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| **Written by:** | **Rob Stevenson** | **Date: November 2024** |
| **Last reviewed on:** | **New** | |
| **Approved by:** | **A.Powell** | |
| **Next review due by:** | **October 2025** | |

**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

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| Person responsible for the Policy: | **Rob Stevenson** |
| Date Approved: | **26th November 2024** |
| Signed: |  |
| Date for Review: | 20th October 2025 |

At Higher Farm Education the named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** | **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s (DDSL)** | **Safeguarding Proprietor** |
| **Rob Stevenson** | **Charlotte Barnes** | **Andrew Powell (Proprietor)** |

The named personnel with designated responsibility regarding allegations against staff / those working in the provision are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Designated Senior Manager** | **Chair of Governors**  **(in the event of an allegation against the Headteacher)** |
| **Rob Stevenson** | **Andrew Powell (Proprietor)** |

Additional Responsibilities:

|  |
| --- |
| **Designated Teacher for Cared for Children/Mental Health Lead** |
| **Charlotte Barnes** |
| **Single Point of Contact for Prevent (SPOC)** *(usually the DSL)* |
| **Rob Stevenson** |

At Higher Farm Education we recognise the responsibility we have under Section 175 of the Education and Inspections Act 2002, to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The Proprietors in our provision approve the S175/157 return to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Learners’s Partnership (CESCP) on a yearly basis.

This policy demonstrates Higher Farm Education’s commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation; it should be read in conjunction with:

* [Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (CESCP) procedures](https://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/cheshire_east/index.html)
* [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803fe31c0c2a000d18cf40/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)
* [Keeping children safe in education 2024 (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792ffff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf)
* [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused. 2015](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)
* [Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f8498efdc5d10014fce6d1/14.258_HO_Prevent_Duty_Guidance_v5c.pdf)
* [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and staff DFE 2022](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1089687/Behaviour_in_Schools_guidance_July_2022.pdf)
* [Safer Working Practice Guidance for those working with learners and young people in education settings](https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/d71d6fd8-b99e-4327-b8fd-1ac968b768a4~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital) May 2022
* School Relationships (and Sex) Education Policy
* Staff Code of Conduct
* Staff use of mobile phones and Social Media Policy
* Substance Misuse Policy
* [“Preventing and Tackling Bullying” DfE July 2017](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)
* [School and Colleges: When to call the police](https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf)
* [Searching, Screening and Confiscation (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1091132/Searching__Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf) – July 2022
* [**Working together to improve school attendance DFE August 2024**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone’s** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with learners and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding learners. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners in this provision make sure their approach is child centred. This means that we consider, at all times, what is in the best interestsof the child. The term learners includes our young people onsite, under the age of 25.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances. If learners and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyonewho comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Through our day-to-day contact with learners and direct work with families, staff take notice of indicators of possible abuse or neglect and consult with Children’s Services in Cheshire East (or in neighbouring authorities dependent upon the child’s area of residence). We recognise that we form part of the wider safeguarding system for learners. This responsibility also means that we are aware of the behaviour of staff in the provision; we maintain an attitude of **‘it could happen here’** where safeguarding is concerned.

In Higher Farm Education we ensure that:

* All learners, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, are treated equally and have equal rights to protection
* All staff act on concerns or disclosures that may suggest a learner is at risk of harm
* All staff are professionally curious and feel able to challenge decisions to ensure learners receive the right support
* Pupils and staff involved in Safeguarding issues receive appropriate support
* Staff adhere to a Code of Conduct & Staff Handbook and understand what to do in the event of any allegations against any adult working in the setting
* All staff are aware of Early Help and ensure that relevant referral, assessments, and interventions take place
* All staff are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label; they recognise that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another
* All staff understand that learners’ poor behaviour may be a sign they are suffering harm or that they have been traumatised by abuse.
* Staff have received advice, support and training in regard to adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed practice

This policy is available on our website and printed copies of this document are available to parents/carers upon request. We inform parents and carers about this policy when their learners join our provision and remind them through regular contact.

The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction, alongside our Staff Code of Conduct. The safeguarding induction will cover online safety which details expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, the role of the DSL, Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 and Annexe B, learner behaviour policy (including bullying) safeguarding response for those learners who go missing from education and staff code of conduct (including whistleblowing and social media)

In addition, all staff are provided with at least Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Annexe B and are required to sign to indicate that they have read and understood it. Annexe B contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Provisions and college leaders and those staff who work directly with learners should read Annexe B.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is able to support all staff in understanding their responsibilities and implementing it in their practice.**

**2.0 Aims of this document:**

* To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of learners and in doing so ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities
* To ensure consistent good practice across the provision
* To demonstrate our commitment to protecting learners
* To raise the awareness, of all staff, of the need to safeguard all learners and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
* To emphasise the need for good communication between all members of staff in matters relating to child protection
* To promote safe practice and encourage challenge for poor and unsafe practice
* To promote effective working relationships with other agencies involved with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners, especially with Learners’ Social Care and the Police
* To ensure that all members of the provision community are aware of our procedures for ensuring staff suitability to work with learners
* To ensure that staff understand their responsibility to support learners who have suffered abuse in accordance with their agreed plan e.g. extra / targeted help, child in need/ child protection plan

**3.0 Scope of this Policy**

This policy applies to all members of the provision community including staff, learners, volunteers, supply teachers, parents/carers, visitors, agency staff and students, or anyone working on behalf of Higher Farm Education.

This policy is consistent with Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (CESCP) child protection procedures.

**4.0 Definitions of terms used in this document:**

**Child Protection:** refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific learners who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners** is defined for the purposes of this policy as: Providing help and support to meet the needs of learners as soon as problems emerge, protecting learners from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online, preventing the impairment of learners’ mental and physical health or development, ensuring that learners grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all learners to have the best outcomes.

**Early Help**: means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that

is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be

particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on learners of all forms of

domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.  Learners may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Learners may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or learners.

**Staff:** refers to all those working for or on behalf of Higher Farm Education in either a paid or voluntary capacity, full time or part time. This also includes parent volunteers and Proprietors.

**Child:** refers to all learners who have not yet reached the age of 18. On the whole, this will apply to learners (up to 25) from our own provision; however, the policy will extend to learners visiting from other establishments.

**Parent:** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role e.g. carers, stepparents, foster parents, and adoptive parents.

**5.0 Prevention:**

Learners feel secure in a safe environment in which they can learn and develop. We achieve this by ensuring that:

* Learners develop realistic attitudes to their responsibilities in adult life and are equipped with the skills needed to keep themselves safe; including understanding and recognition of healthy/unhealthy relationships and support available
* Learners are supported in recognising and managing risks in different situations, including on the internet; being able to judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable, recognising when pressure from others, including people they know, threatens their personal safety and well-being and supporting them in developing effective ways of resisting pressure
* All staff are aware of provision guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks
* Importance and prioritisation are given to equipping the learners with the skills needed to stay safe, including providing opportunities for Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education throughout the curriculum offer and staff mentoring.
* Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place; however, we are careful that “over blocking” does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what learners can be taught with regards to online teaching, remote learning and safeguarding
* All adults feel comfortable and supported to draw safeguarding issues to the attention of the Headteacher and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead and can pose safeguarding questions with “respectful uncertainty” as part of their shared responsibility to safeguard learners
* Emerging themes are proactively addressed and fed back to the local authority and CESCP to ensure a coherent approach so that multi-agency awareness and strategies are developed
* There is a proactive approach to substance misuse. Issues of drugs and substance misuse are recorded, there are related policies and a curriculum which is robustly delivered throughout the provision
* Support and planning for learners in custody and their resettlement back into the provision community is undertaken, where necessary, as part of our inclusive approach
* We comply with ‘Working Together to Safeguard Learners’ 2023 and support the Cheshire East Safeguarding Learners’s Partnership (CESCP) [Right Help, Right Time - Delivering effective support for learners and families in Cheshire East, Multi Agency Threshold of Need Guidance](https://www.cescp.org.uk/pdf/thresholds-document-final-master.pdf), this document supports professionals to access the **right help and support** for learners and their families at the **right time**
* We systematically monitor learner welfare, keeping accurate records, speaking to parents and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary
* All staff are aware of learners with circumstances which mean that they are more vulnerable to abuse/less able to easily access services and are proactive in recognising and identifying their needs
* All staff are aware that learners may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, learners may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened; this could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a learner. Staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with learners and young people which facilitate communication whilst ensuring safer working practices.
* The voice of the child is paramount; therefore, our learners are actively involved in safeguarding development. There is an established learner voice led by support workers, where learners can share their experiences and are involved with the mechanism which works with and challenges staff in order to develop aspects of safeguarding e.g. through the curriculum, approaches and displays.
* We consult with, listen and respond to learners; our provision’s arrangements for this are through our feedback approach “You said, we did”.

**6.0 Early Help:**

All staff understand the Cheshire East Safeguarding Learners’s Partnership (CESCP) ‘Threshold of Need Guidance’ and Child Protection procedures; Right Help, Right Time - Delivering effective support for learners and families in Cheshire East, Multi Agency Threshold of Need Guidance – (see link in previous section) to ensure that the needs of our learners are effectively assessed; decisions are based on a learner’s development needs, parenting capacity and family & environmental factors. We ensure that the most appropriate referrals are made. We actively support multi agency planning for these learners and, in doing so, provide information from the learner’s point of view; bringing their lived experience to life as evidenced by observations or information provided. Staff know how to pass on any concerns no matter how trivial they seem.

Staff members always act in the interests of the learner and are aware of their responsibility to take action as outlined in this policy. In our provision, staff are aware that they must be prepared to identify those learners who may benefit from early help. The staff are alert to the potential need for early help for a learner who:

* is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
* has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan or do not)
* has a mental health need
* is a young carer
* is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups and county lines
* is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
* has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
* is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and or criminal exploitation
* is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
* has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
* is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the learner, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
* is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
* has returned home to their family from care
* is at risk of ‘honour’-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
* is a ‘privately fostered child’
* is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the provision day

If there are concerns about a child’s welfare that do not meet the thresholds of child abuse the provision will consider whether the Early Help approach should be considered. Staff are aware that early identification of concerns and the use of Early Help to develop a multi-agency plan for the child can reduce the risk of subsequent abuse.

The multi-agency threshold framework is a guidance tool that all agencies, professionals and volunteers can use to consider how best to meet the needs of individual learners and young people. This support can be provided on a single agency basis or a multi-agency basis. The stepped approach aims to reduce risk and vulnerability and meet needs at the appropriate level of support and/or intervention. Access to effective early intervention and prevention services is essential to achieving this.

Our provision is an Operation Encompass provision which means that we are able to give proactive support to those learners and their families where domestic abuse is identified. This may be through therapy in place at the provision or through circle time or 1:1 sessions that learners can request with the SENCo or a member of their staff. Learners are encouraged to share their worries and identify their feelings.

If a member of staff has concerns about a learner, they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to Learners’s Social Care/consult with Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS)/contact the police. Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by Cheshire East’s Safeguarding Learners Partnership.

The pyramid of support will help us to identify what advice and guidance is available and who to contact at each different level on the continuum of need. The Family Hub model that is being implemented across Cheshire East will strengthen existing partnerships in each locality making it easier for practitioners to get support for families.

In the first instance staff should discuss ‘Early Help’ requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If early help is appropriate the Designated Safeguarding Lead will support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

As staff may be required to support other agencies and practitioners and parents /carers and learners in an extra help plan or targeted help plan, all staff are aware of the relevant assessments and appropriate support is given to them when they undertake an early help assessment. We have a suite of screening tools which may also help to identify the level of need, the best pathway of support, and the interventions you can be provided for learners, young people and families. These can be found in the [CE SCP Multi-Agency Toolkit](https://www.cescp.org.uk/ce-scp-multi-agency-toolkit/ce-scp-multi-agency-toolkit.aspx)

Concerns assessed as being at lower tier targeted help level for complex early help concerns will be triaged and managed by the family help front door.

Where early help and or other support is appropriate, we ensure that the situation for the learner is kept under constant review. If the learner’s situation doesn’t appear to be improving, we take appropriate action.

The learners in our provision are made aware that there are adults whom they can approach if worried or in difficulty, this includes their keyworker.

There is adequate signposting to external sources of support and advice for staff, parents and learners around the site.

**7.0 Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection**

In our provision we ensure that we follow [Cheshire East’s Multi-agency Practice Standards](https://www.cescp.org.uk/pdf/multi-agency-practice-standards-april-2016.pdf) [Agency roles and responsibilities](file:///C:\Users\NicciHague\Downloads\Agency%20roles%20and%20responsibilites) to ensure that our work, on behalf of our learners, is of a consistently good standard. We use these standards to challenge other workers on behalf of learners where the standards are not being met. The Headteacher and the DSL are aware of the Cheshire East Escalation Procedure [Procedure for Multi-Agency Professional Challenge and... (trixonline.co.uk)](https://pancheshire-cheshireeast.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/procedure-for-multi-agency-professional-challenge-and-escalation?search=escalation)

**8.0 Concerns about a child - recording and reporting:**

Our recording procedures are in line with those outlined in Cheshire East’s “Recording and Reporting Guidance” 2024; the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Lead are aware of this document.

Where a member of staff is concerned that a learner is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or their Deputy, without delay. A written record should be made of these concerns on CPOMS as soon as possible following the disclosure/concern being raised; this must be on the same working day.

Where staff have conversations with a learner who discloses abuse, they follow the basic principles:

* + - listen rather than directly question, remain calm
    - never stop a learner who is recalling significant events
    - never ask a learner if they are being abused
    - make a record of the discussion to include time, place, persons present and what was said (child language – do not substitute words)
    - advise you will have to pass the information on
    - avoid coaching/prompting
    - never take photographs of any injury
    - never undress a learner to physically examine them
    - allow time and provide a safe haven / quiet area for future support
    - at no time promise confidentiality to a learner or adult
    - all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe
    - nor should a victim ever be made to feel they are a problem or ashamed for making a report
    - where abuse has occurred online or outside of the provision it will be treated equally seriously

Staff are aware that they should not question the learner; other than to respond with **TED**: **T**ell me what you mean by that, **Explain** what you mean by that, **D**escribe that. Staff will observe and listen, but do not probe/ask any leading questions.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will obtain key information and agree relevant actions after making a timely assessment of the information.

We recognise that parents may hold key information about incidents/allegations therefore, **in the majority of situations; the Designated Safeguarding Lead will speak to the parents and gain their consent** to discussing the situation with others. Staff are aware that there will be very few instances where; to speak to the parents, it could further endanger the child. In those situations, they would still consult/refer but would have clearly recorded reasons as to why they had not gained parental consent.

The following situations are the instances in which parental consent would not be gained prior to a referral:

* Discussion would impede a police investigation or social work enquiry
* Sexual abuse is suspected
* Organised or multiple abuse is suspected
* Fabrication or induced illness or perplexing presentations is suspected
* Honour Based Abuse e.g. forced marriage, FGM etc. is a possibility/is suspected

Additional consideration re parental consent would be needed in the following circumstances, particularly if there are concerns around parental involvement or influence:

* Extremism or radicalisation is suspected
* County Lines activities are suspected

Staff are also aware that, even in situations where the parent does not give consent, the best interests of the learner are paramount and therefore, they would share their concerns. In addition, the referral will not be delayed if it has not been possible to contact the parents/carers.

For non-urgent contact for a referral or request to the front door, the **appropriate portal form** needs to be completed. There is one for learners’ social care where you feel the learner / young person has reached their threshold for support (**upper tier Targeted Help and Statutory / Specialist Help**).

**Immediate Safeguarding concerns:**

**Phone –**

0300 123 5012

Option 3 – Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS)

Choose Option 2 – ChECS / Immediate Safeguarding concerns

1. Anything you submit to ChECS that is deemed as meeting threshold for social care will be processed within either 2 hours or 24 hours as per statutory guidelines dependant on risk.

A consultation will take place with Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) and/or the police immediately. Where a child lives in a different authority the Designated Safeguarding Lead follows the procedures for that authority.

Where possible we ensure that contacts with outside agencies are through the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy; however, staff are aware that anyone can make this contact. Where a member of staff makes contact, they ensure that they make the Designated Safeguarding Lead aware as soon as possible.

Safeguarding records are held electronically / but some copies are still held as hard copies. Safeguarding and Child Protection records are stored securely and are separate from the main pupil file. Authorisation to access these records is controlled by the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead, information should be kept confidential.

All records should be dated and signed, with the name of the signatory clearly printed, and filed in chronological order. For electronic record keeping system a separate signature is not necessary if individuals have their own log in and any changes to a record are automatically logged (CPOMS).

The provision ensures that safeguarding information, including Child Protection information, is stored and handled in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping learners safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of learners

Where learners leave the provision, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure their safeguarding file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This allows the new school or college to have support in place for when the learner arrives. See the Cheshire East Record Keeping Guidance.

We also ensure that key workers or social workers are notified where a learner leaves the provision.

**9.0 Safer Working Practices**

**Use of mobile phones, cameras and internet:**

The provision and staff take safeguarding seriously and understand this policy is over- arching.

**Personal mobiles and electronic devices:**

Mobile phones are to be kept away in the learner’s clothing and not be used until social times. If a learner does not adhere to this then the next step would involve the learner placing it in a locker or bag in a cupboard. If this still persists then the learner will hand in their phone on arrival and be given it back at the end of the day. Staff are not permitted to use phones or any electronic device in front of learners. Staff should never call parents from their personal device. (please see mobile phone policy for more details)

**Provision devices:**

Provision devices may be used in provision and to take pictures of trips and learners; you may not access personal information on a provision device. You should avoid making calls, unless in an emergency, in front of learners. Provision devices are allowed to be examined at any time by a member of the Management Team, the proprietor or the safeguarding lead.

Electronic devices should be password protected so that content cannot be accessed by unauthorised users.

**Cameras, photography and images:**

Higher Farm Education will obtain parents’ and carers’ written consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications).

Staff will ensure the provision designated camera or recording devices (tablets, cameras, laptops etc) are used when capturing evidence of work undertaken.

**Online safety:**

On provision equipment we ensure that appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place.

We refer you to our ‘Online Safety Policy’ which incorporates and considers the 4Cs as detailed in KCSIE 2024 to ensure an effective online policy.

The provision’s policy on the use of mobile and smart technology and their use reflects the fact many learners have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some learners, whilst at provision or college, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Our provision carefully considers how this is managed on the provision’s premises and continual misuse will mean that the learners will not be permitted to bring phones to the site unless they are travelling independently. Phones that are brought to the provision will be locked away by the staff for the duration of their time in the provision.

**Working off provision premises:**

Where staff take provision computer/digital equipment / or records in paper form off the site they do so with the view that they abide by the staff code of conduct, staff handbook, safeguarding policy, mobile and electronic devices policy and the GDPR policy.

Staff are reminded that information, both in paper or electric form, is sensitive and protected under data protection and GDPR and should be safe and securely stored off the premises and during transportation. (See GDPR and mobile phone policy)

**10.0 Allegations against staff**

Support and advice are sought from Learners’s Services or the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO), and our Personnel/Human Resources advisor whenever necessary.

At Higher Farm Education we recognise the possibility that adults working in the provision; including directly employed staff, volunteers, governors and supply teachers, may harm learners; that they may have:

* **behaved in a way that has harmed a learner, or may have harmed a learner and/or**
* **possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a learner, and/or**
* **behaved towards a learner or learners in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to learners, and/or**
* **behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with learners.**

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of the provision or college, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with learners, this is known as transferable risk.

Any concerns of this nature, about the conduct of other adults, should be taken to the Headteacher without delay or, where that is a concern about the Headteacher, to the Proprietor and the LADO.

Staff are aware that this must be done on the same working day.

The provision will not internally investigate until instructed by the LADO.

We make all staff aware of their duty to raise concerns. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them. They have been made aware of those other channels of support as part of their induction and have access to the whistleblowing policy in the staff room and from the office.

As part of our whole provision approach to safeguarding we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the provision (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. This includes allegations which do not meet the harms threshold, also known as low level concerns.

**Low-level concerns**

We understand that the term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the provision or college may have acted in a way that:

* is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct

outside of work and

* does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

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

* being over friendly with learners
* having favourites
* engaging with a learner on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
* humiliating pupils.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns will be reported in the same way as a concern in relation to concerns and allegations that meet the harms test i.e. to the Headteacher, or, proprietor, if the concern is about the headteacher.

Records of low-level concerns will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to.

Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the Headteacher will decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harm threshold is met.

The Headteacher will consider if there are any wider cultural issues in provision that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

**Relating to Organisations or Individuals using Provision Premises**

If the provision receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their premises for the purposes of running activities for learners (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities), as with any safeguarding allegation, we will follow safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

**11.0 Safer Recruitment**

The provision pays full regard to DfE guidance ‘Keeping Learners Safe in Education’ 2024 and with reference to the ‘Position of Trust’ offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003). We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the provision who is likely to be perceived by the learners as a safe and trustworthy adult.

We do this by:

* Operating safer recruitment practices, following the guidance in Section 3 of Keeping Learners Safe in Education 2024
* Ensuring that staff and volunteers adhere to a published code of conduct and other professional standards at all times, including after hours activities. Staff are aware of social media policy, staff handbook and code of conduct
* Ensuring that all staff and other adults on site are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with learners and parents, following our code of conduct and staff handbook
* Requiring all staff to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with learners (whether received before or during their employment at the setting). Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2006 (amended following the 2018 Regulations)
* Maintaining an accurate, complete, up to date Single Central Record

**12.0 Staff training and updates:**

In our provision there is a commitment to the continuous development of all staff, regardless of role, with regard to safeguarding training:

All staff undertake Basic Awareness Safeguarding training within the first term of their employment/placement by the headteacher. This training is refreshed every 3 years to enable them to understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

This training needs to include local information, priorities and safeguarding procedures for Cheshire East and needs to align with the Cheshire East Safeguarding Learners’ Partnership training pathway for provisions and colleges.

All staff receive an annual refresher update for their safeguarding training. In addition, they receive regular updates via staff meetings, briefings and communications throughout the year.

The Designated Lead and any Deputy have completed specific training such as Designated Safeguarding Lead Training to carry out the duties of the role, and attend (CESCP) multi agency Safeguarding and Child Protection training on an annual basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, and/or Deputy/ies attend the Designated Safeguarding Leads Meetings held each term coordinated by the SCiES Team, therefore enabling them to remain up to date with safeguarding practices and be aware of any emerging concerns/themes within Cheshire East.

The provision acknowledges findings from local and national practice learning reviews and shares lessons learned with all staff.

**13.0 Cared for learners (Looked after learners) and previously cared for learners**

In Higher Farm Education we ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep Cared for Learners safe as we are aware that learners often become cared for as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We have identified a designated member of staff for our Cared for Learners (C.Barnes); this person works closely with the Virtual School.

**14.0 Learners with special needs and disabilities**

We ensure that staff are aware that learners with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. We ensure that staff have knowledge and understanding of the additional barriers which can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in learners with special needs/disabilities. These barriers can include:

**•** assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration

• these learners being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including

prejudice-based bullying) than other learners

**•** learners with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs

**•** communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

• cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact

and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in provisions

or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

We aim to build the necessary skills in staff so that they can safeguard and respond to the specific needs of this group of learners.

**15.0 The use of ‘reasonable force’**

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in the provision to use reasonable force to safeguard learners. The term ‘reasonable force’ covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain learners. This can range from guiding a learner to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. ‘Reasonable’ in these circumstances means ‘using no more force than is needed’.

We have a key emphasis on de-escalation and only use physical touch to prevent a learner or others being harmed. If we do this, we ensure that it is for the shortest time necessary.

Where it has been necessary to use physical intervention, we ensure the following:

* the learner’s wellbeing after the event is monitored and supported
* parents are fully briefed
* the incident is fully recorded including antecedents, de-escalation attempted, and holds used, on CPOMS.
* an individual plan is agreed and recorded so that it is clear what will happen should a similar situation arise in the future
* any incident involving the restraint of a learner is always reported to an identified senior member of staff

**16.0 Private Fostering**

Private Fostering is a type of ‘Kinship Care’. Working Together to Safeguard Learners 2023 provides further examples of this type of care and information and guidance around supporting learners living in these arrangements. To support kinship carers, the role of virtual heads will be extended to supporting every learner in the care of friends or family.

We recognise that our provision has a mandatory duty to report to the local authority when we become aware of, or suspect that, a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. To aid our awareness we ensure that we establish parental responsibility for every child; we take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child when we register them.

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a ‘grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt’ and includes half-siblings and stepparents (by marriage or where a legal order has been made, such as a Child Arrangement Order); it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered learners are appropriately supported and looked after, we recognise that they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases, privately fostered learners are affected by abuse and neglect, or are involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Where a member of staff becomes aware of private fostering arrangements, they are aware that they need to notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform Cheshire East. The provision would also inform Cheshire East of the private fostering arrangements.

**17.0 Learners who are absent from education**

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 we have a duty to investigate any unexplained absences especially as a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

At Higher Farm Education we follow Cheshire East’s procedures for dealing with learners that are absent or who go missing from lessons and/or provision. All staff are aware that learners going missing, particularly repeatedly or prolonged, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called ‘honour’-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a learner going missing in future. We will refer to:

We also ensure that we are rigorous in our attendance procedures; these are outlined in our attendance policy.

If learners do not attend provision, we have a duty of care to ensure they are safe. This may involve visiting the learner’s home to ensure their welfare and safety and will always be done in the best interests of the learner. Provision will always endeavour that parents / carers and the learner(s) themselves are involved in this process. If we are unable to be assured of the learner’s safety, we will, through our Designated Safeguarding Lead, seek advice from other agencies such as The Attendance and Learners Out of School Team, the police or ChECS, if deemed necessary.

Where a learner’s destination is unknown when they have left our provision, we ensure we carry out all necessary checks and refer them as Learners Missing Education (CME), using the [appropriate notification form](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/children-missing-education.aspx) on the Cheshire East website, so that they can be followed up on. Staff are aware of the trafficking of learners and the importance of rigour around our attendance procedures to reduce this as a threat to our learners’ safety.

**Remote education**

We are aware that some learners may require a short period of remote education.

We follow the government guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education>

We will remain in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications will be used to reinforce the importance of learners being safe online and parents and carers will be informed what systems provisions and colleges use to filter and monitor online use.

It is especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their learners are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the provision (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online

**18.0 Learners who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)**

Learners may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Learners may need this help due to abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation and/or complex family circumstances. A learner’s experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will be aware of the fact a learner has a social worker and will use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child’s safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

Where learners need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

**19.0 Learners requiring mental health support**

We recognise that educational provisions have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.

Staff are aware of how experiences of learners can affect emotional wellbeing, mental health and provision attendance. We acknowledge that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

In our provision we have a mental health lead who can be a point of contact and support within provision. They can seek additional advice and support from our own therapists or signpost you to some appropriate help.

We ensure we have specific training and clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

1. **Educational Outcomes**

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures that staff know the learners who have experienced or are experiencing welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues so that, as relevant, we know who these learners are, understand their academic progress and attainment; this means that we are able to make necessary adjustments to help these learners to achieve. In this way we maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort. This includeslearners with a social workerand those previously known to social care; we ensure that teachers are made aware of those learners in this category.

**21.0 Specific safeguarding issues**

**All** staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues. They are aware that these safeguarding issues may not directly involve the learner in our provision but could be happening to their siblings or parents this includes the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and support for siblings where there is intrafamilial harm. They are also aware that some issues could be happening in the lives of staff members.

Staff are supported in accessing and completing the relevant screening tools:

[CE SCP Multi-Agency Toolkit](https://www.cescp.org.uk/ce-scp-multi-agency-toolkit/ce-scp-multi-agency-toolkit.aspx)

As a provision that promotes a strong culture of safeguarding and being alert to the signs and indicators of abuse and harm in learners, staff would be aware of the following issues identified in Keeping Learners Safe in Education 2024 (Part One and Annexe B) and would know how to identify and respond to them:

* Physical Abuse
* Sexual Abuse
* Emotional
* Neglect
* Child abduction and community safety incidents
* Learners and the Court System
* Learners with family members in prison / custody
* Cyber crime
* Homelessness
* Drug/substance/alcohol misuse (both pupil and parent)
* Child Sexual Exploitation
* Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
* County lines
* Serious violence
* Extremism and Radicalisation, including Prevent and Channel
* Learners missing from education
* Domestic abuse
* Child-on-child relationship abuse/Teenage Relationship Abuse
* Child-on-child abuse
* Nudes and Semi Nudes
* Sexual violence and sexual harassment between learners in provisions and colleges
* Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour
* Sexual health needs
* Obesity/malnutrition
* Online grooming
* Inappropriate behaviour of staff towards learners
* Bullying, including homophobic, racist, gender and disability. Breaches of the Equality Act 2010
* Mental health issues including self-harm
* Honour based abuse including - Female Genital Mutilation, Breast Ironing, Forced Marriage
* Unaccompanied asylum-seeking learners
* Child Trafficking
* Modern Slavery and National Referral Mechanism

Staff are aware that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, deliberately missing education and sharing nudes or semi-nudes put learners in danger.

**21.0 Governor/Proprietor Responsibilities**

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure they facilitate a whole provision approach to safeguarding. This means involving everyone in the provision, and ensuring that safeguarding, and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the **best interests** of the child at their heart (KCSiE 2024)

As a provision we ensure that the governing body and proprietors ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. KCSiE 2024 highlights “This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in provisions and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole provision approach to safeguarding.”

The Governing Body/ Proprietor fully recognises its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners in accordance with government guidance.

The Governing Body / Proprietor have agreed processes which allow them to monitor and ensure that the provision:

* has robust safeguarding procedures in place
* operates safe recruitment procedures and carries out appropriate checks on new staff and adults working on the provision site
* has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult on site
* has a member of the Leadership Team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding and child protection issues
* takes steps to remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding safeguarding arrangements
* is supported by the Governing Body nominating a member responsible for liaising with the LA and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse against the Headteacher or Principal; this is the Chair
* carries out an annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures
* carries out an annual Safeguarding Audit (Section 175 audit) in consultation with the Governing Board/Proprietor sharing this with the CESCP on request.

**Finally:**

Staff in Higher Farm Education Provision take the safeguarding of each learner very seriously. This means that, should they have any concerns of a safeguarding nature about a learner or adult, they are expected to report, record and take the necessary steps to ensure that the child is safe and protected. This is never an easy action, nor one taken lightly. They are aware that it can lead to challenge from parents/carers, but at all times staff have the learner at the heart of all their decisions and act in their best interests.

Further information on our safeguarding and related policy documents and procedures is available on request from the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.



**STAYING SAFE AT**

**Higher Farm Education**

· Cheshire East Consultation Service (CHECS): 0300 123 5012 (Option 3, Option 2)

* Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 0300 123 5022
* Family Help Front Door: 0300 123 5012 (Option 3, Option 1)

· Safeguarding of Learners Concerns (Learners living in other authorities): **(INSERT DETAILS OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY CONTACT NUMBERS)**

· Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01270 685904 / 01606 288931

· Prevent referrals: [Prevent Referral Process](http://www.stopadultabuse.org.uk/professionals/preventchannel-referral-process.aspx)

* Cyber Prevent (concerns re online activity) referrals [Cyber.Prevent@nwrocu.police.uk](mailto:Cyber.Prevent@nwrocu.police.uk)

· Police: 999 (Emergency) / 101 (Non-emergency)

· Mental Health Helpline: 0300 303 3972

· Adult Safeguarding: 0300 123 5010

* Designated Safeguarding Lead: Rob Stevenson

(Education Lead and SENCO)

* Deputy DSL/s: Charlotte Barnes (Provision Manager)
* Operation Encompass – Key Adults: Rob Stevenson
* Proprietor : Andy Powell
* Mental Health Lead: Charlotte Barnes
* Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Prevent: Rob Stevenson

**OUR LOCAL CONTACT NUMBERS ARE:**

**KEY CONTACTS IN OUR PROVISION:**

**SCIES 2024**

**SCiES 2024**

**Concerns about an Adult: Whistleblowing/Confidential reporting process**

Provisions and colleges should have processes and procedures in place to manage any safeguarding concern or allegation (no matter how small and including low level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors)

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) harming or posing a risk of harm to learners, then this should be referred to the **headteacher.**

Where there is a concern/allegation about the headteacher this should be referred to the **proprietor of the provision.**

In the event of a concern/allegation about the headteacher, where the headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, or a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the headteacher, this should be reported directly to the local authority designated officer(s) (LADOs).

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01270 685904 / 01606 288931

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**Learners and Families Integrated Front Door**

All agencies have their own safeguarding procedures which will detail how to identify and assess safeguarding concerns.



In the pyramid of support, there are several layers in place to seek advice and guidance without the need to contact the Integrated front door (Family Help front door and Cheshire East Consultation Service) for cases assessed as being at Universal Services or Extra Help level.

This means the Integrated front door can prioritise the requests that do need their support and have more time to make safe risk-assessed decisions in a timely way.

If you do require advice at this stage though and the locality partnership hasn’t been able to support you, you can contact the Family Help front door team, formally known as the Early Help Brokerage team, who can offer advice and guidance.

Who to contact:

* Concerns assessed as being at lower tier Targeted Help level for complex early help concerns will be triaged and managed by the Family Help front door.
* Upper tier Targeted Help as well as immediate and significant risk of harm will be triaged and managed by the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS).



|  |
| --- |
| **Receiving Disclosures:** |
| **Receive**   * Listen, try not to look shocked or be judgmental * Believe what they say, accept what they say and take it seriously * Don’t make them feel bad by saying “you should have told me earlier” * Don’t ‘interrogate’ them – let them tell you, try not to interrupt * Note the date and time, what was done, who did it, and where it took place * Don’t criticise the perpetrator * Don’t ask leading questions – use ‘open’ questions to clarify only (T.E.D)  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | images.jpg  **T**ell me what you mean by that?  **E**xplain that to me  **D**escribe that…. | |
| **Reassure**   * Stay calm, tell the child they’ve done the right thing in telling you * Reassure them they are not to blame * Empathise – don’t tell them how they should be feeling * Don’t promise confidentiality, explain who needs to know * Explain what you’ll do next * Be honest about what you can do |
| **Report and Record**   * Make a brief, accurate, timely and factual record * Discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy, without delay * The DSL will assess the situation and decide on the next steps   **Things to include:**   * Time and full date of disclosure/incident and the time and full date the record was made * An accurate record of what was said or seen, using the learner’s words as appropriate * Whether it is 1st or 2nd hand information * Whether the learner was seen/spoken to * Whether information is fact/ professional judgement * Full names and roles/status of anyone identified in the report * Sign the record with a legible signature. * Record actions agreed with/by the Designated Lead (SMART) * Avoid acronyms/jargon/abbreviations   **Action for DSL:** Review records regularly; add any new concerns, respond to these immediately and record evidence of actions taken and outcomes.  **DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH INJURIES OR MARKS EVEN IF REQUESTED TO DO SO** |

**Further forms of Abuse**

**The information provided below is an abridged version of Annexe B of KCSiE. However, there are details below as to how our provision responds to these concerns and more. Some specific concerns are detailed within the main body of this policy.**

**Contextual Safeguarding**

**Including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** **and County Lines**

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 learners, both male and female and can include learners who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject learners and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation. In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Learners can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other learners, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child causing the harm is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including,

* sexual identity
* cognitive ability
* learning difficulties
* communication ability
* physical strength
* status
* access to economic or other resources

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where learners:

* appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
* associate with other learners involved in exploitation
* suffer from changes in emotional well-being
* misuse alcohol and other drugs
* go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
* regularly miss provision or education or do not take part in education

Learners who have been exploited will need additional support to help maintain them in education.

**Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Some specific forms of CCE can include learners

* being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines,
* working in cannabis factories,
* shoplifting or pickpocketing.
* they can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime
* or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Learners can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As learners involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older learners), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving learners in the production of sexual images, forcing learners to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging learners to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are learners who:

* have older boyfriends or girlfriends
* suffer from sexually transmitted infections
* display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development
* become pregnant

**County Lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Learners and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Learners can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of provisions (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, learners’s homes and care homes. Learners are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media.

Learners can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where learners are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are learners who:

* go missing (from provision, care or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
* have been the victim, perpetrator, or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
* are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
* are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
* are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity
* owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters
* have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

**Learners and the court system**

Learners are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support learners 5-11-year olds <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-5-to-11-year-olds> and 12-17 year olds <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-12-to-17-year-olds> . The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for learners. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool <https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/> with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

**Child abduction and community safety incidents**

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a provision can raise concerns amongst learners and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging learners in conversation. As learners get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to provision on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many provisions provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff. It is important that lessons focus on building learners’s confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: [www.actionagainstabduction.org](https://www.actionagainstabduction.org) and [www.clevernevergoes.org.](https://www.clevernevergoes.org.)

**Child-on-child abuse**

Learners can abuse other learners and this is often referred to as child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

* bullying (including cyberbullying);
* physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
* abuse in intimate personal relationships between learners (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’
* sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
* sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
* causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
* consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes’ images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
* ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.
* initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Staff are clear on our procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and do not take it any less serious than adult to child abuse; they are aware that it should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. We ensure that we apply the same thresholds.

In our provision our PSHE and RSE curriculum offer teaches learners in an age/developmentally appropriate way about topics which include healthy relationships, consent, staying safe online and positive friendships.

We have the systems in place which are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for learners to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. Information throughout provision and assemblies as well as lessons all allow learners opportunities to voice any concerns.

Allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with using our normal provision’s child protection procedures and in line with Part 5 of KCSiE 2024.

We have clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other learners affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported.

We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.

We recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

In our provision we have referred to the [Respectful School Communities toolkit](https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/respectful-school-communities-self-review-signposting-tool-2/) for advice on creating a culture in which sexual harassment of all kinds is treated as unacceptable. We will use the toolkit to establish a culture where harassment is unacceptable at all levels and use this in our SIP. We will use risk assessments (see guidance on dealing with child on child abuse) and review this daily as part of our ongoing commitment to ensure learners are safe.

Where sexual violence or sexual harassment between learners is alleged then the provision follows the guidance issued by the DfE in Part 5 of Keeping Learners Safe in Education 2024.

Where sharing nudes or semi nudes (youth produced sexual images) are part of the abuse then the provision follows the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people)

**Learners Missing from Home or Care**

Learners who run away from home or from care can provide a clear behavioural indication that they are either unhappy or do not feel safe in the place that they are living. Research shows that learners run away from conflict or problems at home or provision, neglect or abuse, or because they are being groomed by predatory individuals who seek to exploit them. Many run away on numerous occasions.

Our provision are aware of the [pan-cheshire-missing-from-home-protocol-2023-2024.pdf (cescp.org.uk)](https://www.cescp.org.uk/pdf/pan-cheshire-joint-protocol/pan-cheshire-missing-from-home-protocol-2023-2024.pdf),

The association of chief police officers has provided the following definition a missing person *is:* ‘Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed’.

Within any case of learners who are missing both push and pull factors need to be considered.

**Push factors** include:

* conflict with parents/carers
* feeling powerless
* being bullied/abused
* being unhappy/not being listened to
* the Toxic Trio

**Pull factors** include:

* wanting to be with family/friends
* drugs, money and any exchangeable item
* peer pressure
* for those who have been trafficked into the United Kingdom as unaccompanied asylum-seeking learners there will be pressure to make contact with their trafficker

As a provision we will inform all parents of learners who are absent (unless the parent has informed us).

If the parent is also unaware of the location of their child, and the definition of missing is met, we will either support the parent to contact the police to inform them, or we will take the relevant action.

**Cyberbullying**

Central to our Provision’s anti-bullying policy is the principle that ‘*bullying is always unacceptable’* and that ‘*all pupils have a right not to be bullied*’.

The provision recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside provision which spills over into the provision and so we will respond to any bullying including cyber-bullying that we become aware of carried out by pupils when they are away from the site.

Cyber-bullying is defined as “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.”

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

* bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
* the use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
* posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
* using e-mail to message others
* hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts
* making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in on-line forums
* Cyber-bullying may be at a level where it is criminal.

If we become aware of any incidents of cyberbullying, we will consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed. The provision will pass on information to the police if it feels that it is appropriate, or we are required to do so.

**Domestic Abuse/Violence**

Higher Farm Education believes that all our pupils have the right to be safe at provision and also in their own homes. We are aware that all learners can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass provision, we are alert to the indicators of abuse, and we have a planned approach to supporting learners in a proactive way. We do this by addressing individually with learners as the need arises; having a clear curriculum identifying key features of healthy and unhealthy relationships and offering therapy support as needed. We will look at providing some adult/parent workshops as our provision grows to support parents in whatever way we can. These may delivered internally or by an external provider.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on learners, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. We understand that the term domestic abuse captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected.” (Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Section 2).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Domestic abuse can affect anybody; it occurs across all of society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth, or geography. Domestic abuse affects significant numbers of learners and their families causing immediate harm as well as damaging future life chances. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as ‘teenage relationship abuse’.

Domestic abuse negatively affects learners. We know that they are often more aware of what is happening than parents think. How they respond depends on their age, personality and support network; but they recover best when they are helped to understand and to process what is happening/has happened to them. Their experiences will shape their self-worth, identity, and ability to relate to others in childhood and adulthood; making it much more difficult to succeed at provision and develop friendships.

To support our learners, we:

* have an ethos which puts learners’ wellbeing at the heart of all that we do
* create a predictable provision life with set routines
* ensure that rules and expectations are clearly stated and understood by all
* understand that oppositional and manipulative behaviours are not attempts to ‘provoke us’, but may be attempts by these learners to control their world when so much feels out of control for them
* model respectful and caring behaviour, positive conflict resolution and respectful interactions, helping learners learn not only what not to do, but what to do instead
* use the language of choice, making clear the benefits and negative consequences of their choices ensuring that we follow through with any consequences or sanctions
* support learners to put feelings into words. We build up a vocabulary of emotional words with them so that they can begin to express their feelings more appropriately/accurately (*A child exposed to domestic abuse may have seen a lot of behaviours that express strong feelings, but may not have heard words to appropriately express/ describe these feelings)*
* understand that the child may experience conflicting and confusing emotions when thinking of or talking about their parents
* create opportunities for learners to feel successful. We let the child know that they matter, taking an active interest in them
* accept that they may not be willing or able to talk about it right away (if ever)
* provide effective, non-verbal, systems for learners to access support
* provide reassurance that only people who need to know about the incident will know
* allow the child, where necessary, to safely store work in the provision or shred it after completion when providing interventions
* have visible and accessible worry boxes/internal support systems /information regarding external sources of support e.g. Childline etc.
* provide opportunities to teach about and discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships

[Learners, Young People and Domestic Abuse](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/staying-safe/domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence/domestic-abuse-tools-and-resources.aspx)

**Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare. Our designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority learners’ social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority learners’ social care will be the lead agency for these learners and our designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) ensures appropriate referrals are made based on the child’s circumstances.

**Emotional Abuse**

Staff are all aware that emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which can cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.

We understand that it may involve the following:

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

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Honour Based Abuse including Breast ironing, FGM and Forced Marriage**

Staff are aware of “Honour-Based’ Abuse (HBA) So-called ‘honour’-based abuse (HBA) encompasses 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. Abuse committed in the context of preserving ‘honour’ often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA” (KCSIE 2024)

Awareness raising has taken place around HBA; staff are alert to possible indicators. They are aware that forced marriage is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage; that it is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence and that HBV and forced marriage can affect both young men and women. Given the ages of our learners this will be covered in our PSHE curriculum but each case would have a tailor-made response; using external agencies as required.

As a provision we would never attempt to intervene directly; where this is suspected we would speak to ChECS before sharing our concerns with the family.

**Breast Ironing also known as Breast Flattening**

Staff have been made aware of an act of abuse performed on girls (from around the age of 9 years old) in which their breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded, burned with heated objects or covered with an elastic belt to prevent or delay the development of their breasts; the intention being to protect the child from rape, forced marriage, sexual harassment or removal from education. It is a practice in Cameroon, Nigeria and South Africa. It is often carried out by the girl’s mother.

Staff are clear that they would follow our usual procedure for recording and reporting this abuse where it is suspected**.**

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Staff are aware of Female Genital Mutilation (also known as female circumcision, cutting or Sunna) and that it is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

Staff are also aware that FGM

* is child abuse; it's dangerous and it is a criminal offence. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM however there is no valid reason for it.
* is illegal in the UK. It’s also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this.

**Indications that FGM may be about to take place:**

* when a female family elder is around, particularly when she is visiting from a country of origin.
* reference to FGM in conversation e.g. a girl may tell other learners about it.
* a girl may confide that she is to have a ‘special procedure’ or to attend a special occasion to ‘become a woman’.
* a girl may request help from a teacher or another adult if she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk.
* parents state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period.
* a girl may talk about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent.
* a girl being withdrawn from PSHE or from learning about FGM (parents may wish to keep her uninformed about her body and rights)

**Indications that FGM has taken place:**

* difficulty walking, sitting or standing
* spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet possibly with bladder or menstrual problems
* unusual/a noticeable change in behaviour after a lengthy absence
* reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
* asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
* prolonged absences/ persistent unexplained absence from provision/college
* seek to be excused from physical exercise without the support of their GP
* child not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
* close supervision of child by family/carers

Teachers in our school are aware of their responsibilities under section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 which says that “If a **teacher**, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the **teacher** must report this to the police”.

Members of our provision community are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. They have been made aware that FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old. Potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM have been shared and the next steps have been identified, in that we take the same course of action as we would with any form of abuse; the Designated Safeguarding Lead plays a full part in the process of identification recording and reporting. We are mindful that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity is always shown when approaching the subject.

**Forced Marriage**

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 or coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial ‘marriages’ as well as legal marriages.Staff are aware of Forced Marriage and that it is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

Learners, especially girls who are forced to marry, or those who fear they may be forced to marry, are frequently withdrawn from education, restricting their educational and personal development.

[Forced marriage resource pack - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-resource-pack/forced-marriage-resource-pack)

**Indications that a Child is at risk of Forced Marriage:**

Staff are aware that they need to be aware of significant changes in the child’s presentation emotional and physical, in dress and behaviour.

* appearing anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn with low self-esteem
* self-harming, self-cutting or anorexia
* criminal activity e.g. shoplifting or taking drugs or alcohol
* declining performance, aspirations or motivation
* not allowed to attend any extra-curricular or after school activities
* girls and young women may be accompanied to and from provision/college
* attending the provision but absenting themselves from sessions
* stopping attendance at provision/college
* a family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early

**Actions our provision takes in relation to take around Honour Based Abuse:**

* when managing requests for absence, we use an absence request form which requests information on all siblings who attend other provision. Sometimes younger siblings tell teachers information that has a bearing on older members of the family, so it is important that we liaise with the other schools
* the Headteacher teacher requires a meeting with parents to discuss applications for extended leave of absence during term time, as we feel this can provide an opportunity to gather important information. We ask for the precise location of where the child is going; the purpose of the visit; the return date and whether it is estimated or fixed
* we check in with the child/learners to see if they know and corroborate the purpose of the visit.
* if a return date has been specified and a child has not returned to provision, we would contact our Attendance/Education Welfare Officer. We would never remove the child from the roll without first making enquiries about their disappearance in line with Cheshire East Learners Missing Education Procedures and referring the case to the police and Learners’ Services as appropriate.

**Modern Day Slavery including Trafficking and the National Referral Mechanism**

The Modern Slavery Act came into Force in 2015.Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs

Staff are aware that:

* a person commits an offence if they knowingly hold another person in slavery or servitude or if they knowingly require another person to perform forced or compulsory labour
* it is an offence to arrange or facilitate the travel of a person with a view to them being exploited. These are serious offences carrying a penalty of up to life imprisonment
* any consent victims have given to their treatment will be irrelevant where they have been coerced, deceived or provided with payment or benefit to achieve that consent
* learners (under 18 years) are considered victims of trafficking, whether or not they have been coerced, deceived or paid to secure their compliance. They need only to have been recruited, transported or harbored for the purpose of exploitation

**Trafficked Learners**

Human trafficking is defined by the United Nations, in respect of learners, as "the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by such means as threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation."

Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim.

As a provision we are alert to the signs both for our learners and for their families and are aware that this may be if they:

* show signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted infection or has an unwanted pregnancy
* have a history with missing links and unexplained moves
* are required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
* work in various locations
* have limited freedom of movement
* appear to be missing for periods
* are known to beg for money
* are being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents and the quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good
* are one among a number of unrelated learners found at one address
* have not been registered with or attended a GP practice
* are excessively afraid of being deported
* look malnourished or unkempt
* are withdrawn, anxious and unwilling to interact
* are under the control and influence of others
* live in cramped, dirty, overcrowded accommodation
* have no access or control of their passport or identity documents
* appear scared, avoid eye contact, and can be untrusting
* show signs of abuse and/or has health issues

For those learners who are internally trafficked within the UK indicators include:

* physical symptoms (bruising indicating either physical or sexual assault)
* prevalence of a sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy
* reports from reliable sources suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation / the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation
* evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse
* being in the community in clothing unusual for a child i.e. inappropriate for age/ borrowing clothing from older people
* relationship with a significantly older partner
* accounts of social activities, expensive clothes, mobile phones etc. with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding
* persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation
* returning after having been missing, looking well cared for despite having not been at home
* having keys to premises other than those known about
* low self- image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour including cutting, overdosing, eating disorder
* truancy / disengagement with education
* entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults
* going missing and being found in areas where the child has no known links
* possible inappropriate use of the internet and forming on-line relationships, particularly with adults.

These behaviours themselves do not indicate that a child is being trafficked but should be considered as indicators that this may be the case.

If staff believe that a child is being trafficked, this will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will be reported as potential abuse.

**Neglect**

Staff are aware that neglect:

* is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development
* may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse
* once a child is born, may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate **medical** care or treatment
* may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs
* may potentially be fatal
* causes great distress to learners and leads to poor outcomes in the short and long-term
* has possible consequences which may include an array of health and mental health problems, difficulties in forming attachment and relationships, lower educational achievements, an increased risk of substance misuse, higher risk of experiencing abuse as well as difficulties in assuming parenting responsibilities later in life. The degree to which learners are affected during their childhood and later in adulthood depends on the type, severity and frequency of the maltreatment and on what support mechanisms and coping strategies were available to the child

If we suspect neglect, we will use the [CESCP Neglect Screening Tool](https://www.cescp.org.uk/professionals/neglect.aspx)

**Online Safety**

With the current speed of on-line change, some practitioners, parents and carers have only a limited understanding of online risks and issues. Parents may underestimate how often their learners come across potentially harmful and inappropriate material on the internet and may be unsure about how to respond.

Some of the risks could be:

* **content**: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example:

pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.

* + **contact**: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as learners or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
  + **conduc**t: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying
  + **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing

and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please

report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group

The provision therefore seeks to provide information and awareness to staff, learners and their parents through:

* acceptable use agreements for learners, teachers, parents/carers and governors
* curriculum activities involving raising awareness around staying safe online
* information included in letters, newsletters, web site
* learners evenings / sessions
* high profile events / campaigns e.g. Safer Internet Day
* building awareness around information that is held on relevant web sites and or publications
* social media policy

**Cyber-crime: Preventing young people from getting involved**

Learners are getting involved in cybercrime, many do it for fun without realising the consequences of their actions – but the penalties can be severe.  Cybercrime is a serious criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act. If we become aware of any incidents of cyber-crimes, we will consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed. The provision will pass on information to the police if it feels that it is appropriate, or we are required to do so.

**Risks associated with Gaming**

Online gaming is an activity that the majority of learners and many adults get involved in.

The provision raise awareness by:

* talking to parents and carers about the games their learners play and help them identify whether they are appropriate
* supporting parents in identifying the most effective way of safeguarding their learners by using parental controls and child safety mode
* talking to parents about setting boundaries and time limits when games are played
* highlighting relevant resources
* making our learners aware of the dangers including of online grooming and how to keep themselves safe
* making our learners aware of how to report concerns

**Physical abuse**

Staff are aware of the signs of potential physical abuse and that it might involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

They are also aware that physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Prevent, Radicalisation and Extremism**

At Higher Farm Education we recognise that learners may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation Higher Farm Education adheres to the Prevent Duty Guidance, December 2023 and seeks to protect learners against the messages of all violent extremism and to prevent them being drawn into terrorism; including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Extreme Right Wing Terrorism which includes Cultural Nationalism, White Nationalism, White Supremacism ideology. Prevent also tackles other ideologies and concerns that may pose a terrorist threat. Established terrorist narratives exhibit common themes such as antisemitism, misogyny, anti-establishment, anti-LGBT grievances and religious or ethnic superiority.

Learners may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting learners from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting learners from this risk should be a part of a provision’s or college’s safeguarding approach.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

The provision community has been made aware of the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism; they are also aware that the normalisation of extreme views may make learners vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation.

In order to raise awareness and reduce risks we ensure that our preventative work is specifically considered, outlined and highlighted in all relevant policies and procedures, including those for Information technology, Special Educational Needs, attendance, the use of provision premises by external agencies, behaviour and anti-bullying.

Our curriculum includes educating learners of how people with extreme views share these with others; we are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the provision’s core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society. Staff do this through informal and formal conversations and social activities.

In our provision community we are aware of these specific issues, relevant to our provision’s profile. Our learners may not understand the implications of being radicalised and as such we will ensure we cover this is as part of the curriculum and in assemblies.

All staff have received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism. This training is reinforced by reminders in staff meetings; sharing relevant news items and dealing with short scenarios in briefings.

Higher Farm Education is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern; therefore, concerns need to be recorded and discussed with the DSL; with timely, appropriate action then being taken.

The **Prevent Duty** requires that all staff are aware of the signs that a child may be susceptible to radicalisation. The risks will need to be considered for political; environmental; animal rights; or faith-based extremism that may lead to a child becoming radicalised.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child’s vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff are alert to changes in learners’s behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff use their judgement in identifying learners who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) / **SPOC (Single Point of Contact)** making a [Prevent referral](http://www.stopadultabuse.org.uk/professionals/preventchannel-referral-process.aspx) on the Cheshire East stopadultabuse.org.uk website (this could be about an adult and/or a child).

If we suspect a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, including being radicalised we would also contact:

Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS): :

0300 123 5012 **Option 3** – Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS)

Then choose **Option 2** – ChECS / Immediate safeguarding concerns

**and** complete a [Prevent referral](http://www.stopadultabuse.org.uk/professionals/preventchannel-referral-process.aspx) on the stopadultabuse.org.uk website.

**Where necessary individuals may be discussed at Channel:**

Staff are aware of Channel being a partnership approach to support individuals vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists. The Channel Duty Guidance: protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, was updated in 2023:

[Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651e71d9e4e658001459d997/14.320_HO_Channel_Duty_Guidance_v3_Final_Web.pdf)

**In Cheshire East the Channel Co-ordinator is Sandra Murphy – Head of Adult Safeguarding.**

The CE Channel Panel meets monthly. Attendees sign a Confidentiality Agreement and share case information. Discussion covers the vulnerabilities of individuals and their families, current support, and risks for the individual and community. Attendees agree if the case is appropriate for Channel and the support plan which is needed. Consent is then sought from the adult / parent with parental responsibility.

For those already open to Panel support plans are tailored, building on existing support, and may consist of help with family problems, mental health support, religious education, mentoring etc.

For those who are not Channel appropriate: a safe exit from Channel or a referral elsewhere is discussed.

This means that schools may be invited to attend the meeting.

**Serious Violence**

All staff are aware of indicators, which may signal that learners are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from provision, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that learners have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from provision, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery. Advice for provisions and colleges is provided in the Home Office’s Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of learners and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

**Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes**

This form of abuse means the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple’s AirDrop which works offline.

Producing and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under 18s is illegal, which causes considerable concern in education settings working with learners and young people, and amongst parents and carers.

Although the production of such images will likely take place outside of education settings, sharing can take place and the impacts of an incident are often identified or reported here. Our provision will respond swiftly and confidently to make sure learners and young people are safeguarded, supported, and educated. We will follow the guidance set out in the following document: [**Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with learners and young people (updated March 2024) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people)

**Sexual Abuse**

Staff are aware of sexual abuse and that:

* It involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening
* The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
* It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving learners in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging learners to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse
* It can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse
* It is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other learners

The sexual abuse of learners by other learners is a specific safeguarding issue in education see child-on-child.

**Acronyms**

The policy contains a number of acronyms used in the safeguarding. These acronyms are listed below alongside their descriptions.

|  |  |  |
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| **Acronym** | **Long form** | **Description** |
| CCE | Child criminal exploitation | A form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence. |
| CSC | Learners’ Social Care | The branch of the local authority that deals with learners’s social care. |
| CSE | Child sexual exploitation | A form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage, increased status or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence. |
| DBS | Disclosure and barring service | The service that performs the statutory check of criminal records for anyone working or volunteering in a school. |
| DfE | Department for Education | The national government body with responsibility for learners’s services, policy and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. |
| DPO | Data protection officer | The appointed person in provision with responsibility for overseeing data protection strategy and implementation to ensure compliance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act. |
| DSL | Designated Safeguarding Lead | A member of the senior leadership team who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the provision. |
| EHC plan | Education, Health and Care Plan | A funded intervention plan which coordinates the educational, health and care needs for pupils who have significant needs that impact on their learning and access to education. The plan identifies any additional support needs or interventions and the intended impact they will have for the pupil. |
| FGM | Female genital mutilation | All procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. |
| UK GDPR | UK General Data Protection Regulation | Legislative provision designed to strengthen the safety and security of all data held within an organisation and ensure that procedures relating to personal data are fair and consistent. |
| HBA | ‘Honour-based’ abuse | So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse involves crimes that have been committed to defend the honour of the family and/or community. |
| KCSIE | Keeping learners safe in education | Statutory guidance setting out provisions and colleges’ duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners. |
| LA | Local authority | A local government agency responsible for the provision of a range of services in a specified local area, including education. |
| LAC in CE Cared For Learners | Looked-after learners | Learners who have been placed in local authority care or where learners’s services have looked after learners for more than a period of 24 hours. |
| LGBTQ+ | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer plus | Term relating to a community of people, protected by the Equality Act 2010, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or other protected sexual or gender identities. |
| MAT | Multi-academy trust | A trust established to undertake strategic collaboration and provide education across a number of schools |
| NPCC | The National Police Chiefs’ Council | The National Police Chiefs’ Council is a national coordination body for law enforcement in the United Kingdom and the representative body for British police chief officers. |
| PLAC/PC4C | Previously looked-after learners / cared for | Learners who were previously in local authority care or were looked after by learners’s services for more than a period of 24 hours. PLAC are also known as care leavers. |
| PSHE | Personal, social and health education | A non-statutory subject in which pupils learn about themselves, other people, rights, responsibilities and relationships. |
| PHE | Public Health England | An executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care which aims to protect and improve the nation’s health and wellbeing. |
| RSHE | Relationships, sex and health education | A compulsory subject from Year 7 for all pupils. Includes the teaching of sexual health, reproduction and sexuality, as well as promoting positive relationships. |
| SCR | Single central record | A statutory secure record of recruitment and identity checks for all permanent and temporary staff, proprietors, contractors, external coaches and instructors, and volunteers who attend the provision in a non-visitor capacity. |
| SENCO | Special educational needs coordinator | A statutory role within all schools maintaining oversight and coordinating the implementation of the school’s special educational needs policy and provision of education to pupils with special educational needs. |
| SPOC | Single Point of Contact | This is the person, usually, the Designated Safeguarding Lead who is the named lead for Prevent in provision. |
| SLT | Senior leadership team | Staff members who have been delegated leadership responsibilities in a school. |
| TRA | Teaching Regulation Agency | An executive agency of the DfE with responsibility for the regulation of the teaching profession. |
| TRA | Teenage Relationship Abuse | Abuse in intimate personal relationships between learners known as teenage relationship abuse |
| VSH | Virtual school head | Virtual school heads are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the learners looked after by the local authority they work for, and all learners who currently have, or previously had, a social worker. |