



Absolute Mentoring

ABSOLUTE CARE AND MENTORING CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

- **POLICY March 2026**
- **Next Review Date: March 2027**

This policy is reviewed annually or following national or local safeguarding changes to policy and procedure throughout the academic year.

Who does this policy apply to? (Aims & Ethos)

The purpose of this document is to assist all staff in safeguarding and protecting children who are at risk of abuse or neglect and to promote their well-being.

It applies to all young people under eighteen placed within our service. Anyone meeting the children in our service or visiting the service must abide by this policy. Everyone working at the service as a member of staff, or volunteer, has a duty to safeguard and protect our children.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following relevant legislation that relates to the safeguarding and protection of children:

Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023

The Children Act 1989 and 2004

Education Act 2002 The Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003

The Further Education (Providers of Education) (England) (Regulations) 2006

The Children and Families Act 2014

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) Specific Safeguarding Issues:

- Abuse: physical, emotional, sexual, neglect
- Online safety
- Sharing nudes
- Extra familial harm
- Child criminal exploitation/ County lines
- Domestic abuse / violence
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeated occasions
- Child on child abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment, Up skirting
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Preventing radicalisation
- Drug and alcohol abuse / Homelessness / Mental Health
- Children and the courts/ family members in prison

Context

The content of this policy is applicable to all staff and the managers of Absolute Mentoring. The directors and staff recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff have an active part to play in protecting children from harm. We believe that Absolute Mentoring should provide a caring,

positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

Our commitment to safeguarding and the protection of children.

Everyone working in our service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn and develop in our setting.
- Identify children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are both safe within our service.
- Creating an approach to safeguard through a culture of care where children are listened to and heard, with the knowledge that their words will be acted upon.
- Our service is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all our children. Each child's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse and that their needs are unique to them. We recognise that children who have suffered abused of any kind or may have suffered neglect at a previous point in their life may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. As a service we are committed to putting the child at the heart of our policies and procedures.
- We recognise that safeguarding concerns do not adhere to our service/home boundaries and that what happens at home and within the wider school environment including on social media, is as relevant as what happens within our service. Behaviour will be challenging at times and we recognise that this may impact on others either directly or indirectly. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support children placed with us.
- **Whistleblowing and Professional Resolution and Escalation**
- Anyone worried about a child must work to raise the concern until they have a reason to not be worried about the child any longer.
- It is essential that our service expect good practice and professional conduct from ourselves, and others involved in the safeguarding of our children. Staff must be committed to providing a high standard of service and children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues.
- If there is a concern from within service regarding the owner or operators about how a safeguarding concern is being managed or a safeguarding concern raised have concerns with the way other agencies are managing a safeguarding concern, then we will follow the Cambridgeshire LSCP Professional Resolution Protocol. This allows us to open an honest approach in the best interests of the child.
- **Safeguarding complaints made by a child whilst placed with us.**
Given the small nature of our business and the provision of 121 mentoring services it is vital that the children placed understand how to make a complaint. In this instance they should be able to speak with their parents or key workers within their mainstream school. It remains vital that these lines or communication remain open on a regular basis to facilitate these opportunities for children placed with us are able speak up and make a complaint if necessary.
- **Child Protection Procedures**
Responsible adults within our service are well placed to observe any physical, emotional and behavioural signs which indicate that a child maybe suffering harm
The relationships between staff, children, parents, and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns. All staff will have an awareness of specific safeguarding issues.

It is not the responsibility of the service to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All members of staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of children will be recorded and discussed with the DSL (Ben Carter) prior to any discussion with parents or with the referring school.

Concerns that staff must act on immediately and report:

Any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the expected knocks or scrapes received in play.

Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment. Any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect. Any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance. Any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person. Any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g., living in a household with children present). Any potential indicators of Child Exploitation, trafficking, criminal exploitation.

Procedure for handling a disclosure from a child

- Listen and offer support.
- Avoid leading questions, interrogating and interrupting.
- Don't promise confidentiality - explain that the information must be shared to keep them safe.
- Record the disclosure immediately - using the child's own words and noting what happened just beforehand.
- Sign, date and name the record in ink.
- Inform the DSL at once so they can decide the next steps.

Managing allegations against adults working with children

We aim to provide a safe environment for all children referred to us. Occasionally adult behaviour may lead to an allegation. We follow harm thresholds in the *'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023)*.

- Allegations may involve an adult who has harmed a child,
- Possibly omitted a criminal act against a child;
- Behaved in a way that suggests they may pose a risk to children;
- Acted outside the setting in a way that raises concerns about their suitability to work with children.

At Absolute Mentoring we will report all allegations or concerning behaviour about anyone within our

Network and also relating to those who are not employed by us directly to lado@Norfolk.gov.uk or lado@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and or any other relevant authority.

We follow all local NCSP Protocol 8.3 and related guidance to safeguard children and to ensure that adults are indeed safe to work with them.

Disciplinary Procedure

Given that we are a very small business currently we remain open to scrutiny by any authority body. In terms of an allegation being made then this will trigger a self referral to LADO where necessary following the guidance of the referring school and Local Authority.

Making a barring referral to the DBS

This is not required currently as no additional employees are employed by the business. However, should that change then if a threshold was indeed met for a referral such as this then it will be made accordingly.

Supporting the child and working with parents & carers

Our service recognises that the child's welfare is paramount, and that good child protection and safeguarding practice and outcomes rely on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents. Whilst we may, on a rare occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect any child.

We will also provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child. Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age and understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why. We will endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents. The DSL will determine which members of staff need to know personal information and what they need to know for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Proprietor It is the responsibility of our Proprietor to ensure that everyone in the setting understands their role in safeguarding children. They are responsible for the strategic overview and to make sure that safeguarding runs through every policy and procedure that operates within the service. The proprietor will ensure that the safeguarding measures reflect the specific needs of the children in our service and consider any additional risks related to this. We do this in conjunction with supporting documentation including:

- staff to read all or parts of the Department for Education statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023.
- The service has an effective Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with local authority guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- The service operates safer recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are conducted on staff and volunteers who work with children.
- Online safety policy and procedures are in place and training and support provided for staff and children to ensure that there is a good understanding of child protection issues related to electronic media. Parental engagement forms part of this.
- children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. This may include covering relevant issues through Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, and/or where delivered, through Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education.
- they remedy, without delay, any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding child protection arrangements and reflect on incidents, or near misses, to consider lessons learnt.
- They be responsible for consulting with the LA LADO team and /or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Service Lead.

Looked After Children

Our staff recognise that Looked After Children and Care Leavers are more vulnerable than other children, often having poorer educational outcomes. Therefore, it is important to ensure their wellbeing, safety and welfare as well as help them to reach their potential.

This includes the looked after child who is moving in or out of care. The service will also ensure that care leavers are supported with pathways suitable to them. Regular communication with the child's social worker will be included in the mentoring plan for the child.

Records & Confidentiality

Absolute Mentoring cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child safeguarding concern arises, as information must be shared with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the Police, seeking consent first unless this would compromise an investigation or increase risk. Disclosures and concerns will be recorded promptly and accurately with all actions taken logged. Access to safeguarding records is restricted to designated staff, and all records are stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

Online safety

Young people are increasingly using mobile phones, tablets, and computers. While mobile devices are a source of fun, entertainment, communication, and education we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm young people. Regular work will be completed around online safety. Further Information can be found at <https://www.internetmatters.org/>

Photography and Images

Absolute Mentoring has taken the decision to not publish any photographs of the young people placed with us that identifies them for any commercial purposes or uploaded to any social media. However, on occasions we will take photos of work completed, activities etc. in support of projects on which they are working. These photos may be placed in a digital document or uploaded to their weekly academic progress diary / Life story and shared with their key people.

Safeguarding Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ben Carter

Cambridgeshire Children's Services concerns: 0345 0455203

Norfolk Children's Services: 0344 8008020

To report a professional: LADO@cambridge.gov.uk 01223 727 967

To report back to the school: Contact SEN lead for each referring school

Police: 999

Police non-emergency: 101

Policy Review

Absolute Mentoring will review this policy annually in line with Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership and other local authorities children's partnership.