



Safeguarding Policy Reviewed:

This policy is dated: January 2022
This policy will be reviewed in January 2023

Apex Learning Hub fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding. Our policy applies to all Staff, Management Committee members, external agencies and volunteers working in the centre.

There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, Centre staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The Centre will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the Centre whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHEE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to:

- Ensure we have a nominated person on the Management Committee responsible for child protection.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that all staff undergo regular training so that their knowledge and awareness of child protection policies and procedures is up to date.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the Centre and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the Centre prospectus.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who has been identified as being at risk.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all such records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.

- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The Centre may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at the Centre their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The Centre will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The Centre's ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The Centre's behaviour for learning policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the Centre.
- The Centre will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new setting immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Identifying Abuse

Dealing with Child Abuse is a complex, multi-agency procedure which is defined within a legal framework. The Centre will follow the recommended procedures as set out in LEA guidelines. Because of the length and close proximity of contact with children, teachers are often the best placed to identify the symptoms of abuse.

The role of staff is basically defined as:

- (a) Assisting in the identification of abuse.
- (b) Providing support to children who have experienced abuse.

The Centre is not an investigation or an intervention agency for child protection but it has an important role to play in the recognition and referral stages.

A child may be at risk from any combination of the following four categories:

1. Physical Abuse

This involves physical injury to the child, including deliberate poisoning and forcing a child to consume drugs such as tobacco and alcohol. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after (sometimes described as fabricated or induced illness by carers). Symptoms may include:-

- (a) Bruising - especially about the face and head.
- (b) Slap marks.
- (c) Cuts and abrasions.

2. Sexual Abuse

This is illegal sexual activity involving a child or young person or, in the case of young people over the age of 16, sexual activity carried out without the person's consent, including coercion, threat and intimidation. Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or producing pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Pupils with special education needs and/or with behavioural and emotional problems are particularly vulnerable to such abuse. Symptoms are more difficult to define but may include:

- (a) Precocious and/or promiscuous behaviour.
- (b) Sexual references in interactions with others.
- (c) Sudden changes in behaviour - withdrawal, avoidance of social contact, truancy, aggression.
- (d) Abnormal response to particular teaching situations e.g. lessons/discussions on sex and health education and inter-personal relationships.
- (e) Sudden deterioration of performance.
- (f) Anxiety and/or low self-esteem.
- (g) Knowledge of sexual matters beyond what would be expected.
- (h) Strong need for affection, sometimes expressed in physical terms.

- (i) Difficulty in trusting or defiance of teacher.
- (j) Fear of Centre medical examinations.
- (k) Vague pains or aches, possibly arising from psychosomatic illness. (l) Threat of, or actual self-harm.

3. Emotional Abuse

This is persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child which causes severe and long lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or cause children to feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child.

Symptoms may include:

- (a) Withdrawal, fear of people or situations, a reluctance to participate in lessons.
- (b) Inappropriate responses to situations e.g. excessive aggression to a mild reprimand, no or little response to shocking news.
- (c) Expressions of low self-worth and low self esteem.
- (d) Lack of self-confidence, nervousness in group situations.
- (e) Distorted views of other people (the English teacher hates me).
- (f) Negative attitudes and views of significant others (my father is a pig, my family is no good, etc.).
- (g) Failure to make lasting, secure relationships.

4. Neglect

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Some symptoms are:

- (a) Small physical size, poor growth.

- (b) Dirty, unkempt appearance.
- (c) Poor awareness of personal hygiene.
- (d) Symptoms of physical illness in Centre.
- (e) Evidence of poor care outside Centre e.g. the child is seen wandering the streets late at night, or is in the company of older children/young people.
- (f) Poor eating habits, an unbalanced diet, constantly asking for food or money to buy food from others, stealing food or money to buy food.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER/TUTOR

1. Be aware of pupils' physical condition and behaviour in terms of the criteria listed above.
2. Report any concerns immediately to the Senior Teachers/Manager. Make a dated note of your concerns and observations.
3. Do not engage the child in a discussion on a suspected problem - this may exacerbate the situation. Direct intervention with a child requires great skill and tact and should only be undertaken by a trained member of the Child Protection Team.

4. You may ask a child to explain an obvious physical injury e.g. a bruise or black-eye as this may have a simple and innocent cause. However, it is crucial that a physical injury is reported if:-
 - (a) It has a number of similar antecedents.

 - (b) The explanation given does not match the nature of the injury.

5. Report the following immediately to the Child Protection Officer:
 - (a) Statements made directly to you by a child which allege or suggest abuse.
 - (b) Statements made to you by others, including children, siblings, even members of the public.
 - (c) Comments overheard by you made by suspected victims or others.
 - (d) Unusual statements made in pupils' written work e.g. references to close relationships with particular individuals or descriptions of unusual situations.

6. It is possible that (5) above may relate to a member of staff or another person known to you. Under no circumstance should your own relationship influence your response. You are obliged by law to refer any allegation or information on possible abuse to the nominated staff.

7. It is important that if a child reports any form of abuse, that it is believed in the first instance. The NSPCC report that children rarely retract their original disclosures and when they do, it is more likely to be because of pressures upon them. This also applies to reports made by friends.

8. In any interaction with a child, you should never ask leading questions as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.

9. Treat any information given by the Child Protection Officer in the strictest confidence - never discuss it with anyone else, including colleagues.

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

1. To be familiar with legislation and LEA policies on Child Protection.
2. Based on (1) above, keep the Centre's policy and procedures up-to-date.
3. Provide guidance and training to staff.
4. Represent the Centre at all meetings and case conferences which deal with Child Protection issues or ensure that this is undertaken by another appropriate member of staff.
5. Keep all reports and records in a safe, secure place and ensure their information is shared on a 'need to know basis'. Not as part of pupil's general file.
6. Liaise with other agencies, including receiving and preparing reports.
7. Monitor pupils on the Child Protection Register in terms of attendance, behaviour, physical appearance, academic progress and general welfare. This will involve close liaison subject teachers and mentors.
8. Give teachers the information necessary for them to respond in the most appropriate way to pupils at risk bearing in mind, at all times, the need for maximum confidentiality. Information will be given only on a 'need to know' basis.
9. Children with SEN are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Designated teachers will work closely with the SENCO. This is especially important when children have poor communication skills.
10. In collaboration with the subject leaders or mentors, arrange for learning experiences which help pupils acquire relevant information and attitudes to resist abuse in their own lives.

PROTECTION OF PUPIL IDENTITY

As a Centre, we work hard to protect children. This includes identity protection.

In this respect, we issue parents with a letter seeking their approval for taking and using images of children.

We also have a procedure for verifying phone calls from parents if there is cause for concern.

When a parent phones with a message for a child [for example, about travelling home] a member of the staff will phone the contact number for the child to ensure that the caller was who they said they were, and a request is made for confirmation of the message.

<p>What is child abuse? _</p> <p>Physical abuse</p> <p>_ Emotional abuse</p> <p>_ Sexual abuse</p> <p>_ Neglect</p>	<p>What to do</p> <p>_ Report to designated person</p> <p>_ Put what you have heard in writing</p> <p>_ Try to use the exact words used by the pupil if possible</p> <p>_ Offer reassurance to the pupil</p>
<p>What not to do</p> <p>_ Do not ask the pupil questions</p> <p>_ Do not try to investigate</p> <p>_ Do not promise confidentiality</p>	<p>Guidelines for all staff</p> <p>_ Never touch pupils except for their safety</p> <p>_ Corporal or physical punishments are unlawful</p> <p>_ Think about how you talk to pupils</p>
<p>Abuse could be _</p> <p>Excessive restraint</p> <p>_ Rough handling</p> <p>_ Verbal bullying</p> <p>_ Frequent shouting</p>	<p>If an allegation of abuse is made _ The following MUST be told:</p> <p>_ Social Services</p> <p>_ Local Education Authority</p> <p>_ Educational Welfare Services</p>

_ Touching a pupil except for their safety	
Consequences --Social Services may pursue it as a Child Protection issue -- Police may become involved --A criminal charge may follow	If such an allegation involves a member of staff, additionally the Chair of the Management committee must be told and action taken in relation to the Centre's Staff Discipline Policy. _ Parents can bring a civil action _ Disciplinary action

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

1. **You must inform Mr F Pirbhia.**
2. If at any time a student gives you information about being harmed, or the prospect of being harmed, **you must tell them that the information he or she has given to you will have to be shared with Mr F Pirbhia –and cannot be kept confidential.** They are likely to need your support with this.
3. **Record immediately** what the student has said and in their own words. If possible, this should be with another suitable adult present, but **NOT** the person against whom an allegation has been made. **Do not probe or ask leading questions.**
4. **In conjunction with the Mr F Pirbhia ensure that the relevant person within the LA is informed of the allegation immediately, or within 24hrs.** After hours on a Friday evening it must also be considered whether the situation is urgent enough for the Duty Social Work team to be informed.
5. **Provide a copy of your written report to the Mr F Pirbhia at the earliest opportunity and within 24 hours.**
6. If at any time you have concerns about a student, and especially if you suspect that they are suffering, or likely to suffer, some form of significant harm, **you must tell either Mr F Pirbhia and record your concerns clearly and in writing.**
- 7.

***Please note carefully:* Any allegation of child abuse against any member of staff including an allegation against you, must be treated with the utmost seriousness.**