures and the procedures of any other local authorities where any child at risk may reside.

- TreeHouse School is committed to working with the London Borough of Haringey LADO and the police if there are any concerns about, or perceived risks, in respect of staff or volunteers at any service.
- TreeHouse School is committed to ensuring all staff and volunteers, including those with designated responsibilities, have received appropriate levels of up-to-date safeguarding training.

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7. Risk Assessment

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

- **For children at risk of abuse or neglect** – being placed at further risk of harm and neglect.
- **For staff and volunteers** – who 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 Alerting Managers, the Chief Executive and Board of Trustees and the Governing Bodies** – possible inquiry/investigation and report from the Charities Commission and regulators or recommendation from local authorities to regulators.
- **For Ambitious about Autism**– possible risk of public scrutiny and ultimately risk of prosecution and/or additional inspections from regulators and ultimately deregistration. All of the above can lead to negative media attention and damage to the reputation of the TreeHouse School.

8. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education’s statutory guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#).

We comply with this guidance and the procedures set out by our local multi-agency partnerships.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- Part 1 of the schedule to the [Non-Maintained Special Schools \(England\) Regulations 2015](#), which places a duty on Non-Maintained Special Schools (NMSS) to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- [The Children Acts 1989](#) and [2004](#), which provide a framework for the care and protection of children.
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers and other professionals to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by or at risk of FGM.
- Sexual Offences Act 2003, Serious Crime Act 2015 and Voyeurism Act 2019 which among other things, provide the framework for responding to allegations of sexual violence and harassment between pupils in schools and colleges.
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 \(exceptions order 1975\)](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions should disclose these to prospective employers.
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#), which define what ‘regulated activity’ is in relation to children and vulnerable adults.
- Statutory [guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools’ duties under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- The Disqualification under the [Childcare Act \(DUCA\) Regulation 2018](#) , which sets out who is disqualified from working in early years or later years childcare.

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This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#), our funding agreement and articles of association and with Charity Commission guidance in [Safeguarding duties for charity trustees](#) and [Safeguarding strategy](#) and how to report serious safeguarding incidents [Guidance on reporting serious incidents](#).

London Boroughs adhere to the Pan London Child Protection Procedures and Guidance (5th edition) which can be found on the [London Child Protection Procedures website](#).

9. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

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

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18. The term Children in this policy could also be referenced as Young People. For Young People in our services over the age of 18 please refer to our Adult Safeguarding Policy. OFSTED defines safeguarding as:

“Safeguarding is not just about protecting children, learners and vulnerable adults from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including:

- *Children’s and learners’ health and safety and well-being, including their mental health.*
- *Meeting the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.*
- *The use of reasonable force.*
- *Meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions.*
- *Providing first aid.*
- *Educational visits.*
- *Intimate care and emotional well-being.*
- *Online safety and associated issues.*
- *Appropriate arrangements to ensure children’s and learners’ security, taking into account the local context.*

10. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. Children with autism may be more vulnerable to abuse than their neurotypical peers due to their autism. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children’s diverse circumstances. 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 or disabilities.
- Are young carers.

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- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender 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.

11. The Procedures

11.1 Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility and hence is a whole organisational approach. This policy applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers and governors in TreeHouse School and is consistent with the procedures of Haringey Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Pan London Child Protection Procedures and Guidance.

We are aware of our responsibility to do all we can to support social workers, and to facilitate social workers to have access to children in order to undertake statutory assessments under s17 (child in need) or s47 (child in need of protection). Any staff member may be asked to contribute to an assessment and would have a statutory responsibility to do so.

Our policy and procedures also apply to extended schools/colleges and off-site activities, such as community access programmes, residential visits and work experience placements.

11.2 All staff responsibilities

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and review this guidance at least annually. The organisation has a process to track that staff have read and understood the statutory safeguarding guidance.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including the staff code of conduct, the role of and how to contact the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), online safety and acceptable use policy, the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- The early help process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
- The process for making referrals to Local Authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play.
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), honour based abuse and radicalisation. The organisation has a separate Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy.

Section 12 and Appendix 5 of this policy outline in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

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11.3 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Our DSL is The Assistant Head (PDWB) of TreeHouse School. The Director of External Affairs is the DSL for central charity staff. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding arrangements.

The Director of Education is the Organisation Lead and has overall responsibility for safeguarding. In the absence of the Director of Education the role will be delegated to another trained member of the Executive Leadership Team.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. See Appendix 1 for a full chart of DSL and Deputy DSL.

When the DSL is absent, the Head of School for Treehouse will act as cover for their school.

If the DSL and Head of School are not available, the Director of Education will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out-of-term activities).

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to the assessment of children.
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (Local Authority children's social care, Channel programme, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.
- Liaise with HR to ensure appropriate referrals are made to the Disclosure & Barring Service, Teaching Regulation Agency and / or other regulatory bodies.

The DSL will also keep the Organisational Lead informed of any issues and liaise with Local Authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate. The Organisational Lead in turn will brief and keep updated the Chief Executive and/or Chair of Trustees as appropriate.

The full responsibilities of the DSL are set out in their job description and at KCSIE annex B.

11.4 Governance

The Education Committee will approve this policy at each review and hold the Director of Education and Head of School to account for its implementation.

The Board of Trustees will appoint a senior board level member to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the board of Ambitious about Autism (AaA). This is always a different person from the DSL. In addition, AaA has a joint Safeguarding Board which meets three times each year to review and monitor child protection and safeguarding practice across the organisation. The Safeguarding Board reports to the Education Committee.

The Director of Education will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against a Head of Service.

The Chief Executive will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the Director of Education.

The Board lead will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the Chief Executive Officer.

Trustees must follow the specific guidance outlined in *How to report serious incidents in your charity* Sept 2017, *Charities: how to protect children and adults at risk* 2018 and *Strategy for dealing with Safeguarding issues in charities* Charity Commission Sept 2017.

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The Chief Executive will advise the Chair of Trustees when a safeguarding incident needs to be reported to the Charity Commission.

11.5 The Director of Education

The Director of Education is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of this policy as part of their induction.
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school/college and via the school/college website.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly.
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see Appendix 4).
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable.
- Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person.

11.6 Confidentiality

In TreeHouse School, the DSL has responsibility to ensure all concerns within the school are recorded, monitored and secured.

The Director of External Affairs is responsible for concerns that are not about pupils/learners at the school or college to be recorded, monitored and secured.

Our settings use a digital recording system, BehaviourWatch, which includes a discrete child protection module with appropriate security certificates in place. All staff are expected to record their concerns onto BehaviourWatch; these records are accessible only to the designated staff and Head of School and Director of Education.

All existing paper records are kept in a locked cabinet and in a secure place within the main school buildings.

Records will not be taken off the site without the express written permission of the Director of Education.

Access to these records (whether paper or digital) will be strictly limited on a need to know basis and controlled by the DSL and the Charity Lead and the Chief Executive. Where someone other than the designated staff, or Head of School, or Director of Education has reason to view a child's child protection file, this will be recorded on the child's chronology.

All electronic records will be held in a secure area with access limited by the DSL. If records are sent outside of the organisation, then the records would be password protected and/or sent via an encrypted email system such as Egress Switch.

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12. Recognising abuse and taking action

If you have a cause for concern that a child is in immediate danger or risk of harm, you must report it verbally immediately to children's social care and/or the police. You must inform the DSL verbally within two hours and enter a written report on BehaviourWatch within 24 hours.

If no Designated person is available, or the concerns are not within the school, then the Director of Education should be reported to directly.

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Procedures cannot predict every set of circumstances and if any member of staff/volunteer is dealing with a child protection or safeguarding matter, then they should raise concerns without delay, seek support through supervision and debrief with a senior manager at each stage in the process.

12.1 If a child is in immediate danger

Make a referral to children's social care and/or the police immediately if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm. Anyone can make a referral.

Tell the DSL (see section Appendix 1) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly. The procedures detailed here are mandatory and must be followed. The flow charts that accompany these procedures constitute the basic outline of the processes that need to be considered; each box on the flow chart has a related paragraph in these procedures. Responding to concerns that a child may be being abused or neglected, including disclosure by a child or young person

Discuss your concern or the incident / disclosure with the DSL or deputy without delay; you will then be asked to record your concern or the incident on BehaviourWatch as soon as possible. Also refer to flow chart Figure 1.

Recognition of signs and indicators of abuse

Recognition of the signs and indicators of abuse poses considerable challenges for most professional staff who work with children and do not deal with protection and safeguarding issue on a day to day basis. Identifying abuse of children with disabilities who may also present with a range of behaviors that challenge is not straightforward. It is crucial to effective safeguarding that all staff and volunteers are able to recognise signs and indicators of abuse and this requires acceptance that children with autism are more likely to be abused than children without disabilities. Appendix 2 offers a range of indicators and signs of abuse as well as examining some of the potential blocks to recognition and factors which can inhibit the taking of appropriate steps.

Raising a concern

Where a member of staff believes a child may be at immediate risk of abuse or neglect, or a child or young person makes a disclosure, staff will report this directly and without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If no Designated person is available, or the concerns are not within the school/college, then the Director of Education should be reported to directly. The staff member with the concern will then be asked to make a detailed record of the information on BehaviourWatch.

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Where staff have a safeguarding or pastoral concern or believe that a child may benefit from early help (but do not believe there is an immediate risk of harm) they will make a detailed written account of their concern or the incident on BehaviourWatch. The DSL or deputy may contact the member of staff for additional information or clarification.

Recording

The keeping of accurate and prompt recording is fundamental to effective safeguarding and all staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure all concerns are recorded appropriately. This requires those who raise concerns to make a written record on BehaviourWatch within two hours of raising any concerns. If more than one member of staff is present at an incident, each should make their own record.

The child protection facility of BehaviourWatch is designed to capture the essential information outlined below. If for some reason, an individual cannot make a digital record (a visiting professional, for example) they will be asked to make a written record instead which should include:

- Who they have concerns about (name of learner).
- Age of pupil / learner (if known).
- Date and time, they are making the record.
- Date and time the incident occurred (if this is known).
- What was observed, heard or noted that led to the concern being raised.
- Source of information (if the concern was not directly observed i.e. a parent informs a member of staff that he/ she has seen abuse indicators).
- Behavioural observations (noting that this is one of the most likely ways in which a member of staff is likely to note concerns).
- If a child or young person has made a disclosure, record what was said / communicated.
- Which senior manager has been reported to (in line with these procedures) and what initial actions were agreed.
- This record must be signed, and time dated by the person making the record and the relevant DSL.

The DSL will ensure that the concern or incident is logged on BehaviourWatch and the paper record is scanned into the system.

When reporting a concern to the local authority children's social care, the DSL will inform the Local Authority that a written record of the concern is available and will email details of the concerns to the local authority securely if requested.

If at any stage we or the Local Authority decide that no further action is to be taken, then the reason for this and who made the decision will be recorded.

Once a concern has been raised about a child, an individual child protection record will be created on BehaviourWatch. All subsequent actions/events following the reporting of a concern should be recorded in the digital file; which will then produce a chronology. Any documentation received digitally from the local authority, police or other agencies will be saved to the digital child protection file; paper documentation will be scanned in and the date of receipt logged.

Concerns that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm by a stranger or member of the public

If initial fact finding suggests that the concerns relate to a member of the public or a stranger, then this is to be reported to children's social care and the police without delay.

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Some Local Authorities in London indicate they will contact the police in such circumstances. It is essential that the police are informed so this needs to be clarified at the time of raising the concern. The DSL or deputy will take into account the NPCC guidance on when to contact the police. In such circumstances the police lead investigations and may need to interview staff or volunteers as witnesses. With the agreement of children’s social care, the DSL or deputy should inform the parents/carers of the child of the concerns <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>.

12.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a child protection or safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions; use TED (Tell, Explain, Describe) questions if you need to clarify what the child is telling you.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset.
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner.
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- Contact the DSL or deputy without delay; disclosures will almost always require referral to children’s social care.
- Record your conversation on BehaviourWatch as soon as possible using the child’s own words.
- If you made any initial notes before uploading the report to BehaviourWatch you must also sign and date the note and pass it on to the DSL.
- Remember that records of concerns, disclosures, initial notes, etc., may be shared with children’s social care, police or as part of legal action; it is therefore essential that you stick to the facts, and do not put your own values or judgement on the situation.
- If the child is at immediate risk, make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police directly (see 12.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so.

Remember that disclosure does not have to be verbal; a child may sign or communicate their worries or concerns non-verbally.

12.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM

The Department for Education’s Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs”.

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as ‘female genital cutting’, ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation’. Possible indicators that a learner has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a learner may be at risk, are set out in Appendix 5.

Any teacher who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a learner under 18 must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. Unless there is a good reason not to, the member of staff should inform the DSL that a police report has been made and make a record on BehaviourWatch.

The duty above does not apply in cases where a learner is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a learner under 18 must speak to the DSL and then make a record on BehaviourWatch.

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Any member of staff who suspects a learner is at risk of FGM or discovers that a learner age 18 or over appears to have been a victim of FGM, must speak to the DSL and record their concern on BehaviourWatch.

12.4 If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger)

Figure 1 illustrates the procedure to follow if you have concerns about a child's welfare and the child is not in immediate danger.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. Alternatively, if the locally agreed criteria for action have been met, make a referral to Local Authority children's social care directly (see 'Referral' below) considering whether or not parental consent would be needed. You can also contact the charity NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 if you need advice on the appropriate action.

Early help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will support you in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency early help assessment as appropriate.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and will consider a referral to Local Authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to Local Authority children's social care or the police because the local criteria for action have been met, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so. If you make a referral directly, you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The Local Authority will decide within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the Local Authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded. If the Local Authority does not provide information, then the DSL may make a referral to the police.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must contact the Local Authority and if necessary, follow the multi-agency partnership escalation procedure to press for reconsideration to ensure the concerns have been addressed and the child's situation improves.

12.5 If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not at immediate risk of harm, where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. Alternatively, make a referral to the relevant agencies directly if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). The organisation has a separate Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include the Prevent coordinator, Channel, a programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the Local Authority children's social care team.

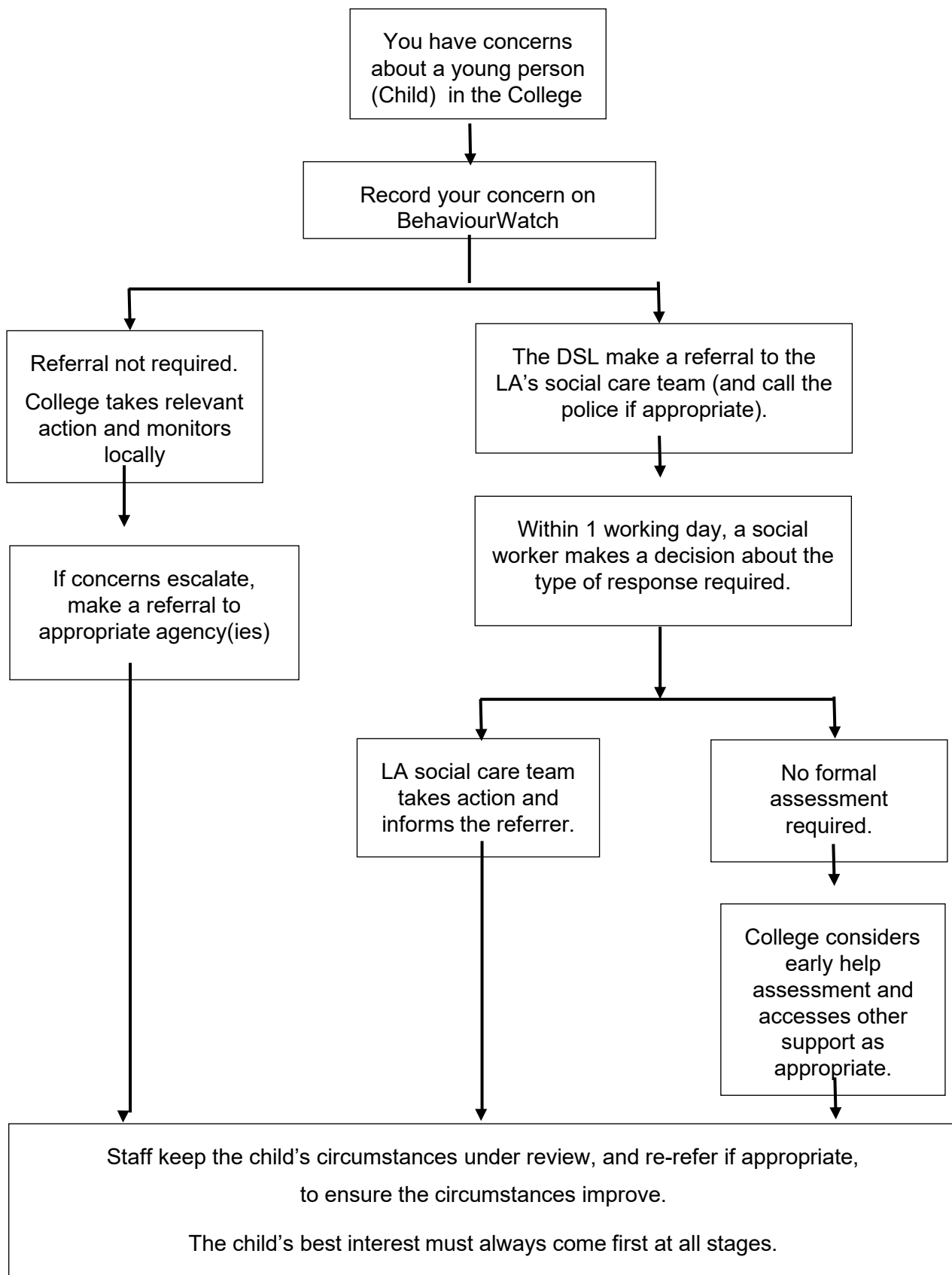
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The Department for Education also has a website, Educate against Hate (<https://educateagainsthate.com/>) with a dedicated telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) that College staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

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Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a child’s welfare (no immediate danger)



Further information can be found in Appendix 6.

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13. Notifying parents

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child’s parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure or abuse.

Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

Consent from parents will always be needed for s17 child in need support or early help but is not required in order to make a s47 (child protection) referral. In line with the principles of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, if we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, allow evidence to be destroyed, or that it would not be reasonable or practical to contact parents (for example, because it would cause a delay or the given phone number is uncontactable) we will discuss this with the Local Authority children’s social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved. If the police or children’s social care are involved, the parents will only be informed with the agreement of those agencies.

14. Mobile phones and cameras

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present. Staff members’ personal phones will remain in their bags, lockers or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.

For further guidance please see the E-Safety policy.

15. Complaints and concerns about TreeHouse School safeguarding practices

15.1 Complaints against staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see Appendix 4).

15.2 Other complaints

Concerns raised against the organisation in relation to its handling of safeguarding issues should be referred to the CEO who will raise this with the Chair of Trustees where appropriate.

15.3 Whistle-blowing

For information on Whistleblowing, please see the Ambitious about Autism Whistleblowing policy.

16. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

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All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Child protection and safeguarding records relating to individual children / learners will be retained according to statutory guidance after they have left the school (if TreeHouse School is the last education setting a child attends) in accordance with the Ambitious about Autism Data Retention and Archiving Policy.

All paper records will be kept in a locked cabinet and in a secure place within the main school buildings. Paper records will not be taken off the site without the express written permission of the Director of Education. Access to paper and digital child protection records will be strictly limited on a need to know basis and controlled by the DSL, Director of Education and the Chief Executive.

Electronic records relating to safeguarding concerns, including emails and reports, will be saved to the child's digital child protection file.

Child protection records will be kept separately from education files/records. If a child transfers to another setting, TreeHouse School will provide the new setting with the child protection file as soon as possible, ideally in a face to face handover. If this is not possible, the file will be sent securely and separately from the main pupil file and taking into consideration the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. The DSL is responsible to make sure that a child's protection file and other information is transferred as soon as possible and to ensure safe transit, confirmation of receipt should be obtained, and the receiving SENCO and DSL notified the file has been sent. If it is in the best interest of the child information can be shared in advance of transferring the file in order to allow the new setting to plan any support the child may need. TreeHouse School will retain a copy of the chronology in line with the retention schedule (see above).

Parents and carers with parental responsibility have a right of access, should they request it, to all records that our schools and college make about a child (but not child protection files or those records and reports sent to the charity from other agencies). Therefore, anyone recording safeguarding issues should consider this and ensure that records are factual, clear and, where opinion is expressed, it should be recorded as such and distinguished from fact.

In addition:

- Appendix 3 sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre-employment checks.
- Appendix 4 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff.

17. Training

17.1 All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistleblowing procedures, to ensure they understand our safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse, neglect or safeguarding issues. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from our local safeguarding children partnership.

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All staff will have training on the government’s anti-radicalisation strategy, PREVENT, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

17.2 The DSL and deputies

The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They will also undertake PREVENT awareness training at least every 3 years.

17.3 Governors

All Trustees and Governors receive training about safeguarding, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their strategic responsibilities as outlined in KCSIE part 2.

17.4 Recruitment – interview/appointment panels

At least one person on any interview/appointment panel for a post at the TreeHouse School will have undertaken Safer Recruitment in Education training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education’s statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

17.5 Staff who have contact with pupils and families

All staff who have contact with children and families will have supervisions which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

18. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Code of conduct Policy and Procedure
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Health and safety Policy
- Attendance at School Policy
- E-safety
- PSHE and RSE
- Data Retention and Archiving Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

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19. Monitoring arrangements

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

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Appendix 1: Designated Safeguarding Leads

**Designated Safeguarding Lead
Charity Lead
Director of Education
Vivienne Berkeley
Tel: 07472 580 252**

TreeHouse School

Ambitious College

The Rise School

Wider Charity Services

**Designated Safeguarding Lead

Assistant Head of School:
Sean Egan
Tel: 07496309761**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead

Assistant Head of College:
Jacqui Steel
Tel: 07472560027**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead

Assistant Head of School:
Hannah Clements
Tel: 07584 124 693**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead

Director of External Affairs:
Alison Worsley
Tel: 07850 915715**

**Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Head of School:
Tracey Capstick
Tel: 07472 584 544**

**Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Head of College:
Linda Looney
Tel: 07472 584 544**

**Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Head of School:
Helen Ralston
Tel: 07709339975**

**Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead
Participation

Programme Manager**

**Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum):
Karen Oliver
Tel: 07823 344 536**

**Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead
The Rise School
Family Liaison

Administrator and Receptionist:
Diane White
Tel: 0208 099 0640**

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These appendices are based on the Department for Education’s statutory guidance, *Working together to safeguard children 2018* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021*.

Appendix 2: 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 child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

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

Emotional abuse 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.
- Not giving the child 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 children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

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

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- 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 in education.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

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Appendix 3: Safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures

We will record all information on the checks carried out in TreeHouse School's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files held centrally by People Team. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

Appointing new staff

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity.
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months.
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available.
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards.
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher.
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent.

In addition for Treehouse School we will:

- Check that candidate taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the Secretary of State.
- Ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

Wherever possible, we will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments.

We will ensure that appropriate steps are carried out to ensure that individuals employed to provide early years or later years childcare are not disqualified from providing that care under the Disqualification under the Childcare Act (DUCA) Regulations 2018.

Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not have a lawful reason to carry out certain checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Regulated activity includes any person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children.
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children.
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not.

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- Driving a vehicle purely to convey children.
- Providing health care to children.
- Anyone who line manages others who are in regulated activity.

Existing staff If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

We have a statutory duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult:

- Where the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. that no action or inaction occurred but the present risk that it could was significant).
- Where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.
- If there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#).
- If the individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left.

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the School/College has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:

- An enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity.
- An enhanced DBS certificate, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children.
- We will obtain the DBS certificate at the appropriate level (standard or enhanced) for self-employed contractors who are sole traders, if they are eligible for such a check.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at TreeHouse School.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

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Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity.
- Undertake a written risk assessment for all new volunteers not working in regulated activity, to determine whether any level of criminal check is relevant and proportionate.
- Where the risk assessment indicates that this is appropriate, obtain an enhanced DBS certificate without barred list information for all volunteers who are not in regulated activity, but who have an opportunity to come into contact with children on a regular basis, for example, regular supervised volunteers.
- Ensure that volunteers providing early years or later years childcare are made aware of their duty to disclose if they have reason to believe that they may be disqualified from providing childcare under the Disqualification under the Childcare Act (DUCA) Regulations 2018.

Governors

All trustees and local governors will have an enhanced DBS certificate (without barred list information) and section 128 check [*section 128 checks are only required for local governors if they have been delegated any management responsibilities*].

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity. The chair of the board of trustees will have their DBS check countersigned by the Secretary of State.

All trustees, proprietors and local governors will also have the following checks:

- Right to work in the UK;
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK.

Trustees are also required to complete a self-disclosure of their suitability to act as a fit and proper person (see Charity Commission website for more information).

Adults who supervise pupils/learners on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

Pupils staying with host families

Where TreeHouse School makes arrangements for pupils/learners to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where TreeHouse School is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

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Appendix 4: Allegations of abuse made against staff

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse or behaviour took place in TreeHouse School. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension

Suspension will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative. Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within TreeHouse School so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned.
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children/learner
Redeploying the individual to alternative work in TreeHouse School so that they do not have unsupervised access to children.
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation

Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive

False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)

Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations.

In the event of an allegation that meets or appears to meet the criteria above, the Head of School/Director of Education (or Chair of Governors where the Head of School is the subject of the allegation) – the ‘case manager’ – will take the following steps:

Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the Local Authority (the LADO). This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children’s social care services. (The case

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manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police) Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children’s social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children’s social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies.

Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at TreeHouse School is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children’s social care services, as appropriate.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details.

If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

If it is decided that further action is needed, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in TreeHouse School and/or liaise with the police and/or children’s social care services as appropriate:

Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative from the senior team to keep them informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate. Staff can contact WorkPlace Options Tel [0800234458](tel:0800234458) assistance@workplaceoptions.com www.workplaceoptions.com.

Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children’s social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.

Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence).

Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working with children in the EYFS (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made

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as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made. If the school is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

Where the police are involved, wherever possible TreeHouse School will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in TreeHouse School's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point. The same will be requested where children's social care are undertaking s47 enquiries.

Timescales

Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week.

If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days.

If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we would usually hold this within 15 working days.

Specific actions Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the Local Authority designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or TreeHouse School ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and Ambitious about Autism's HR advisor will discuss with the designated officer and referrals would be made to DBS when the organisation believes a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including children.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the TRA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching. A referral would be appropriate if the alleged misconduct is so serious that it warrants a decision on whether the teacher should be prevented from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this. The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending TreeHouse School.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the Head of School, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the Head of School, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s)/learner(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil or learner.

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Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the local authority designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared.
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality.
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation.
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises.

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation.
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved.
- Notes of any action taken, and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above).

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, TreeHouse School will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file and provide a copy to the individual. We will normally retain these records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer. However, for the duration of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) it is unlawful to destroy any records that may be called as evidence to the inquiry; as a result, the records relating to any allegation of sexual harm of a child or children will be retained for the duration of the inquiry, regardless of the outcome.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file, unless they fall within the scope of the IICSA as described above.

References

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

Learning lessons

At the conclusion of any case, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the School's/College's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff;
- The duration of the suspension;
- Whether or not the suspension was justified;
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual;

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- Whether there are any training needs or changes to policies / procedures needed.

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Appendix 5: Specific safeguarding issues

Children missing from education

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

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children 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.

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the Local Authority if a child leaves TreeHouse School without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

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 child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the Local Authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.

This can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, but does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam.

Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL and report their concern on the digital system. The DSL will follow the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if the local thresholds / criteria for action have been met. Indicators of sexual exploitation can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;

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- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant;
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing;
- Misusing drugs and/or alcohol;
- Going missing for periods of time, or regularly coming home late;
- Regularly missing school or education, or not taking part in education.

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 children affected by or at risk of FGM or other forms of so-called honour-based abuse.

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM. Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil 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/College, 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 pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider).
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl'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 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 girl 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 girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion).
- Being unexpectedly absent from TreeHouse School.
- Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication.

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

Other forms of 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.

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 pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL. The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil 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 fm@fco.gov.uk.
- Refer the pupil to a pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or counsellor, as appropriate.

Preventing radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Schools/Colleges have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in TreeHouse School being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding children board and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our pupils to stay safe online at TreeHouse School and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves.
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution.

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- Changes in friendship groups and appearance.
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy.
- Converting to a new religion.
- Isolating themselves from family and friends.
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views.
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.
- Increased levels of anger.
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions.
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter.
- Possessing extremist literature.
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL. Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

Further information on TreeHouse School’s measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other school policies and procedures, including:

- Behaviour policy
- E-safety policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- PSHE and RSE Policy

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 TreeHouse School any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using TreeHouse School’s facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

- Ring the main contact to inform them transport has not collected their son/daughter.
- If appropriate inform the Local Authority.
- Ask for the child to be collected by the parent during this time with a member of staff who knows the child will wait with them.

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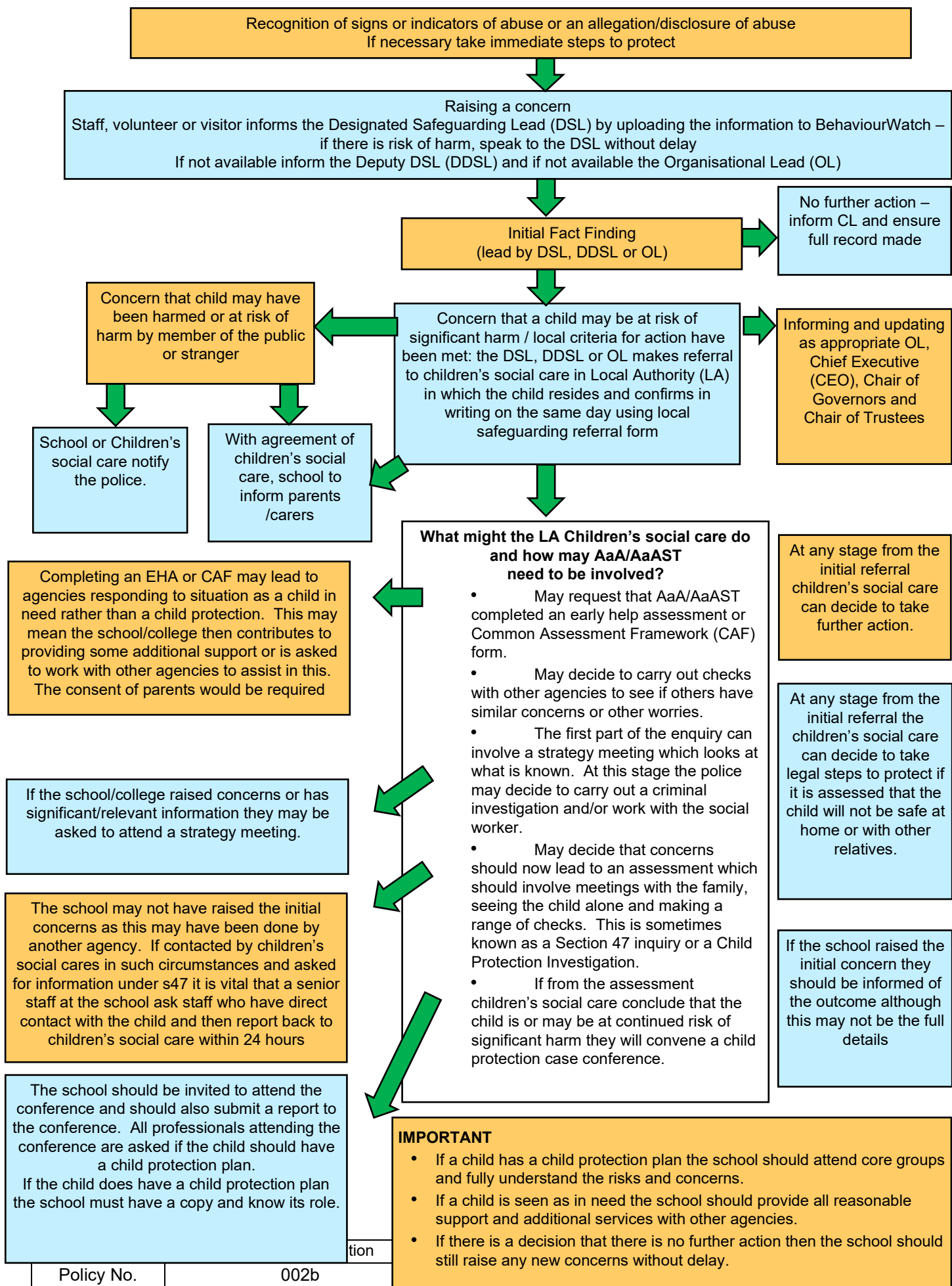
- If the parent cannot collect the child TreeHouse School will organise for the child to be escorted home in a taxi or a company vehicle.
- If the non-collection of a child is considered a safeguarding concern then this would be reported as a concern to the DSL.

Missing pupils

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing from school we will: invoke the schools Absconding policy and procedure.

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Appendix 6: Responding to concerns that a child may be abused or neglected



Appendix 7 – Key contact details in host London Boroughs

Haringey Local Authority Safeguarding Information:

- [Haringey's Child Protection Website](#)
- [Haringey's Safeguarding Adults Website](#)
- [The MASH operating protocol](#)

The Haringey Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is Sarah Roberts. She can be contacted on 020 8489 2968/1186 or email LADO@haringey.gov.uk.

Hounslow Local Authority Safeguarding Information:

- [Hounslow Child Protection Website](#)
- [Hounslow Adult Safeguarding Website](#)
- [Hounslow MASH information](#)

The Hounslow Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) can be contacted at 0208 583 5730 Or via email at lado@hounslow.gov.uk

Islington Local Authority Safeguarding Information:

- [Islington MASH information](#)
- Urgent Child Protection referrals should be made by phone call to 0207 527 7400 at any time
- Tim Djavit - Local Authority Designated 020 75278120 (LADO)
- Elaine Oxley, Head of Safeguarding Adults, 020 7527 8180 elaine.oxley@islington.gov.uk

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