

BRIDGWATER COLLEGE

CHILDCARE CENTRE -

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND

CHILD PROTECTION

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Contents

Section	Section Heading	Page
1.	Policy Statement	3
2.	Policy Intention	3
3.	Part 1 – Safeguarding children and child protection procedures	6
4.	Part 2 – Definitions of abuse	11
5.	Part 3 – Reporting Procedures	25
6.	Part 4 – Recruitment, selection, induction and training	36

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements.

Section 3

Policy Statement

At Bridgwater College Childcare Centre our belief is that no child or young person should ever experience abuse of any kind. We understand that safeguarding is the responsibility of all, and we are committed to ensuring our practice protects any child who attends the Childcare Centre or any student who may be on site whether; on work placement, work experience, taster days, open days, volunteering or observing practice.

Staff, children, visitors, volunteers, and parents are made aware of the expected behaviours and the Childcare Centre's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our children. And that they all have a responsibility for safeguarding children, being vigilant and identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns, in line with this and supporting policies.

We are committed to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare through building a safer organisational culture.

This policy works in conjunction with the College's safeguarding policies and is also guided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP).

This policy works in conjunction with additional safeguarding relevant policies and procedures in the Childcare Centre

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains in line with statutory guidance. Its effectiveness is monitored through staff and stakeholder reviews, appraisals and feedback to ensure appropriate knowledge and awareness is in place.

It is the responsibility of every staff member, student and volunteer to report any breaches of this policy to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Policy Intention

The policy makes it clear that all staff, students and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people and to protect them from harm¹. It aims to raise awareness of how to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provides procedures should a child protection issue arise.

This policy applies to all children up to the age of 18 years whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently (Working together to safeguard children).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy, is defined as:

¹ Harm is as defined by section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 and means ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical), or impairment of physical or mental health, or impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It also includes, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise family network through a kinship care arrangement, wherever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Child protection is an integral part of safeguarding children and promoting their overall welfare. In this policy, child protection shall mean:

- The activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, in foster care and residential care, as well as online. (Working together to safeguard children)

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Develop a safe organisational culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Ensure all staff are able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse, including the softer signs of abuse, and know what action to take
- Know that young children may not be able to understand when something happening to them is abuse
- Ensure a shared understanding of all children's individual needs, particularly children with SEND
- Understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives, including being aware of the range of support available for families
-
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

We promote:

- Always listening to children
- Positive images of children
- Children developing independence and autonomy as appropriate for their age and stage of development

- Safe and secure environments for children
- Tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities
- British values
- Providing intervention and help for children and families in need.

We have a duty to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. If in any doubt about what constitutes a safeguarding concern, refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If there is a concern, never do nothing (Laming, 2009), always do something, including sharing information with any relevant agencies. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Every person looking after children must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

The Childcare Centre aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do, providing sensitive interactions that develop and build children's well-being, confidence and resilience. We will support children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, healthy and develop positive relationships
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), isolated families and vulnerabilities in families, including the additional potential impact of the trio of vulnerabilities on children and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, maintaining professional curiosity around welfare of children, sharing information, and seeking help that a child may need at the earliest opportunity
- Ensure that all staff are trained at least every two years and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local and/or national procedures, including thorough annual safeguarding updates
- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Ensure that staff identify, minimise and manage risks while caring for children
- Follow clear whistleblowing procedures by taking any appropriate action relating to poor or unsafe practices and allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities

PART 1: Safeguarding children and child protection procedures

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Follow all up to date statutory guidance and legislation such as EYFS, Children's Act 1989, The Children and Social Work Act 2017, KCSiE 2025 6 & the South West Child Protection Procedures (local area Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership SSCP)
- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Always listen to children
- Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures, and communities
- Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision making and how to promote British values through play, discussion, and role-modelling
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate such as Somerset children's social care team, health professionals or the police

This policy works alongside other safeguarding areas to cover all aspects of child protection including college policies.

We ensure all staff, students and volunteers have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their duties and are confident to implement these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis to support them in promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children. This is achieved through recruitment and induction processes and by offering ongoing training and support to all staff, appropriate to their specific role. In line with the criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS.

We are committed to promoting the Fundamental British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance, through our curriculum and practice with the children, their families, and the community.

We have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism as stated by the Prevent Duty. In our Childcare Centre we strive to protect children and adults from the risk of radicalisation, and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL):

The DSL has overall responsibility for the safeguarding children and child protection policy and procedures. It is their role to ensure that the policy and procedures are implemented to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They are responsible for coordinating safeguarding and child protection training for staff across the organisation.

There is always at least one designated person on duty during the opening hours of the Childcare Centre. The designated persons receive comprehensive training, consistent with the training criteria as provided in Annex C of the EYFS as delivered by the Local Authority at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team with regular safeguarding updates.

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Caren Egan
Deputy DSL	Chloe Trapnell
Group Vice Principal for Student Experience and Designated Safeguarding Lead, UCS College Group	Bethan Foweraker

During the Childcare Centre opening hours, the DSL or Deputy will be available for staff or parents to discuss any safeguarding and child protection concerns. In the unlikely event of the DSL being absent, any serious issues must be referred to Bethan Foweraker, College Group DSL. In the very unlikely event no one was available and to ensure immediate action can be taken, contact the Local Safeguarding Partnership.

The role of the DSL

The role of the DSL is to:

- Monitor and update the Safeguarding children and child protection policy and procedures in line with new legislation and to ensure it is effective. This will be done by making sure that everyone understands the correct procedures during their individual annual review
- Ensure updates and new legislation are reflected in our services as soon as they are known
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff, students, volunteers, children and parents who have child protection concerns
- Ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- Review all written safeguarding reports
- Assess information provided promptly, carefully and refer as appropriate to external agencies
- Provide signposting to other organisations
- Consult with statutory child protection agencies and regulatory bodies where required
- Make formal referrals to statutory child protection agencies or the police, as required.

In addition, the DSL is required to:

- Keep up-to-date with good practice and national requirements for safeguarding and child protection

- Provide information on safeguarding and child protection for the Childcare Centre, including the DfE safeguarding help for early years providers²
- Raise awareness of any safeguarding and child protection training needs and implement where necessary
- Retain up-to-date knowledge of local child protection procedures, including how to liaise with local statutory children's services agencies and with the local safeguarding partners to safeguard children.

The DSL does not investigate whether or not a child has been abused or investigate an allegation or disclosure. Investigations are for the appropriate authorities, usually the police and social services.

Looked after children

As part of our safeguarding practice, we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. In order to do this, we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g. whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/ her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved
- Any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question

Monitoring children's attendance

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework, we must follow up on absences in a timely manner. See our Attendance policy for further details about the processes we will take to implement this requirement.

We are required to monitor children's attendance patterns and trends to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern. We ask parents to inform the Childcare Centre prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all incidents of sickness absence should be reported to the Childcare Centre the same day so the Childcare Centre management are able to account for a child's absence.

- If there is a break in a child's normal attendance pattern with no explanation, we will attempt to contact the family, we then record this in a contact log, continuing to record all attempts to contact. If this leads to any concerns, we would report it to Somerset Direct.
- Parents should inform the Childcare Centre prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into Childcare Centre on the day, so the Childcare Centre management are able to account for the child's absence.
- If the child has not arrived by 10:00am the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the further emergency contacts will be used to ensure the children are safe.

² <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/safeguarding>

- Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will be reported to the local authority children's social care team.
- This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children but enables children's attendance to be logged.
- If contact cannot be established then we would assess if a home visit were required to establish all parties are safe, as part of this we would assess if it would be appropriate to contact relevant authorities, including the police, in order for them to investigate further.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Local Authority children's social care team, police or LADO does not allow this to happen.

This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

Support to families

The Childcare Centre takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships among families, staff, students and volunteers within the Childcare Centre.

The Childcare Centre will continue to welcome a child and their family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must not override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained for all concerned if an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

If uncertain about whether sensitive information can be disclosed to a third party, contact the DSL or call the Information Commissioner's Office helpline on 0303 123 1113. They will provide advice about the particulars relating to each individual case, including information which can and cannot be shared.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent, child or member of staff.

Record keeping and data protection

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate and in line with guidance of the Local Authority with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

The Childcare Centre keeps appropriate records to support the early identification of children and families which would benefit from early help. Factual records are maintained in a

chronological order with parental discussions. Records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to look holistically at identifying children's needs.

Our Data protection and confidentiality policy will be applied with regards to any information received from an individual. Only persons involved in the investigation should handle this information although any investigating body will have access to all information stored in order to support an investigation.

PART 2: Definitions of abuse

Definition of significant harm

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as 'the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children'. It gives LAs a duty to make enquires to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Whilst there are no absolute criteria to rely on when judging what constitutes significant harm, consideration should be given to:

- The severity of the ill-treatment, including the degree of harm
- The extent and frequency of abuse and/or neglect
- The impact this is likely to have, or is having, on the child involved.

This may be a single traumatic event, such as a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning, or it can be a combination of events (both acute and long-standing) that impairs the physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development of the child.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community Childcare Centre by those known to them or, more rarely, a stranger.

Perpetrators of abuse can be an adult, or adults, another child or children.

(What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners and Working together to safeguard children)

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but can help to indicate that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree.

Indicators of child abuse

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones• Fearful or withdrawn tendencies• Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff |
|--|

- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

Emotional states: Fearful, withdrawn, low self-esteem.

Behaviour: Aggressive, habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention
- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parent disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed
- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions
- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is also known as peer-on-peer abuse; children are included as potential abusers in our policies. Child-on-child abuse may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. Reporting procedures in these instances remain the same although additional support from relevant agencies may be required to support both the victim and the perpetrator. Children who develop harmful behaviours are also likely to be victims of abuse or neglect.

If child-on-child abuse is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

If physical abuse is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Fabricated or induced illness (FII)

This abuse is when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. The parent may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. They may exaggerate a real illness and symptoms, or deliberately induce an illness through poisoning with medication or other substances, or they may interfere with medical treatments. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

FII is a form of physical abuse and any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed with no medical reason. The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy, according to the community.

It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother, and/or death (definition taken from the Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation). Other consequences include shock, bleeding, infections (tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C) and organ damage.

FGM is a form of physical abuse and any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures. In addition, there is a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

Breast ironing or breast flattening

Breast ironing, also known as breast flattening, is a process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or to delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage. These actions can cause serious health issues such as abscesses, cysts, itching, tissue damage, infection, discharge of milk, dissymmetry of the breasts, severe fever.

Breast ironing/flattening is a form of physical abuse and any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Emotional abuse

Working together to safeguard children defines emotional abuse as 'the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent 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 separately.

Examples of emotional abuse include:

- 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 a child opportunity 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, such as 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
- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children
- A child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

A child may also experience emotional abuse through witnessing domestic abuse or alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. In England, The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises in law that children are victims of emotional abuse if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of domestic abuse.

Signs and indicators may include delay in physical, mental and/or emotional development, sudden speech disorders, overreaction to mistakes, extreme fear of any new situation, neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation), extremes of passivity or aggression, appearing to lack confidence or self-assurance.

If emotional abuse is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, or enticing, a child to take part in sexual activities. Sexual abuse does not necessarily involve a high level of violence and includes whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Adult males are not the sole perpetrators of sexual abuse; women also commit acts of sexual abuse, as do other children. This policy applies to all children up to the age of 18 years.

Action must be taken if staff witness symptoms of sexual abuse including a child indicating sexual activity through words, play or drawing, having an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or having an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or language, for their developmental age. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls or toys or in the role-play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words.

Additional signs of emotional and physical symptoms are shown below.

Emotional signs	Physical signs
• Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age or stage of development • Personality changes, such as becoming insecure or clingy • Regressing to younger behaviour patterns, such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys • Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating • Being isolated or withdrawn • Inability to concentrate • Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a carer • Becoming worried about clothing being removed.	• Bruises • Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area • Sexually transmitted infections • Pregnancy.

If sexual abuse is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Neglect

Working together to safeguard children defines neglect as '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 adults involved in the care of the child failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect them from physical harm or danger

- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Respond to their basic emotional needs.

The NSPCC statistics briefing for 2024 has found neglect continues to be the most common form of abuse, with one in ten children in the UK having been neglected. Concerns around neglect have been identified for half of children who are the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register in the UK. Younger children are more likely than older children to be the subject of a child protection plan in England because of neglect, although research suggests that the neglect of older children is more likely to go overlooked.

Signs of neglect include a child persistently arriving at the Childcare Centre unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at the Childcare Centre in the same nappy they went home in, or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed. A child may be persistently hungry if a caregiver is withholding, or not providing enough, food. A child who is not receiving the attention they need at home may crave it from other adults, such as at the Childcare Centre or school.

If neglect is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Domestic abuse

The definition of domestic abuse from the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021 is:

- Behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B) is 'domestic abuse' if:
- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other
- The behaviour is abusive.
- Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse (any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property and/or obtain goods or services)
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, age, social background, religion, sexuality or ethnicity and domestic abuse can happen at any stage in a relationship.

Signs and symptoms of domestic abuse include:

- Changes in behaviour (for example, becoming very quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed etc.)
- Visible bruising or single, or repeated, injury with unlikely explanations
- Change in the manner of dress (for example, clothes to hide injuries that do not suit the weather)
- Stalking, including excessive phone calls or messages
- Partner or ex-partner exerting an unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule
- Frequent lateness or absence from work.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

Where incidents of domestic abuse are shared by our own staff, students or volunteers we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information, without permission, in cases of child protection or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

If domestic abuse is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Contextual safeguarding

As young people grow and develop, they may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their family. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will work in partnership with parents and other agencies to work together to safeguard children and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include

children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation (Keeping children safe in education).

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology and may be without the child's immediate knowledge such as through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Physical injuries such as bruising or bleeding
- Having money or gifts they are unable to explain
- Sudden changes in their appearance
- Becoming involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if it is suspected they are being supplied by older men or women
- Becoming emotionally volatile (mood swings are common in all young people, but more severe changes could indicate that something is wrong)
- Using sexual language beyond that expected for their age or stage of development
- Engaging less with their usual friends
- Appearing controlled by their phone
- Switching to a new screen when you come near the computer
- Nightmares or sleeping problems
- Running away, staying out overnight, missing school
- Changes in eating habits
- Talk of a new, older friend, boyfriend or girlfriend
- Losing contact with family and friends or becoming secretive
- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Other examples include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Signs and symptoms of CCE are similar to those for CSE.

If CSE or CCE is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

County Lines

The National Crime Agency (NCA) defines county lines as gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' Customers live in a different area to the dealers, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Perpetrators often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and

If involvement in county lines is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

weapons to ensure compliance of victims. A child is targeted and recruited into county lines through schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Changes in dress style
- Unexplained, unaffordable new things (for example, clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
- Missing from home or school and/or significant decline in performance
- New friends with those who don't share any mutual friendships with the victim, gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Increase in anti-social behaviour in the community including weapons
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual
- Unexplained injuries
- Significant changes in emotional well-being
- Being seen in different cars or taxis driven by unknown adults
- A child being unfamiliar with where they are.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime. In this instance, the drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to criminally exploit them by using their home as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties.

Signs and symptoms include:

- An increase in people, particularly unknown people, entering or leaving a home or taking up residence
- An increase in cars or bikes outside a home
- A neighbour who hasn't been seen for an extended period
- Windows covered or curtains closed for a long period
- Change in resident's mood and/or demeanour (for example, secretive, withdrawn, aggressive or emotional)
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Increased anti-social behaviour.

If cuckooing is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Child trafficking and modern slavery

Child trafficking and modern slavery is when children are recruited, moved, transported and then exploited, forced to work or are sold.

For a child to have been a victim of trafficking there must have been:

- Action: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation
- Purpose: sexual exploitation, forced labour or domestic servitude, slavery, financial exploitation, illegal adoption, removal of organs.

Modern slavery includes slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and child trafficking. Victims of modern slavery are also likely to be subjected to other types of abuse such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Signs and symptoms for children include:

- Being under control and reluctant to interact with others
- Having few personal belongings, wearing the same clothes every day or wearing unsuitable clothes
- Being unable to move around freely
- Appearing frightened, withdrawn, or showing signs of physical or emotional abuse.

If child trafficking or modern slavery are suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is defined as 'a marriage in which one, or both spouses, do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.'

Where incidents of forced marriage are shared by our own staff, students or volunteers, we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information without permission in cases of child protection, or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

If it is suspected that a forced marriage is being planned, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

'Honour' based abuse (HBA)

HBA is described as 'incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.' (Keeping children safe in education). Such abuse can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their 'honour' code. It is a violation of human rights and may be domestic, emotional and/or sexual abuse such as being held against their will, threats of violence or actual assault. It often involves wider family networks or community pressure and so can include multiple perpetrators.

Signs and symptoms of HBA include:

- Changes in how the child dresses or acts, such as not 'western' clothing or make-up
- Visible injuries, or repeated injury, with unlikely explanations
- Signs of depression, anxiety or self-harm
- Frequent absences
- Restrictions on friends or attending events.

Where incidents of HBA are shared by our own staff, students or volunteers, we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information without permission in cases of child protection, or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

If honour-based abuse is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or multi-murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation
- Children's actions are believed to have brought bad fortune to the family or community.

If CALFB is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Extremism and radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on early years providers "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism", including safeguarding learners from extremist ideologies and radicalisation to prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent Duty.

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources and some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the way a person comes to support or be involved in extremism and terrorism; usually it's a gradual process so those who are affected may not realise what's happening. Radicalisation is a form of harm.

The process may involve:

- Being groomed online or in person
- Exploitation, including sexual exploitation
- Psychological manipulation
- Exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information
- The risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts.

For further information visit [The Prevent Duty](#) website.

If radicalisation or extremism is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures. This includes reporting concerns to the police.

Online safety

While the growth of internet and mobile device use brings many advantages, the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.

There are four main areas of risk associated with online safety:

- Content - being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material such as pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views
- Contact - being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users such as commercial advertising or adults posing as children or young adults
- Conduct - personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images and online bullying
- Commerce - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Report online safety concerns to the DSL and to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP): <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

Inappropriate content received via email must be reported to the DSL and to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): <https://www.iwf.org.uk/en/uk-report/>

Up skirting/down blousing

Up skirting and down blousing are criminal offences. They involve taking pictures of someone's genitals, buttocks or other intimate images under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or in order to humiliate, or distress, the individual.

If up skirting or down blousing is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

PART 3: Reporting Procedures

Procedure when reporting a safeguarding concern for all persons

1. Stay Calm
2. Listen Carefully
3. Record all relevant facts, including any physical marks and anything that has been said which is factual and clear.
4. Report to the DSL, ASAP, this may happen before recording if the DSL is available to speak to
5. The DSL will decide on the next steps

Recording concerns, signs and indicators of abuse and disclosures

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the DSL as soon as possible.

- Staff will report their concerns to the DSL (in the absence of the DSL and Deputy they will report to College DSL)
- Any signs or marks/ injuries to a child or information a child has given will be recorded and stored securely
- If appropriate, the incident will be discussed with the parent/carer, such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to on request
- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect that member of staff:
 - Stay calm
 - Listen to the child and take them seriously, offers reassurance that they have done the right thing and gives assurance that she or he will take action, explaining that they will have to tell someone else who can help
 - Allow the child to continue at their own pace
 - Try not to look shocked and reassure them it is not their fault
 - Reassure the child that they have done the right thing, let them know what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
 - Reinforce that this is not their fault
 - Do not investigate or ask questions, encourage the child to use their own words
 - Do not make promises they cannot keep
 - Inform the DSL as soon as possible
 - May need to inform the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted
- Makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - child's name, address and age of child and date of birth
 - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
 - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible.
 - Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
 - Exact observation of any incident including any concern was reported
 - What was said by the person the child spoke to.
 - any observations of the child's behaviour and emotional state
 - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time
 - the names of any other person present at the time
 - Any discussions held with the parent/s (where deemed appropriate)

- It is the responsibility of the DSL to follow the appropriate procedures when considering the next steps
- Ensures these records are seen by the DSL and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially
- Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/ concerns they have regard to a child.
- Staff must not make comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent or member of staff.

Reporting procedure

We will always act on behalf of the child and will do everything possible to ensure the safety and welfare of any child and so will take all allegations of potential abuse seriously. All concerns reported to staff will be pursued, regardless of the nature of the concern and to whom the allegation relates.

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding and child protection concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the DSL as soon as possible, as follows:

If a concern is raised anonymously and we have no contact details, we will treat the concern as valid and follow the procedures as above. If a malicious call is suspected, the procedures will still be followed: a child may be in danger. The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) will be contacted to ensure permitted data sharing.

The DSL will:

- Contact the local authority children's social care team to report concerns and seek advice. If it is believed a child is in immediate danger we will contact the police.
- If the safeguarding concern relates to an allegation against an adult working or volunteering with the children the DSL will follow the reporting allegations procedure and inform Bethan Foweraker College DSL and LADO as appropriate.
- Record information and action taken relating to the concern raised
- Speak to the parents (unless advised not to do so by Somerset Children's Social Care Team)
- If we have concerns and require additional advice the designated person will call the Children's Safeguarding Leads' Consultation Line 0300 123 3078 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday or Early Advice Hub 01823 355803
If we refer concerns to the local authority we will follow protocols and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
- NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for

reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the Childcare Centre may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

- The DSL will follow up with the Somerset Children's Social Care Team if they have not contacted the Childcare Centre. We will never assume that action has been taken.

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or College DSL they should call the Somerset Children's Social Care Team or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

Recording a case of disclosure or suspicions of abuse in the community

If you observe a concern or receive a disclosure, make an objective record. Where possible include:

- Child's name and address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Childcare Centre name and address
- Date and time of the observation or disclosure
- Details of the concern using factual information, including the exact words, if relevant
- Accurate details of the observation, including actions of the child or adult involved
- Accurate details of an injury or wound seen, including position and size
- The names of any other person present at the time
- Name of the person completing the report
- Name of the person to whom the concern was shared, with date and time.

Public interest disclosure (whistleblowing) Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker (staff member, student or volunteer) passes on information concerning wrongdoing. All safeguarding allegations, internal or external, current or historical, must be passed on to the DSL. We will cooperate fully with the authorities involved and follow any guidance given. See the Whistleblowing policy which outlines our procedures, including where staff, students or volunteers may wish to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding our safeguarding provision. All concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

We believe keeping children safe is the highest priority and if, for whatever reason, concerns cannot be reported to the DSL or deputy DSL, or where a staff member person feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, concerns can be reported firstly to the College

DSL or anonymously to the LA social services safeguarding children team, the NSPCC, the police, or Ofsted.

Allegation against our staff **students or volunteers**

An allegation against our staff **students or volunteers** may relate to a person who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

We will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties while an allegation or concern is being investigated. Dealing with an allegation can be a stressful experience and, to support the staff member, a named person (usually a member of People Management and the DSL) to liaise with will be offered.

We reserve the right to suspend a staff member until the investigation is concluded. Further action will be determined by the outcome of the investigation.

Founded allegations are considered gross misconduct, in accordance with our disciplinary procedures, and may result in the termination of employment. DBS will be informed to ensure their records are updated and Ofsted will be informed. We retain the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry.

All safeguarding records are kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 22 years, if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids unnecessary reinvestigation.

Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated. A return to work plan will be put in place for any member of staff returning to work after an allegation has been deemed unfounded. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the staff member and the nature of the incident such as more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring or external support services.

If the member of staff resigns during the investigation, we will inform DBS, Ofsted and the police, where appropriate.

Reporting the abuse or misuse of images of children

If a member of staff, student or volunteer becomes aware of the abuse or misuse of images of children from the Childcare Centre, they must immediately notify the DSL who would need to review the information provided to decide on the next steps:

- If the image(s) involve suspected child abuse or illegal imagery, DSL to report to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

- If there are concerns regarding online abuse, extortion, or the ways individuals are communicating with children or staff online, DSL to report to the National Crime Agency CEOP Command
- If a child under 18 has had an explicit image shared online, DSL to support the child and/or their parents to use the Childline Report Remove Tool for IWF review and removal
- Escalate safeguarding concerns to the LADO as required.

Allegations against staff, adults working or volunteering with children

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the Childcare Centre, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the Childcare Centre, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- The allegation will be reported to the Manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the Director of Student Services instead.
- The allegation must also be reported to the College DSL Bethan Foweraker
- We follow the Allegations against Staff and Volunteers procedures of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the Childcare Centre, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the Childcare Centre, has abused a child.
- We have a Whistleblowing policy in place and are mindful of observing any inappropriate behaviours from adults in the centre. All staff are aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues via the whistle blowing and complaints policies.
- If as an individual, we feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is our duty to inform the LADO directly
- We report any such alleged incident to Ofsted (as soon as possible but at the latest within 14 days of the allegation being made) and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- We will contact the LADO (Anthony Goble and Greg Liddington) as soon as an allegation has been made - via Somerset Direct (0300 123 2224)
- We will fill out the Allegation Report Form/ ARF within one working day
- We will await advice from the LADO as to the correct process to follow. The Childcare Centre will ask all relevant staff members to do the same and co-operate where required.
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice.
- The college reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation.
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations. We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police. This will also follow Bridgwater College procedures.
- Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in termination of their employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision.
- The member of staff will be suspended on full pay for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

- The Childcare Centre will also notify the DBS to ensure their records are updated.
- Counselling will be available for any member of the Childcare Centre who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the Childcare Centre and the parents.
- All enquires/ external investigations/ interviews will be documented and kept in the safeguarding locked cabinet.
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated.
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer.
- NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.

Link:

<http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/protocols-procedures-and-reviews/allegations-management-procedures/>

<http://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/contents.html>

Sharing low-level concerns

In line with the college low level policy

On occasion, inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour by staff or other adults is observed but does not meet the threshold for significant harm. This may be classed as a 'low-level' concern, although this does not mean that it is insignificant.

We define a low-level concern as:

- Any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working with children may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with our College staff behaviour policy, including inappropriate behaviour outside of work
- A concern that may be a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' and does not meet the harm threshold or is serious enough to refer to the LADO.

We encourage a culture of openness, trust and transparency, with clear values and expected behaviour, monitored and reinforced by all staff. All concerns or allegations, however small, will be shared and responded to. All concerns will be shared with the DSL, or other nominated person, as in our reporting procedures. We encourage concerns to be shared as soon as reasonably practicable and preferably within 24 hours of becoming aware of it. However, it is never too late to share a low-level concern.

It is not expected that staff will be able to determine whether the behaviour in question is a concern, complaint or allegation before sharing the information. If the DSL is in any doubt as to whether the information meets the harm threshold, they will consult the LADO.

Occasionally a member of staff may find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or appear compromising to others. If this occurs, staff are encouraged to self-

report to the DSL. Equally, a member of staff may have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, falls below the standards set in our Staff behaviour policy. If this occurs, staff are encouraged to self-report to the DSL. We encourage staff to be confident to self-refer and believe it reflects awareness of our standards of conduct and behaviour.

When the DSL receives the information, they will need to determine whether the behaviour:

- Meets, or may meet, the harm threshold (and so contact the LADO)
- Meets the harm threshold when combined with previous low-level concerns (and so contact the LADO)
- Constitutes a 'low-level' concern
- Is appropriate and consistent with the law and our Staff behaviour policy.

The DSL will make appropriate records of all information shared, including:

- With the reporting person
- The subject matter of the concern
- Any relevant witnesses (where possible)
- Any external discussions such as with the LSP or LADO
- Their decision about the nature of the concern
- Their rationale for that decision
- Any action taken.

This constitutes a record of low-level concern. We retain all records of low-level concerns in a separate low-level concerns file, with separate concerns regarding a single individual kept as a chronology. These records are kept confidential and held securely, accessed only by those who have appropriate authority. Records will be retained at least until the individual leaves their employment.

If the low-level concern raises issues of misconduct, then appropriate actions following our disciplinary procedures will be taken. Records will be kept in personnel files as well as in the low-level concerns file.

Extremism – The Prevent Duty

- All staff complete the Prevent duty online course within the first 3 months.
- Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police. (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support)
- Channel provides support to individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism. Their aim is to divert that person from their path of radicalisation before they become involved in any terrorist-related criminal activity.
- The Channel process assesses referrals, and when necessary, brings together a number of partner agencies, to discuss the concerns raised and organise a bespoke safeguarding support package for the vulnerable individual.

- This may be cause for concern relating to a change in behaviour of a child or a family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team, or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in our care.
- Make sure the staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children and families at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism.
- Prevent and channel referral guide can be found on the SSCP website
- Any concerns should be raised with the Single Point of Contact for Prevent, or in their absence, any DSL The SPOC or DSL may make a Channel Referral or discuss with the Prevent Regional Coordinator for the Southwest.

For further information visit [The Prevent Duty website](#).

Support for staff during safeguarding incidents

The DSL will support staff throughout any of the processes listed above and along with People Management will organise appropriate counselling should this be required.

Supervisions will be used as a place where supportive discussions can be held over past incidents, if required

Any member of staff who has concerns about the content of this policy and its procedures, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible. If any member of staff wishes to talk confidentially about any safeguarding concern or any other issue relating to child protection or personal circumstance, it is important to do this as soon as possible.

Contact telephone numbers:

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

- The designated person will inform the Children's Social Care Team

Tel. No. 0300 123 2224 (01823 589280)

Link: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/childrens-services/safeguarding-children/report-a-child-at-risk/>

Out of Office Hours - Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0300 123 23 27

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Ofsted 0300 123 1231

Emergency Police 999

Non-emergency police 101

Government helpline for extremism concerns 020 7340 7264

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must not override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained for all concerned if an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

If uncertain about whether sensitive information can be disclosed to a third party, contact the DSL or call the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113. They will provide advice about the particulars relating to each individual case, including information which can and cannot be shared.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent, child or member of staff.

Record keeping and data protection

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate and in line with guidance of the Local Authority with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

The Childcare Centre keeps appropriate records to support the early identification of children and families which would benefit from early help. Factual records are maintained in a chronological order with parental discussions. Records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to look holistically at identifying children's needs.

- Any information is shared under the guidance of Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- Parents and families will be treated with respect and in a non-judgmental manner whilst external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the Childcare Centre's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- DASH reports must NOT be shared with parents
- We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

PART 4: Recruitment, selection, induction and training

Recruitment and selection

Through the implementation of our Safer recruitment of staff policy, we endeavour to prevent unsuitable people from becoming members of staff. We check the suitability of new recruits following the procedures outlined in the Recruitment, selection and suitability of staff policy.

Procedures include relevant checks, such as obtaining high risk references, establishing the identity of applicant and conducting criminal records disclosures prior to employment. Where required, staff and stakeholders have enhanced DBS checks. Clear person specification criteria and processes during the recruitment and selection process enable us to determine a candidate's suitability for the role.

We have specific responsibilities, as outlined in this policy, for any staff, apprentices, students and learners under the age of 18 whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently.

Induction and probation for staff

As part of our induction process, all new workers will receive basic training on this Safeguarding children and child protection policy so they have the necessary knowledge and skills to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They will also complete the mandatory safeguarding training as part of the induction process

Within induction, all staff will receive a copy of this policy. It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that the new staff member understands it and is able to follow it. All safeguarding training must be completed by the end of the probationary period.

Staffing and Volunteering

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the Childcare Centre are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out a disclosing and barring check before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the Childcare Centre or has access to the children.
- All students have DBS checks conducted on them before they start placement with us.
- People Management/HR ensure we receive at least two written references, followed by verbal checks BEFORE a new member commences employment with us. They request DBS checks.
- We abide by the requirements of the EYFS and Ofsted guidance in respect to obtaining references, Enhanced DBS and suitability checks for all staff, students and volunteers at the Childcare Centre.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.

- We give staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about health, medication or about changes in their home life such as child protection plans for their own children.
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors and students to the Childcare Centre. We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the Childcare Centre so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- All visitors/contractors will be supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.
- As a staff team we will be fully aware of how to safeguard the whole Childcare Centre environment and be aware of potential dangers on the Childcare Centre boundaries such as drones or strangers lingering. We will ensure the children remain safe at all times.
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us.
- All staff have access to and comply with the whistleblowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner. During their supervision meetings opportunities will be made to discuss any individual children, child protection and any needs for further support.
- The deployment of staff within the Childcare Centre allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar, the staff member will tell other staff, or other safeguards will be put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.
- Parents and older siblings are spoken to about their mobile phones. We do not allow phone use on entering the Childcare Centre.
- Students and visitors are asked to hand over their mobile phones and we keep in the office.
- The Childcare Centre has a Childcare Centre tablet which may be taken to take photographs. The Manager/ Educator may take their own personal phone for emergency use only. (See E-Safety policy)
- Staff keep their mobile phones separate from the floor they remain in the office/ staff room or in their locker. They use their phones at break times only. If answering a call they take themselves into a separate room away from the children or use the staff area.
- Staff can access the college email site on their phone – which is password protected.
- We have a separate camera, device, and mobile phone policy. E-Safety Policy

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events unless we feel this will put the child at risk of significant harm. In these cases, the investigating officers (not the DSL) will inform the parents.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made.
- We inform parents where we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.

- In situations where the parent is the likely abuser, and after taking advice as to whether it is in the best interest of the child to speak to the parent the social workers will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have a copy of the threshold document 'Effective support for Children and Families in Somerset' and the 'The Family Strength and Needs Toolkit' and in conjunction with the DSL and SENCO, the practitioners identify a level of need and which services could help in meeting these needs.
- We work with the Government's Statutory Guidance "Working together to Safeguard Children." and Keeping Children safe in Education, KCSIE
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues.
- Guidance for professionals can be found on Professional choices to raise an Early Help Assessment
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff in accordance with statutory framework of the EYFS. This is to include where an allegation has been made against a member of staff not on the premises.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will inform Ofsted within 48 hours.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the Childcare Centre to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- As part of our induction, the staff read our safeguarding policy, which we amend with the latest information. There will be regular safeguarding updates at staff meetings, supervisions, staff notice board and in the message book.
- Each staff member undertakes online Safeguarding training within the first days of employment.
- Staff attend safeguarding training which takes place at least every two years for all staff, with regular updates during this period and a yearly safeguarding refresher course on the college mandatory training site we update staff during full staff meetings, The DSL delivers cascade in-house training provided by the Local Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- The DFE Safeguarding training for Early Years is completed yearly or when a new staff member starts.

- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the Childcare Centre. New staff are informed about these procedures during the induction within both the Childcare Centre and the college environments.
- We use additional training resources such to keep staff abreast of child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- New legislation is shared with all staff. All staff are expected to keep their safeguarding knowledge and skills up-to-date and report any concerns they may have. We maintain records to ensure all staff have received the training they need.
- All staff are to complete Prevent training using the free online DFE ACT training course [ACT for Education | ProtectUK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-duty-training) or the Government Prevent training <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-duty-training>
- Regular scenarios and updates are passed on throughout the year to keep everyone as up to date as possible including agreeing and signing to KCSiE declaration yearly

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others
- CCTV is operational on the main floor, sleep room, reception area, dining room, outside garden areas close to the centre, sensory room
- The Childcare Centre ensures that a member of staff is in the sleep room at all times, if there are more than 12 sleeping children at least two adults will be present, more staff will remain whilst children are settling to sleep to ensure the children's safety; when the numbers become less, one member of staff is left, they may return a woken child to the main floor, returning immediately but on returning to the sleep room another check is done straight away, other staff are within close distance during this time. If any child is not asleep then the room must not be left unsupervised, all other staff are available to support at all times.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.
- A signed Parent's Agreement states that no parents will take photos of children or take photos and load them onto a social media site.
- Parents sign a consent form to allow practitioners to access their key children's development information when working from home.
- Access to any work at home is through a password protected system, and a coded permission system, via iConnect.

Legal framework

We adhere to all current legislation, as below:

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015)

Freedom of Information Act 2012

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Childcare Act 2006

The Children Act 2004

The Children Act (England and Wales) 1989

The Equality Act 2010

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Police Act 1997

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

The Data Protection Acts 1984, 1998 and 2018

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Working together to safeguard children

Children's Wellbeing & Schools Bill

Prevent Duty

Relevant non-statutory guidance:

Child sexual exploitation, DfE 2017

Information sharing, DfE

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, DfE 2015

Effective support for children and families in Somerset –Thresholds for assessment and service

The family strength and needs toolkit

Effective support for Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2019

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25

Useful contacts

Childcare Centre	
Main office	01278 441270
DSL	Caren Egan 01278 441438
Deputy DSL	Chloe Trapnell 01278 441270
College DSL	Bethan Foweraker 01278 455464
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	0300 123 2224
Local Authority Safeguarding Children Partnership	0300 123 2224
Ofsted (England)	0300 123 1231
Police and related contacts	
Emergency police	999
Non-emergency police	101
Child exploitation and online protection (CEOP)	Online contact only
DfE counter-extremism helpline	020 7340 7264

Other useful contacts	
Anti-terrorist hotline	0800 789 321
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Kidscape	020 7823 5430
National Domestic Abuse helpline	0808 2000 247
Modern slavery helpline	08000 121 700
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)	01223 20 30 30
Information Commissioners Office (ICO)	0303 123 1113