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## **I am Me Support**

### **Safeguarding policy**

#### **January 2025 to be reviewed at least annually**

I am Me Support is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which the children in our care are protected from abuse and harm.

We will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur. The child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is Jenny Morley. The DSL coordinates child protection issues and liaises with external agencies (eg Social Care, the LSCB and Ofsted) and the individual schools if a child or young person is on roll at a school.

#### **Forms of child abuse and neglect**

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

#### **Signs of child abuse and neglect**

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- deterioration in a child's general well-being
- unexplained bruising or marks

- comments made by a child which give cause for concern
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

### **If abuse is suspected or disclosed**

When a child makes a disclosure to a mentor, that mentor or staff will:

- Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
- Listen to the child but not question them
- Give reassurance that the staff member will take action
- Record the incident as soon as possible (see *Logging an incident* below).

If a member of I am Me Support witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the incident straightaway. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that we are obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

### **Logging an incident**

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure will be recorded on the **Logging a concern** form as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- Date of the disclosure or of the incident causing concern
- Date and time at which the record was made
- Name and date of birth of the child involved
- A factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child's own words.
- Name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be given to the DSL who will decide whether they need to contact the child's school, Social Care or make a referral. If other members of staff think that the incident has not been adequately followed up, they may call Social Care themselves.

### **Allegations against staff**

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident record** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and to Ofsted. The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, the DSL will act upon their advice.
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.

### **Promoting awareness among staff**

I am Me Support promotes awareness of child abuse issues through its staff training. It ensures that:

- Its designated DSL has relevant experience and receives appropriate training
- Safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff
- All staff have a copy of this Safeguarding Children policy and KCSIE (2024), understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse or neglect
- All staff have received child protection training and are aware of their statutory requirements with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse
- Staff are familiar with the 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused' flowchart

- Its procedures are in line with the guidance in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children (2012)’ and KCSIE (2024).

### Use of mobile phones and cameras

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents’ permission. Due to the specific work the staff may carry out they will have their mobile phones with them but are fully aware of their responsibility in safe use of them.

### Contact numbers

Police: Emergency – 999 Non-emergencies - 101

NSPCC: 0808 800 500

This policy was adopted by: I am Me Support	Date: 01/01/2025
To be reviewed: September 2025 or earlier if guidance is updated	Signed: <i>Jenny Morley</i>

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the Agora Learning Partnership and the schools within it, will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE, September 2024) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)
- Working together to safeguard children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (July 2018) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused (DfE 2015)
- The Education (independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 Years
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medication Conditions
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Section 26, The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (PREVENT duty)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74, Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry, which includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry whether or not the forced marriage takes place - in addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used; as with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial ‘marriages’ as well as legal marriages)
- Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- The Human Rights Act 1998