



Date of approval by Trust Board	11 December 2024
Review cycle	Annual

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

All references in this document to 'The Provision' or 'the school' refer equally to Alternative Learning Trust and all its provisions.

Key staff:
Executive Principal/CEO, Alternative Learning Trust – Emma Bradshaw
Executive Headteachers/Headteachers/Heads of Schools
Safeguarding Managers/Designated Safeguarding Leads in all provisions
Deputy Safeguarding Manager/DSLs
Local Governor responsible for Safeguarding
Trustee responsible for Safeguarding

INTRODUCTION

‘The welfare of the child is paramount.’

At Alternative Learning Trust, the safety and welfare of our students is of the utmost importance. Owing to the day-to-day contact with children and young people, our staff are well-placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. All adults working at Alternative Learning Trust and all its provisions must protect children from harm and abuse, and be aware that any student may be at risk of harm or abuse. We have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students (*students under 18 years in FE institutions*) under the Education Act 2011 and Children Act 2004 through identifying any child welfare concerns and taking a holistic approach in partnership with families and other agencies, where appropriate. Staff in our schools have a statutory responsibility to address all welfare concerns and encourage children and young people to talk to staff about anything that worries them. Staff will always act in the best interest of the child to ensure they remain safe from harm. The Trust ensure that all staff – including Members, Trustees and Governors – receive regular training in relation to safeguarding and child protection in line with the statutory guidance in the Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024 documentation. In addition to this, all staff working in our provisions are required to read Keeping Children Safe In Education Part 1 and all leaders part 2 subsequently sign to confirm they understand their legal duties.

In addition to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, we have the following policies in relation to safeguarding children and young people within our school policies:

- Health and Safety
- Drugs
- Anti-Bullying and Anti-Discrimination
- Equality and Diversity
- Looked After Children
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Anti-Radicalisation
- Online Safety
- Whistleblowing
- Relationship and Sex Education
- Self-harm

At Alternative Learning Trust's provisions, students are taught about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

There are a number of elements to our policy:

- Ensuring safe recruitment practice in checking the suitability of all our staff and volunteers to work with children in keeping with KCSIE 2024 guidelines. Including referring to the member of staff's behaviour inside and outside school. Ensuring adequate checks are done on staff - on-line presence.
- All staff and volunteers must read Part 1 of KCSIE and all leaders must read all of KCSIE.
- All schools should adhere to the Department for Education's guidelines on filtering and monitoring of IT used in schools. Department for Education's new filtering and monitoring standards (DfE, 2023b).
- Raising awareness of safeguarding issues amongst all staff and volunteers and of what to do if they have concerns.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operating as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at case conferences and core group meetings.
- Establishing and maintaining a safe environment in which children feel secure and are encouraged to talk freely about anything that concerns them.
- Ensuring the young people know there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried about anything.
- Including opportunities in the PSHE and tutor time curriculum to develop and equip students with the skills needed to recognise risks and stay safe from abuse.
- Supporting students who have been abused or may be at risk of harm in accordance with any agreed child protection plan.
- When responding to safeguarding concerns, Designated Safeguarding Leads should take into consideration that students who have a Social Worker may potentially be at greater risk of harm.
- Ensuring we respond appropriately to any concern or allegation about a member of staff or volunteer, involving the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) accordingly.
- Ensuring staff follow accepted 'safe practice' principles when working with students.
- All schools should apply the safeguarding policy to organisations using their sites. For organisations or individuals using school premises, updated guidance includes information on responding to allegations relating to incidents occurring when an individual or organisation uses a school's premises. As with all safeguarding allegations, schools should follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Children absent from education - the updated guidance 2024 highlights that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.

If there are safeguarding concerns, the London/Regional Child Protection Procedures (London, Kent, Medway Safeguarding Children Board) must be followed (available from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)). The relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board/Partnership (LSCB/P) has adopted these procedures. This policy and procedure also accords with:

- DfE guidance – ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (DfE 2024).
- ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (HM Government, updated February 2024)).

Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect (Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024).

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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical and Mental abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. In addition, preventing impairment of children’s mental health and development, insuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. 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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person 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. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve 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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Disguised Compliance

Disguised compliance occurs when parents or carers appear co-operative but fail to make necessary changes to improve a child's safety or wellbeing. Staff must be alert to the signs of disguised compliance, such as repeated assurances without evidence of action or superficial engagement during meetings. In such cases, concerns must be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who may seek guidance or intervention from external agencies to ensure the child's needs are addressed.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) & Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

According to the Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024 document, both CCE and CSE 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 criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an 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. CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation

Indicators of child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation may include the following:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation.
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks.
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work.
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late.
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls.
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections.
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault.
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups.
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers).
- Frequenting areas known for sex work.
- Concerning use of internet or other social media.
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours, and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse.
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example).
- Recent bereavement or loss.
- Social isolation or social difficulties.
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality.
- Economic vulnerability.
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status.
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited.
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work.
- Having a physical or learning disability.

- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories), and
- Sexual identity.

More information can be found in the most up-to-date Keeping Children Safe In Education document.

County Lines

- County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of ‘deal lines’. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.
- Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.
- Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, CE and county lines exploitation:
 - ✓ Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years.
 - ✓ Can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years.
 - ✓ Can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual.
 - ✓ Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
 - ✓ Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults, and
 - ✓ Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.
- Children most vulnerable to county lines are:
 - ✓ Having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse.
 - ✓ Lack a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example).
 - ✓ Social isolation or social difficulties.
 - ✓ Economic vulnerability.
 - ✓ Homelessness or insecure accommodation status.
 - ✓ Connections with other people involved in gangs.
 - ✓ Having a physical or learning disability.
 - ✓ Having mental health or substance misuse issues.
 - ✓ Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories).
 - ✓ Being excluded from mainstream education, in particular attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

- Some potential indicators of county lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:
 - ✓ Persistently going missing from school or home and/or being found out of area.
 - ✓ Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones.
 - ✓ Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls and/or having multiple handsets.
 - ✓ Relationships with controlling/older individuals or groups.
 - ✓ Leaving home/care without explanation.
 - ✓ Suspicion of physical assault/unexplained injuries.
 - ✓ Parental concerns.
 - ✓ Carrying weapons.
 - ✓ Significant decline in school results/performance.
 - ✓ Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.
 - ✓ Self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing.

FGM

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors of FGM include:

- Low level of integration into UK society.
- Mother or a sister who has undergone FGM.
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE.
- Visiting female elder from the country of origin.
- Being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin.
- Talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman.

Symptoms of FGM:

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out of school to visit an 'at risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- Spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- Frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- Prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return.
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.

- Confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. In schools, this will usually come from a disclosure.

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out; and discuss any such cases with the safeguarding lead and children's social care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

Honour Based Violence

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so-called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBV, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children. We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not in school. This means we need to have at least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if their numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly.
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off roll when they:
 - a. Leave school to be home educated.
 - b. Move away from the school's location.
 - c. Remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age.
 - d. Are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards),
or
 - e. Are permanently excluded.

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place, will be referred to the local authority. When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

Prevent Duty

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the Prevent Duty. Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads undertake annual training in relation to the Prevent Duty and around tackling extremism and are able to support staff with any concerns they may have. We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school'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.

Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes.
- Glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures.
- Making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school.
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature.
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups.
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent).
- Secretive behaviour.
- Online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles.
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality.
- Graffiti, artwork or writing that displays extremist themes.
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others.
- Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views.
- Advocating violence towards others.

Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration. Children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.

We identify pupils who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe by completing the following screeners/interventions etc:

- SEN profiles.
- SLCN screeners.
- A variety of staff who have expertise in specific areas of need (e.g. ASD ambassador).
- SEN training.
- SLCN service (assessments/classroom observations).
- EPS.
- ASD service.
- SEN learning walks.
- Graduated response.
- IAP target setting.
- SEN information with strategies after assessments available to all staff.
- Review of targets and outcomes after block of SALT/ELSA.
- Liaison with professional network.
- Liaison with safeguarding team.
- Liaison with parents.
- SEN register.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Gender-based violence.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced imagery).
- Initiation-type violence and rituals.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. This could, for example, include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence.

We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy. Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features may be found.

The allegation:

- Is made against a pupil and refers to their behaviour towards another pupil or a more vulnerable pupil.
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence.
- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school.
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student.
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student.

We will support the victims of child-on-child abuse by:

- Using our consequence ladder.
- Restorative justice approach.
- Liaising with parents/carers.
- Liaising with the police where necessary.
- Educating around the issue of child-on-child abuse.
- Targeting workshops for students experiencing child-on-child abuse.

Sexting

In cases of sexting, we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) published in 2020: 'Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents, and safeguarding young people'. There is also the UKCIS Sharing Nudes & Semi Nudes Advice For Education Settings, published in February 2024, which we also follow.

Private Fostering

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; 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 children are appropriately supported and looked after, 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 children are affected by abuse and neglect, or become involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

School staff should notify the Designated Safeguarding Leads when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The Designated Safeguarding Leads will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the local authority. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements. On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

Supporting victims of abuse

All staff should be able to reassure victims of abuse that they are being taken seriously and will be supported. Children and young people should never be made to feel ashamed or that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Children and the court system

Children involved in family or criminal court proceedings may face additional stress and trauma. Staff should remain aware of the potential impact of these processes on the child's emotional wellbeing. Schools should offer support, including signposting to appropriate organisations such as the NSPCC or CAF/CASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service). The Designated Safeguarding Lead should maintain regular contact with relevant professionals to monitor the child's welfare.

Children with family members in prison

Having a family member in prison can significantly impact a child's mental health, behaviour and academic performance. Staff should provide additional support to these children, ensuring they have access to trusted adults and the appropriate support and pastoral care. Staff should be aware of and understand the stigma and emotional burden these children may face. Referrals to external organisations for additional support may be appropriate.

Online safety

The latest guidance on sharing nude and semi-nude images and videos published by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) (UKCIS, 2020) states that it is illegal to share images and an offence that should be reported and investigated. Other agencies will be involved as appropriate.

Upskirting

Upskirting, defined as taking a photograph under someone's clothing without their permission, is a criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019. It constitutes a form of sexual harassment and can have a significant impact on a victim's emotional wellbeing. Any incidents must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and appropriate steps, including involving the police, will be taken.

Child criminal and sexual exploitation

All staff should have an understanding of and recognising signs of child criminal and sexual exploitation. The guidance highlights that the vulnerability of children involved in criminal exploitation is not always recognised by adults and professionals and that the indicators of exploitation are different for boys and girls.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse and can be a one-off occurrence or might happen over time. All children and young people, including 16- and 17-year-olds, can experience child sexual exploitation.

Mental health

Designated Safeguarding Leads will support children and young people's mental health, including DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, 2021), as well as the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024.

Child abduction

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal of a child from their usual environment, whether by a stranger or someone known to them. Staff must remain vigilant for signs of potential abduction, such as suspicious behaviour around the school premises. In cases of abduction or attempted abduction, immediate action must be taken including contacting the police and notifying the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

DESIGNATED STAFF FOR SAFEGUARDING

Alternative Learning Trust's provisions all have DSLs who are responsible for safeguarding issues. Any member of staff concerned about a student should tell the designated person immediately. If they are unavailable, you should talk to whoever is deputising or to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. We also have a nominated governor for safeguarding. The designated person has a responsibility to:

- Liaise with the nominated governor, the local authority Children, Young People and Learning Services, Police and other agencies on individual safeguarding cases.
- Act as the contact person within the school, providing advice and support and ensuring that all staff (including temporary, supply staff and volunteers and members of the governing body) are aware of their role.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating action within the school on safeguarding issues.
- Discuss individual cases with staff on a 'need to know basis' to protect children's right to confidentiality.
- Oversee the planning of any curricular or other provision in relation to safeguarding matters.
- With any other relevant staff (e.g. class teacher or year head), represent the school at safeguarding meetings and be a member of a core group if required.
- Ensure staff are familiar with this Policy and Procedure.
- Raise awareness about safeguarding on an ongoing basis.
- Train **all** (i.e. including ancillary) staff annually (and for new staff commencing work between whole school training sessions or absent for such sessions arrange attendance at induction sessions arranged by the local authority). In addition, all staff receive ongoing safeguarding training through briefings and twilight sessions.
- Ensure that they (the DSLs) receive update training on a regular basis.

THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL STAFF

Everyone within Alternative Learning Trust and its provisions must be alert to the possibility that any student, regardless of race, religion, culture, class or family background, could be

the victim of abuse or neglect and must be familiar with these procedures. Concern about a *student* must be discussed with the DSLs immediately so that, if necessary, a referral can be made without delay. In urgent situations, referral must not be delayed.

Members of staff should not investigate safeguarding concerns. This is done by Children's Social Services or the Police. However, if a *student* says something, it is vital to listen carefully, so you can record and report it accurately. Records will also assist other members of staff who may have concerns. Safeguarding flowcharts are visible in all staff areas to assist in reporting concerns.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Our students and their parents have the right to expect that all staff will deal sensitively and sympathetically with their situation. It is important that information is only available to those who need to know it. Parents and, where appropriate, students should be told their right to confidentiality may be breached if information comes to light suggesting possible harm to a child/young person.

Safeguarding issues relating to individual cases must not be subject to open discussion in the staff room or elsewhere in the school. Members of staff should also remember not to promise to students to keep 'secrets'.

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

In our recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers we will at all times adhere to the appropriate guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024).

In particular, we will ensure that our interview panellists are appropriately trained, that we always follow up gaps in previous employment. We always require specific references from employers for the last five years and that for all posts, paid and voluntary, the appropriate DBS disclosure checks are conducted. DBS checks are conducted every three years; this applies to staff in regulated activity.

We keep a central record of all staff with the date and outcome of their DBS check so that at all times staff and pupils and parents can be assured that this has been done.

We should only start staff after full checks have been done and only in exceptional circumstances will staff start without all checks complete, in these instances a Risk Assessment must be completed and signed off by the Trust.

DSL'S are key people in each of our schools they 'must' be given time to deal with concerns. They must have a deputy or co-DSL to cover absence and all DSLs should be offered independent supervision and regular training.

CONTRACTORS AND OUTSIDE SERVICES

We expect all contractors providing services within the Trust's provisions, whose staff have access to any of our provisions' premises, to comply with this policy and the attached procedure. They must agree to this in writing.

In particular, we require any contractor or organisation delivering a service on behalf of Alternative Learning Trust or using our premises to provide evidence that they adhere to the above requirements in terms of recruitment, selection, training and supervision of their staff and any volunteers, in particular DBS disclosure checks.

This policy and procedure will also apply to any organisation using Alternative Learning Trust's facilities. They must agree to this in writing.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

If concern arises about the welfare of a *student*, the following procedure must be followed.

Do not delay:

- Tell the DSLs as soon as you can
- Early referral gives more time to offer help to the *student* and family before the situation becomes severe or serious.
- When the matter is already severe or serious, early referral gives more time for others to protect the student.
- The DSLs may consult the Children's Services or any other relevant outside agency.

MAKE WRITTEN NOTES

- At the earliest opportunity make a written record of your concerns – record facts accurately and be clear when you are expressing an opinion and the basis for this – these notes will help to ensure accuracy in recalling events later – notes should be legible, signed and dated (this should be completed on a safeguarding concern form).
- These notes must be given to the DSL as soon as possible and added to CPOMS or relevant on-line recording system - the electronic safeguarding system.

CONCERN FROM SOMETHING THE YOUNG PERSON SAYS

Listen – do not ask questions or interrogate.

Remain calm – if you are shocked, upset or angry the student will sense this and this could stop them from saying more.

Reassure the student that he/she has done nothing wrong – tell them it is all right to talk.

Do not promise to keep it secret – tell the student that you cannot keep the matter secret and will need to take advice from someone who can help. Always remind students you are working with that if they tell you something that could put them or others at risk of harm or a crime being committed you have a duty to share with DSL.

- Follow the CP flowchart in each school
- If in doubt, consult.
- Do not ignore concerns, even if these are vague.
- Your first responsibility is to the student.
- If you need help or support to manage your own feelings, this can be provided.

CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY

Contact with the family should be discussed with the DSLs in each school who may consult the Children's Service or other appropriate agencies.

In cases where a minor physical injury causes concern, it is usual school practice to discuss this with the parent or carer. If the explanation suggests a non-accidental cause for the injury (or a failure to protect the student from harm), the parent or carer should be informed that the matter will be referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

In cases of possible neglect or emotional abuse, the concern may have built up over a period of time. There may have been discussion previously between school staff and the family about sources of help (e.g. Children's Services) but if concerns persist the DSL will need to refer to MASH and will normally advise the family of this.

In cases where there are suspicions of sexual abuse, the DSL will seek immediate advice from Children First Contact Service within the appropriate Local Authority before discussing this with the family.

RECORDING

- All records relating to child welfare concerns will be kept on the student's safeguarding file securely and recorded on the electronic safeguarding system.
- Information from records will only be used on a 'need to know' basis.
- Staff will need to know when a student is subject to a Child Protection, so they can monitor the student's welfare.
- Records relating to the student's welfare will remain on the student's file as long as the student is a pupil at Alternative Learning Trust's provisions/school.
- When the student leaves the school, the new school will be advised in writing that the school's records contain information about safeguarding concerns even where these are no longer current.

CONCERN ABOUT A STAFF MEMBER, CARER OR VOLUNTEER

- Allegations or concerns about a member of staff, worker or volunteer must immediately be notified to the Head Teacher (or the Chair of Governors if the concern is about the Head Teacher).
- The Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will always consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO in each local area)).
- Following consultation, the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will decide on appropriate action:
 - Immediate referral to Social Care for the relevant .
 - Consideration of disciplinary proceedings.
- It is important to bear in mind that although the concern may relate to an individual student, other students may also be at risk.
- The procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE September 2024) and the local area LSCP procedure will be followed in such cases.

HARM FROM, OR TO, OTHER CHILDREN

- Abuse or concerns about abuse or harm by other *children/young people* should be subject to the same safeguarding procedures as in respect of *children/young people* being abused by an adult.
- Professionals responding should be alert to the risk a child may pose to children other than any 'current' victim.
- *Children/young people* who harm others are likely to have considerable needs themselves (e.g. subjected to abuse, witnessed domestic violence or committed criminal offences, or SEN).

Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA) DFDFD

APVA refers to behaviours where a young person uses physical violence, coercion or emotional abuse to control or harm their parent or carer. Staff should be able to identify such cases and provide appropriate support, including liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and external agencies. Families experiencing APVA may benefit from referrals to support services such as domestic violence charities or social care interventions.

OTHER AGENCIES

- School staff have a legal duty to assist local authority Children's Services or the Police when they are making enquiries about the welfare of students.
- Information about a student must therefore be shared on a 'need to know' basis with other agencies.
- When telephone requests for information are received, **always** maintain security by checking the telephone number listing for the caller and calling back to a switchboard number **before** giving information or confirming the student is on Limes College roll.
- Always advise the DSL about such requests for information.
- Requests for attendance at meetings about individual *students* (e.g. safeguarding conferences) should be notified to the DSL, who will arrange preparation of a report and attendance at the meeting.
- Reports should contain information about the child's:
 - ✓ Academic progress
 - ✓ Attendance
 - ✓ Behaviour
 - ✓ Relationships with children and adults
 - ✓ Family
 - ✓ SEN
 - ✓ Any other relevant matter
 - ✓ Reports should be objective, distinguishing between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.
 - ✓ Unless you specify otherwise, reports will normally be made available to the student's family.

STUDENTS SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

- The school will be told by the relevant Local Authority Children's Services when a student is subject to a Child Protection Plan whether the London Borough of Sutton or another local authority.
- The name of the key social worker must be clearly recorded on the student's record.

- The school will participate fully in the work of Core Groups for these students, to assist with the objectives of the Child Protection Plan for the *student*.
- When a student is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the college will report all unexplained absences even if only of a day.
- When a student is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the school will report all behavioural changes or other concerns to the key social worker.
- When a *student* who is subject to a Child Protection Plan leaves the College, all the safeguarding information will be transferred to any new school.

Dangerous dogs and safeguarding

Incidents involving dangerous dogs can pose significant risks to children, including physical harm and emotional trauma. Staff should report any concerns about dangerous dogs within a child's home environment or community to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where necessary, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with social care or local authorities to address potential risks and ensure the child's safety.

GENERAL ISSUES

- All staff must observe the above policy and procedure at all times. They will be reviewed annually and as required in line with changes in local (LSCB) or national guidance.
- All staff must read (and sign to confirm that they have read) Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024.
- We have a safeguarding Audit tool that our Safeguarding Governor uses to Audit our safeguarding practises and procedures.

Persons responsible for updating this policy:

CEO/Executive Principal
Heads of Schools
Safeguarding Managers