



**R.E.A.L. Education Limited**

# **Safeguarding and Protection of Young People in Our Care Policy**

**(R.E.A.L. Education Ltd)**

**(R.E.A.L. Independent Schools, Hinckley)**

**(R.E.A.L. Independent Schools, Mansfield)**



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## 1. Introduction

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This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(published 15th December 2023, updated February 2024\)](#) and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our local safeguarding partners (see section 3). It is also based on part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. This policy is in response to **Sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002, implemented June 2004**. It applies to all adults, including supply staff and volunteers, working in or on behalf of R.E.A.L. Education.

Everyone in the organisation shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe and secure environment for children and young people to learn in education settings; and
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting.
- Ensuring our approach is child-centre and in the best interests of the child or young person.

## 2. R.E.A.L. Education

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R.E.A.L. Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our children and young people and we expect everyone employed by us to share this commitment. All adults employed by R.E.A.L. are aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that they have a role to play in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children. Everyone understands that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside education, inside and outside of home, and online.

All adults working within R.E.A.L. take all welfare concerns seriously whilst recognising that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. All adults are aware that no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. In order to ensure that the welfare of the child is paramount, adults will always consider and act in the best interests of the child. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all our learners.

This policy will be reviewed by the Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead on a regular basis to ensure it remains current and incorporates all revisions made to local or national safeguarding guidance. This policy will as a minimum be fully reviewed as a minimum once a year during the autumn term provided to the Governing Body for approval and sign off at the first autumn term meeting.

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### 3. Providing a Safe and Supportive Environment

#### 3.1 Safer Recruitment and Selection

R.E.A.L. Education pays full regard to DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works within R.E.A.L. Education who is likely to be perceived by the learners as a safe and trustworthy adult, including volunteers and staff employed by contractors. Safer recruitment practice has been fully encompassed in the organisation's Recruitment Policy and its procedures. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applications, verifying identity and qualifications, obtaining



professional and character references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking rigorous selection procedures and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other checks.

Recruitment practices in place are:

- An Enhanced DBS Certificate with Barred list check is obtained for all new appointments to the organisation workforce;
- A CV will not be accepted, unless accompanied by a fully completed application form;
- Teacher Services checks are undertaken for all relevant staff, including QTS verification;
- ID and right to work in the UK is verified prior to appointment;
- Two references are taken for all appointments, including their last employer and their last role working with children;
- Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK will undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools. In addition overseas police and professional body checks for overseas application or those who have lived abroad for 3 months or more in the last 5 years;
- An Enhanced DBS is obtained for volunteers following a risk assessment considering the frequency, regularity, duration and nature of contact with children and young people;
- Ensuring that any contracted staff are DBS checked where appropriate;
- Maintaining a Single Central Record detailing the range of checks carried out on their staff, volunteers, governors and regular visitors;
- All new appointments are subject to identity, criminal conviction disclosure, health and rights to work in the UK checks prior to interview;
- Make appropriate referrals to the disclosure and Barring Service and/or the Secretary of State (via the Teaching Regulation Agency) where a teacher or member of staff in regulated activity is dismissed;
- Checks of the applicant's online presence will be undertaken;
- All those involved in recruitment have undertaken the approved Safer Recruitment Training. At least one member of every interview or appointment panel has successfully completed this training.

### 3.2 Safe Practice

All staff undertake Child Safeguarding training and updates of this training at least every 3 years to ensure that staff are safe and aware of behaviours which should be avoided.

In addition R.E.A.L.'s Staff Code of Conduct outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards children and young people. A summary of this is also provided in the Staff Safeguarding Induction prior to taking up employment.



Safe working practice ensures that learners are safe and that all staff:

- Are responsible for their own action and behaviours and know how to avoid any conduct which could lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions;
- Work in an open and transparent way;
- Discuss and/or take advice from the Safeguarding Leadership Team over any incident which may give rise to concern;
- Record any incidents or decisions made in relation to a child or young person;
- Apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality;
- Are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

### **3.3 Trainee teachers and learner placements**

For all trainee teachers or learner placements where individuals are engaging in regulated activity relating to children (which in most cases by the nature of the work, they will be), an enhanced DBS certificate (including children's barred list information) will be obtained and entered onto the single central register.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks, R.E.A.L. will obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre-appointment checks that the school or college would otherwise be required to perform and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

As with other visitors who have been checked by an external organisation, R.E.A.L. will have 'written notification' that appropriate checks have been made and have been reviewed annually.

If tutors of trainee teachers do not have unsupervised contact with children, they will not require a DBS check. If they do have such contact, then it will be the responsibility of their institution to undertake the check and inform the school that appropriate checks have been made.

### **3.4 Sharing Safeguarding Information with Learners**

R.E.A.L. Education is committed to ensuring that learners are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All learners know that we have a senior member of staff with responsibility for child protection and know who this is. We inform learners of whom they might talk to, both in and out of learning, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. PSHE lessons are used to help learners learn how to keep safe.



Information is made available to learners, including NSPCC and Childline. The arrangements for consulting with and listening to learners are via assemblies, 1:1 support sessions and learner surveys.

### **3.5 Partnership with Parents/carers**

The safety and welfare of all children and young people is paramount and R.E.A.L. Education shares this purpose with parents/carers. All parents and carers are provided with child protection and safeguarding information prior to starting with R.E.A.L. Education. We are happy to share a copy of our policy on request and it is also on our website. Parents/carers are advised that if a member of staff is informed of an issue which causes us concern, we may request the help of outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the concern and the severity of the issue, we may or may not contact parents/carers regarding the disclosure the child has made. We would in this instance contact the relevant professional body and seek their advice. Our aim is always to act professionally with the child's safety and best interest at the forefront.

We are committed to working positively, openly and honestly with parents/carers and ensure that all parents/carers are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents/carers' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so to protect a child. We will share with parents/carers any concerns we may have about their child unless doing so may place the child at risk of harm.

R.E.A.L. Education follows each Safeguarding Partnership's (formerly LSCB) procedures when dealing with any matters of a child protection nature. We will endeavour to discuss all concerns with parents/carers about their child/ren. However, there may be exceptional circumstances when concerns will be discussed with Social Care and/or the Police without parental knowledge (in accordance with Safeguarding Partnership's Child Protection Procedures). We will, of course, always aim to maintain a positive relationship with all parents/carers.

We will seek ways to communicate with parents and carers to make them aware of the risks children face online, and how they can safeguard their children online at home.

### **3.6 Partnerships with others**

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Although inter agency working and information sharing are vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, it is clear they are especially important to identify and prevent child sexual and/or criminal exploitation.





We recognise that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies. These include the Local Authority, Social Care, Barnardo's, Police, Health, Childline, NSPCC, etc.

### Operation Encompass

R.E.A.L. works in partnership with Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs and the Police as part of Operation Encompass. This is a national scheme, with the Department for Education and Home Office endorsement.

Operation Encompass is a unique police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership, which involves the reporting to schools, prior to the start of the next school day, when a child or young person has been exposed to, or involved in, any domestic violence incident.

Operation Encompass will ensure that the Dedicated Safeguarding Lead is trained to allow them to liaise with the police and to use the information that has been shared, in confidence, while ensuring that the school is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in, or exposed to, a domestic abuse incident, should this be necessary.

**The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR** do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children 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 children.

### 3.7 Training and Staff Induction

The Safeguarding Leadership Team at R.E.A.L. Education (Lead Designated Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Leads) undertake basic child protection and safeguarding training on a 2 yearly basis. All other staff undertake appropriate induction training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is updated at least every three years. Staff are required to annually complete online child safeguarding training which reflects the updated KCSIE and includes elements on online safety. All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) are provided with a Safeguarding Induction prior to taking up appointment and are provided with a copy of this policy and other relevant policies during Induction.

Half-termly safeguarding briefings are provided on relevant child safeguarding issues e.g. Online-Safety, Safe Practice, Record Keeping. All staff will be made aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.



Governors will receive an appropriate level of training to provide them with the necessary knowledge to ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are effective. This may be delivered face to face or online.

### **3.8 Support, Advice and Guidance for Staff**

Staff will be supported by the Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, who will provide guidance and training where appropriate. They will be supported by the Director of Education where applicable. Advice and support is always available from the Local Authority's MASH Education Adviser and further advice is available from the Police.

### **3.9 On-line Safety**

Our Lead DSL and the senior safeguarding team has the lead responsibility in this area, which is overseen and regularly reviewed by the governing body. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. R.E.A.L. Education has website filtering and monitoring software on all computers and devices available across the organisations. Our Learner Mobile Phone Policy is shared as part of the learner induction process to support the safeguarding of children. As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, we offer a curriculum which covers the need for safeguarding, including online. This is covered through specific lessons in PSHE and the assembly programmes.

Across R.E.A.L. Education sites, all devices are filtered and monitored using iBoss filtering and monitoring systems. These are applied to all users of the internet, including those visitors who bring their own devices. The system is able to limit access to dangerous and inappropriate content on the web. iBoss are members of the Internet Watch Foundation, comply with the CIAC database (child abuse images database) and work with the Home Office to limit access to terrorist and extremist content. In addition to filtering, iBoss monitors web use and proactively flags 'risky' behaviour. Web users actions are tracked and logged against their unique user credentials so a thorough audit of web use is recorded.

Systems are in place to ensure that the online content that children can access is carefully filtered and monitored to ensure that they do not have access to concerning content. The effectiveness of these systems are reviewed by the ICT Strategy Group on an annual basis and the process is referenced within our Online Safety Policy.

### **3.10 Related Policies**

Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection in relation to individual children. It also encompasses issues such as learner health and safety and bullying and a range of other issues, for example, arrangements for meeting the medical needs of children, providing first aid, school security, drugs and substance misuse etc. There may also be other safeguarding



issues that are specific to the local area of population. Other related policies and protocols that should be referred to include:

Health and Safety Policy  
Anti-Bullying Policy  
Online Safety Policy  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Whistleblowing Policy  
Drugs Policy  
Educational Visits Policy  
Equality Policy  
Supporting learners with Medical Conditions Policy  
Behaviour Policy

### **3.11 Learner Information**

In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them we require accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names (including any previous names), address and date of birth of child;
- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives;
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above);
- Whether the child is Looked After;
- Emergency contact details;
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from the Academy;
- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Interim or Full Care Order, Injunctions etc);
- If the child is or has a Child Protection Plan (formerly known as being on the Child Protection Register);
- Name and contact details of any key persons from other agencies, including GP;
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

### **3.12 Lettings and use of R.E.A.L. premises**

The organisation has procedures and processes in place to seek assurance that any other body using the R.E.A.L. premises has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (and will inspect these as needed) and to ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise directly with Mark Spencer (Head of Health, Safety and Environments) on these matters where appropriate.

Any allegations made against an outside organisation or individual which may include community groups, sports associations or other service providers running extracurricular activities must follow the R.E.A.L. safeguarding policy and procedures. The local authority designated officer (LADO)

must also be informed if a safeguarding allegation is made by our organisation against an external individual or organisation.

### 3.13 Roles and Responsibilities

R.E.A.L. Education will ensure that:

- Safeguarding policy and procedures are in place that are in accordance with the Safeguarding Partnership guidance and locally agreed interagency procedures, and the policy is available to parents/carers upon request;
- We operate safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children;
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the Local Authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures;
- A senior member of the organisation's Leadership Team is designated to take lead responsibility for Child Protection (and a deputy);
- Staff undertake appropriate child protection training, including at least annual updates;
- We remedy, without delay, any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding child protection arrangements;
- Where services or activities are provided on an R.E.A.L. premises by another body, the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection and liaises with R.E.A.L. on these matters where appropriate;
- Ensure the Safeguarding Policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the Safeguarding Governor regarding this;
- Our policies and procedures are reviewed annually;
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring is in place and is kept up to date, whilst not preventing access to online learning opportunities;
- Should an allegation arise outside of term time and the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead/s are unavailable, the Director of Education will be responsible for managing the referral process in their absence;
- Governors receive appropriate training to provide oversight and monitoring of the above.
- All staff understand that Early Help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. We recognise providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.

The Head of Alternative Provision and Standards in conjunction with the Head of Schools will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policies and procedures are fully implemented, and followed by all staff;



- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated safeguarding lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities;
- appropriate levels of qualified staff are maintained within the organisation to ensure adequate levels of safeguarding practitioners at all times; and
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with the agreed Whistleblowing Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Follow up all potential safeguarding issues and to make referrals to other agencies where appropriate;
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the organisation;
- Liaise with the Head of Schools to inform him/her of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there always cover for this role.
- To recognise how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral;
- Have a working knowledge of how the child protection cases operate, the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these;
- Ensure that all staff have access to and understand the organisation's Safeguarding Policy;
- Ensure that all staff have induction training;
- Circulate relevant information and guidance to staff on a regular basis;
- Keep detailed and accurate secure records and/or concerns;
- Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online
- Recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses at least every two years.
- Ensure parents/carers are made aware of the Safeguarding Policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of R.E.A.L. Education in this to avoid conflict later;
- Ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They will also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The designated safeguarding lead will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child;

- Help promote education outcomes, sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school leadership staff;
- When a child leaves R.E.A.L. Education, ensure the Child Safeguarding file is copied for the new establishment ASAP and is transferred to the new school separately from the main learner file. If a child goes missing or leaves to be educated at home, then the child protection file should be copied and the copy forwarded to the Principal Education Welfare Officer at the Local Authority.

All staff and volunteers will:

- Fully comply with the organisation's policies and procedures;
- Attend appropriate training;
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any concerns;
- Understand the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessment under the Children Act;
- Record any potential safeguarding incidents appropriately

#### **4. Identifying Children and Young People who may be suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm**

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All staff across R.E.A.L. Education are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, learners, parents and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or staff being alerted to concerns.

Safeguarding children is defined as:

- The actions we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm are everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.



Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also relates to aspects of school life including:

- Learner health and safety.
- The use of reasonable force.
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions.
- Providing first aid.
- Educational visits.
- Intimate care.
- Online safety.
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure school security, taking into account the local context.

Safeguarding can involve a range of potential issues such as:

- Bullying, including cyber bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, etc) and prejudice based bullying and being aware of the ease of access to mobile phone networks.
- Contextualised also known as extra-familial abuse.
- Child-on-Child Abuse (to include children abusing other children, other varying form of bullying including online and sexually harmful behaviour, sexual violence, and sexual harassment (further defined in KCSiE 2024 Part Five
- Racist, disability-based, homophobic, bi-phobic, or transphobic abuse
- Risk of extremist behaviour and/or radicalisation and susceptible to being at risk of being drawn into
- terrorism.
- Child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, modern slavery, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- In possession of a knife and or involved in knife crime, youth violence, criminal child exploitation
- (CCE).
- The impact of new technologies, including 'sexting' and accessing pornography.
- Is in family circumstances which present challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse,
- adult mental health issues and domestic abuse/harm.
- Upskirting (typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm).
- Issues which may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and serious youth violence. Staff will need to recognise possible signs of a child being at risk of or involved in youth violence, such as lack of guilt and empathy, physical violence/aggression, positive attitude towards delinquency, previous criminal activity, unexplained money or new expensive possessions, unexplained physical injuries and regular truancy.

- Particular issues affecting children include domestic abuse including teenage relationship abuse, female genital mutilation, honour based abuse, breast ironing and forced marriage.
- The approach to online safety, including appropriate filtering and monitoring on devices and networks, including home use.
- ‘Deliberately missing education and children who have unexplained or persistent absence from education’ or may be going ‘missing from care or home’ and the risks this poses on repeat occasions and for prolonged periods.
- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls.
- A young carer.
- Has a mental health need and has an effect on school attendance and progress.
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Privately fostered.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending.
- Harm outside the home - extra familial harm.
- Persistent absence from education, including persistent absence for part of the school day.

#### 4.1 Definitions

As in the Childrens’ Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday.

**Harm** means ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; health includes physical and mental health; ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

**Abuse** is 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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse** 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.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the





production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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, 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, though it may occur alone.

**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. 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);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Whilst the above are the legal definitions, staff must also be aware of other forms of harm including forced marriage, radicalisation, honour based abuse and female genital mutilation.

**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. In the first instance staff should discuss early help requirements with the designated safeguarding lead. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment. Staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- is a young carer;
- is frequently go missing from education, home or care;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol;



- is bereaved
- is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- is suffering from mental ill health
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- is a privately fostered child
- has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- have experienced multiple suspensions or are at risk of permanent exclusion
- is showing signs of being drawn into antisocial or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse; and/or
- has returned home to their family from care.

**A Child in Need** is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

**Mental Health** All staff should also be aware 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. Only appropriately trained professionals will attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following this policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

## 5. Taking Action to Ensure that Children and Young People are Safe at R.E.A.L. Education and at Home

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It is not the responsibility of R.E.A.L. staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly all concerns regarding the welfare of learners will be recorded and discussed with the designated safeguarding lead with responsibility for child protection (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated safeguarding lead) prior to any discussion with parents/carers.

### 5.1 Staff will immediately report

- Any suspicion that a child is injured, marked or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play.
- Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious.
- Any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. worrying drawings, writing or acts).
- 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).
- Staff should be aware that children with SEND may face additional safeguarding challenges and should ensure that any potential barriers to them reporting concerns are removed.
- 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 designated safeguarding lead, who will inform the Police;
- Any children who they believe may benefit from early help, this includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the designated safeguarding lead, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.
- Any concerns that a child is at risk of, or involved in, serious violent crime.
- Concerns will be recorded on CPOMS. If the system is unavailable for any reason, Appendix A should be used.

### 5.2 Responding to a Disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from learners, parents/carers or other members of the public. We recognise that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity.



Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated safeguarding lead and make a contemporaneous record.

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the designated safeguarding lead in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next. Staff will:

- Listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm.
- Try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of staff.
- Try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'did X hit you?'
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise.
- Not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child.
- Explain sensitively to the child that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Reassure and support the child as far as possible.
- Explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told.
- Explain what will happen next and that the child will be involved as appropriate

### **5.3 Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or other senior person in their absence)**

Following any information raising concern, the designated safeguarding lead will consider:

- Any urgent medical needs of the child.
- Making an enquiry to the Central Database (formerly the Child Protection Register)
- Discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family.
- Consulting with appropriate persons e.g. Police, Children's Social Care etc.
- The child's wishes.
- Any suspicion of female genital mutilation of a girl under 18 years of age will be reported to the Police and Children's Social Care.

Then decide:

- Wherever possible, to talk to parents/carers, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any Police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk.
- Whether to make a child protection referral to Children's Social Care or the Police because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately.

OR

- Not to make a referral at this stage.
- If further monitoring is necessary.

- If early help is appropriate the designated safeguarding lead should support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate and then ensure the case is kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving or is getting worse.
- If it would be appropriate to make a referral for other services.

Referrals should ideally be made by a designated safeguarding lead, however in their absence, anyone can make a referral, and their absence must not delay the appropriate action being taken. Where referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead the designated safeguarding lead should be informed, as soon as possible, that a referral has been made. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to Social Care will be accompanied by a standard Referral Form (appendix C).

#### **5.4 Action following a Child Protection referral**

The designated safeguarding lead or other appropriate member of staff will:

- Make regular contact with Children's Social Care
- Contribute to the Strategy Discussion and Initial Assessment
- Provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference
- If the child or children have a Child Protection Plan, contribute to the Child Protection Plan and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Child Protection Conferences
- Share all reports with parents prior to the meetings
- Where in disagreement with a decision made e.g. not to apply Child Protection Procedures or not to convene a child Protection Conference, discuss this with the Education Safeguarding Manager
- Where a child is having a Child Protection Plan moves from R.E.A.L Education or goes missing, immediately inform the key worker in Social Care.

#### **5.5 Recording and Monitoring**

Each Learning Manager will record:

- Information about the child: name, address, D.O.B, those with parental responsibility, primary carers, emergency contacts, names of persons authorised to collect from the education, any court orders, if a child has been subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Key contacts in other agencies including GP details
- Any disclosures/accounts from child or others, including parents/carers (and keep original notes)
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, actions taken (dated, timed and signed) and arrangements for monitoring/reviewing

All records should be objective and include:

- Statements, facts and observable things (what was seen/heard)
- Diagram indicating position, size, colour of any injuries (photographs if appropriate)
- Words child uses (not translated into 'proper' words)
- Non-verbal behaviours

All child protection documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the learner's main file. This will be locked away and only accessible to the Head of Schools and designated safeguarding lead. These records will be copied and transferred to any school or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for the attention of the designated safeguarding lead with Responsibility for Child Protection'.

If the child goes missing from education or is removed from roll to be educated at home then any Child Protection file should be copied and the copy sent to the Principal Education Welfare Officer. R.E.A.L. Education will retain all original copies of child protection files until the child's 25th birthday.

Each Site Lead will monitor:

- Injuries/marks
- Attendance
- Changes e.g. mood/academic functioning
- Relationships
- Language
- Behaviour
- Demeanour and appearance
- Statements and comments
- Medicals
- Stories, 'news', drawings
- Response to PE/sport
- Family circumstances
- Parental behaviours/care of child

## 5.6 Supporting the Child and Partnership with Parents/Carers

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

We will provide secure, caring, supportive and protective relationships 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/carers. The designated safeguarding lead 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.

### **5.7 Allegations regarding Person(s) working in or on behalf of R.E.A.L. Education (including volunteers)**

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of R.E.A.L. Education including supply staff and volunteers, that he or she has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Has behaved, or may have behaved, towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children; or
- Has behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This may include an incident outside of school which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children e.g. an incident of domestic abuse.

R.E.A.L. Education will follow the Safeguarding Partnership's Procedure for Dealing with Allegations against a Person who works with Children.

Detailed records will be made to include decisions, action taken and the reasons for these. All records will be retained securely as mentioned above.

Whilst we acknowledge that such allegations (as all others) may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge that they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

#### **Initial Action**

- The person who has received the allegation or witnesses an event will immediately inform the Head of Schools (HoS) or Head of Alternative Provision and Standards (HoAPS) or Director of Education/Chair of Governors if the allegation is against the (Head of Schools) and make a record of what happened
- The HoAPS/HoS will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical needs
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children



- The HoAPS/HoS may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however, no person will be interviewed at this stage
- The HoAPS/HoS will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by the organisation or if there needs to be a referral to social care and/or police for investigation
- Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of learners, parents and staff
- The HoAPS/HoS will inform the R.E.A.L.'s People Manager/Directors of any allegation as appropriate.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the Head of Schools, designated safeguarding lead or other senior colleague, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should refer to the R.E.A.L.'s Whistleblowing Procedure.

Required further investigations, including suspensions, and any relevant referrals will be managed within R.E.A.L.'s Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

#### **'Low Level' Concerns**

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out in the bullet points above. 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 school 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 allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO (the LADO should be consulted if you are unsure whether the concerns have met the threshold for referral)

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

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

As with concerns that meet the 'harm' threshold' low level concerns must be reported as follows:

- to Head of Alternative Provision and Standards;
- to Head of Schools



- where there are concerns/allegations about the Head of Schools and/or Head of Alternative Provision and Standards, this should be referred to the Director of Education/Chair of Governors.

As with all allegations, lessons should still be learned by the organisation as a result of a low level concern.

### **Supply Staff**

Whilst R.E.A.L. Education is not the employer of supply staff; we must ensure that allegations are dealt with properly. Therefore, we will take the lead in any investigation because agencies do not have direct access to children or R.E.A.L. staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts or liaise with the LADO. In all cases the employer must be informed of the allegations.

## **5.8 Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm**

### **5.8.1 Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. R.E.A.L. Education ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements including contact. The designated teacher for Looked After Children and Designated Safeguarding leads have details of the child's social worker, as well as the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care. They will work with the virtual head to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of LAC and meet the needs in their PEP (Personal Education Plan)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

### **5.8.2 Children who need a Social Worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)**

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child'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. Local authorities will share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead will hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This will be considered as a matter of routine. Where children need a social worker, this will 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). The school will also work with the Virtual Head to ensure that they are able to have oversight of the attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker.

### 5.8.3 Children requiring Mental Health Support

Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. 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. R.E.A.L. Education has a specialist lead in place to identify and work with children who may require mental health support. This includes staff training, curriculum development and both learner and staff mental health ambassadors.

### 5.8.4 Care Leavers

Local authorities have on-going responsibilities to the young people who cease to be looked after and become care leavers. That includes keeping in touch with them, preparing an assessment of their needs and appointing a personal adviser who develops a pathway plan with the young person. This plan describes how the local authority will support the care leaver to participate in education or training. Designated safeguarding leads will have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver, and will liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

### 5.8.5 Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

### 5.9 Work Experience

R.E.A.L. Education has procedures to safeguard learners undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise learners on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### 5.10 child-on-child abuse

child-on-child abuse can take many forms, such as:



- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence - includes rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault.
- sexual harassment - this can be defined as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online or offline. child-on-child sexual harassment is likely to; violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) - is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or other or sends sexually explicit messages via mobiles, tablets, smartphones or any device that allows you to share media and messages.
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) - is an umbrella term for behaviour that is inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent which is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. It can occur online and/or offline.

Whilst we recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), all child-on-child abuse or harm will always be taken seriously and acted upon, under the appropriate policy e.g. safeguarding, behaviour, and not dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. These issues will be part of PSHE lessons and discussions. Victims will be supported through our pastoral system.

A dedicated NSPCC helpline is now available to support anyone who has experienced sexual abuse in an educational setting or has concerns about someone, the number is 0800 136 663.

We will;

- deal with any reports or disclosures in line with this policy and refer to the DSL (or Deputy);
- educate children about positive, responsible and safe relationships and the unequivocal facts about consent, via PSHE and the wider curriculum;
- educate children about the positive, responsible and safe use of mobile technology and social media;
- ensure that children know how to report if they witness or experience such abuse and understand that any form of child-on-child abuse is unacceptable;
- conduct a risk assessment to determine the specific risks to which the children at the school are, or may be, exposed, assessing, addressing and monitoring those risks;
- never tolerate or normalise this behaviour and are very clear it is not an inevitable part of growing up;



- not tolerate or dismiss sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”;
- challenge behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts;
- understand that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the academy, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language.

We recognise children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children.

These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.
- any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will involve liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and the Individual Needs Co-ordinator.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans or questioning (LGBTQ) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBTQ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ. Our sites will be a safe space for children to speak to, or share concerns, with staff.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

## **Appropriate Management**

Any response should:

- include a thorough investigation of the concern(s) or allegation(s), and the wider context in which it/they may have occurred: depending on the nature and seriousness of the alleged incident(s), it may be appropriate for the police and/or children’s social care to carry out this investigation
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk; while the alleged perpetrator may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves.

R.E.A.L. should ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for victims and the alleged perpetrator, and additional sanctioning work may be required for the latter.



R.E.A.L. should consider:

- that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved, and consider and address the effect of wider sociocultural contexts – such as the child’s/children’s peer group (both in and outside R.E.A.L.); family; the learning environment; their experience of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child/children’s online presence. Consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address the child/ children’s needs and to mitigate risk;
- the potential complexity of child-on-child abuse and of children’s experiences, and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent. While children may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited they are not consenting;
- the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so (for example, where a referral needs to be made immediately), the DSL should discuss the proposed action with the child/children and their parents, and obtain consent to any referral before it is made.

Child-on-child abuse that involves sexual assault and sexual violence must always result in a multi-agency response. As well as supporting and protecting the victim, professionals need to consider whether the alleged perpetrator could be a victim of abuse too. Children who develop harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and neglect themselves.

Children affected by sexual assault and sexual violence must receive the help they need. A typical response will involve:

- Children’s social care
- The police
- Specialist services that support children who demonstrate harmful sexual behaviour
- The family
- Any other professionals who know or who have had contact with the child.

If the children are in the same class, then they should be separated while the concerns are being investigated. In situations of alleged rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must always be removed from classes they share with the victim. R.E.A.L. should consider how best to keep the alleged perpetrator and victim apart while they are on the same premises, as well as on transport to and from their place of learning. Separation arrangements must be continued for as long as is necessary to make sure children are safe. This includes beyond the investigation even if it is inconclusive. Lack of conviction is not the same as the allegation being unfounded.

R.E.A.L. Education will always carry out a safety plan in respect of:

- any child who is alleged to have behaved in a way that is considered to be abusive or violent;



- any child who has reportedly been abused or affected by the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child, or any child who may be at risk due to the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child as deemed appropriate by the DSL.

Where it is alleged that a child has behaved in a way that is considered to be inappropriate or problematic (as opposed to abusive or violent), the DSL will use their professional judgement – based on the particular concern and/or allegation raised, and the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question – to determine whether it would be appropriate to contact children’s social care, and to carry out a safety plan.

Where other children have been identified as witnesses to alleged abuse or violence, consideration should also be given by the DSL to whether there might be any risks to those children, and whether a safety plan would be appropriate in relation to any risks presenting to them.

R.E.A.L. Education should consider what action may be appropriate for any child/children involved. However, if there are police proceedings underway, or there could be, it is critical that R.E.A.L. Education works in partnership with the police and/or children’s social care.

Where a matter is not of interest to the police and/or children’s social care, then R.E.A.L. may still need to consider what is the most appropriate action to take to ensure positive behaviour management.

### **5.11 Physical Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force**

All staff are encouraged to use de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the child. Restraint will only be used as a last resort and all incidents of this are reviewed, recorded and monitored. Reasonable force will be used in accordance with government guidance and the Behaviour Policy.

### **5.12 Alternative Provision**

We will obtain written confirmation from any alternative provision that all relevant checks have been carried out as we would with our own staff. We will share any risk assessments and safeguarding issues where relevant and will regularly visit the provision and our learners. We will ensure they have effective safeguarding in place and keep the DSL appropriately informed. A robust quality assurance process is in place and we uphold our responsibility for any learners accessing this type of provision.



### 5.13 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. (\*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.) We will notify the Local Authority if it becomes aware of such arrangements to allow the Local Authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

### 5.14 Domestic Abuse

The definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

R.E.A.L. Education will work with the Police through Operation Encompass to provide emotional and practical help to children. Through this scheme the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day if they have been called to an incident of domestic violence. This ensures that we have up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can give support to be given to the child.

### 5.15 Forced Marriage

Since February 2023 it has been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

### 5.16 Learners Absconding from Education

If a learner is suspected of leaving a R.E.A.L. Learning Hub or community venue without permission:



- The member of staff will alert the relevant Learning Manager. If the Learning Manager is not available then the central office so they are able to inform the relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- If the child appears to be missing but there is no evidence that he/she has left the site, a quick, but thorough search of the site should be conducted. If at a community venue, inform the relevant manager to ensure all areas have been checked.
- If there is no doubt that the child has absconded, the Learning Manager, or DSL will contact the child's parent/carer/home to inform them. If they have the child's mobile they will attempt to contact them to find out where they are. If this is not successful a decision will be made about phoning the police. It is the responsibility of the last person who saw the child to phone the police. The DSL, or Learning Manager will give the staff member advice and support with this if required.
- The Learning Manager, or DSL should then inform the relevant commissioner for the child and inform them of the procedures being followed. Other professionals involved in the care of the child should be informed of the incident if applicable.
- Staff to follow the child (if safe to do so, or they are in sight) at a safe distance and to keep the Learning Manager or DSL informed. Where possible, the member of staff following should remain in contact with the Learning Manager or DSL, via a mobile phone. If appropriate further staff can be allocated to go and collect the learner and return them to a safe and agreed location. Staff should not run after the child as this can cause their anxiety levels to rise and may result in a more dangerous situation.
- If relevant and with agreement from the Learning Manager or DSL, staff to support further searches of known places the learner would visit.
- It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and the Learning Manager and/or DSL should:
  - Review the incident with the child, parent/carers and other professionals (where relevant).
  - Record and identify hazards and controls required to keep the learner safe in their individual risk assessment.
  - Log on CPOMS using the significant incident form.
  - Keep all colleagues informed of any changes to the risk assessment





## 6. Appendices

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APPENDIX A :Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

APPENDIX B: Actions where there are concerns about a child (flowchart)

APPENDIX C: Allegations against R.E.A.L. staff including supply staff and volunteers

APPENDIX D: Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

APPENDIX E: Child Criminal and/or Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy

APPENDIX F: So-called Honour Based Abuse

APPENDIX G: Children Missing from Education

APPENDIX H: Youth Produced Imagery

APPENDIX I: Online Safety



**APPENDIX A: Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form**

**Safeguarding Concern Form**

<b>Name of child:</b>	<b>Date of Birth:</b>
<b>Date and time of concern:</b>	<b>Date and time of writing concern:</b>
<b>Concern identified by:</b>	<b>Role/Position:</b>

<b>Note the reason(s) for recording the incident.</b>

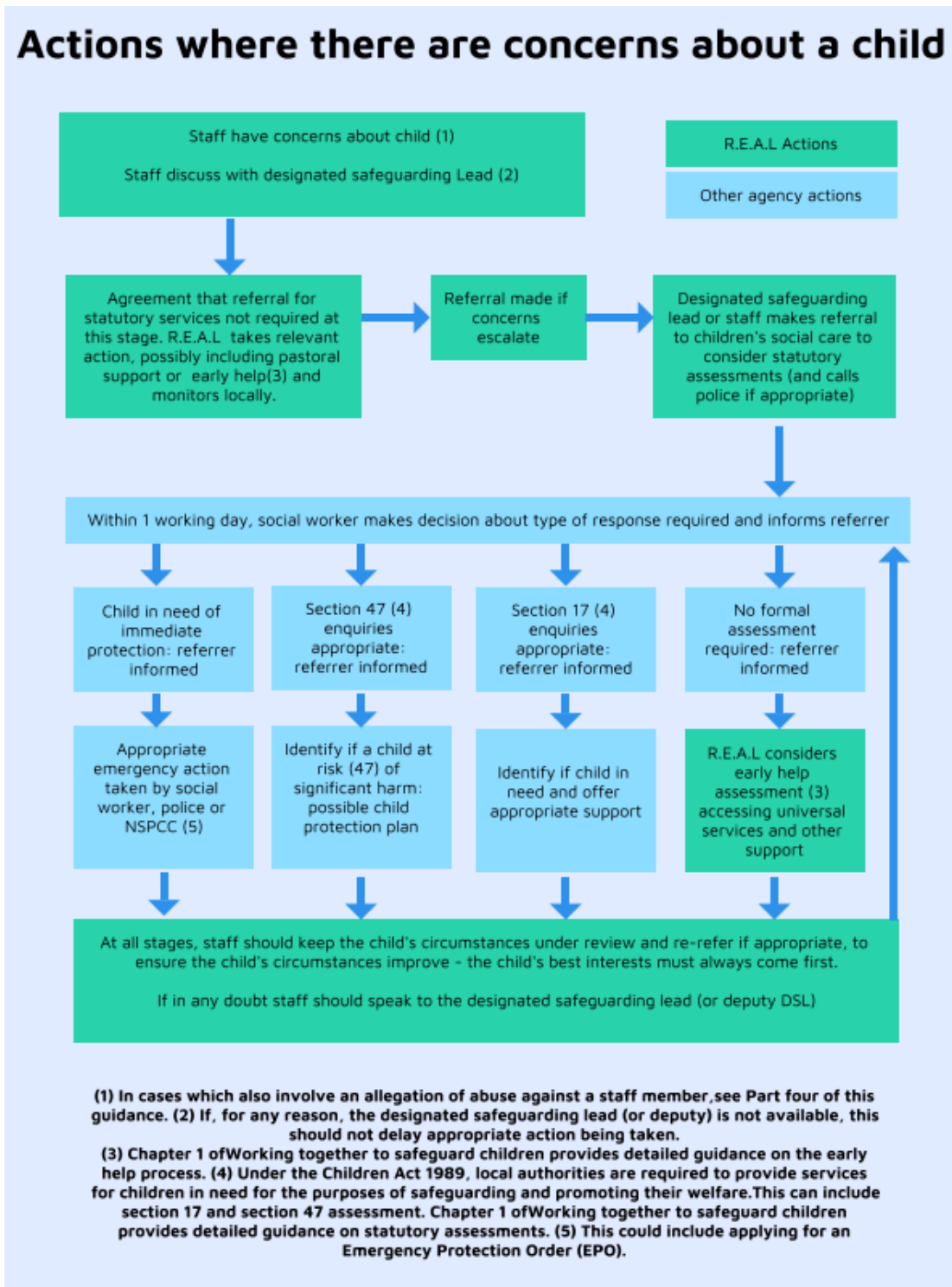
<b>Record the following factually: Who? What (if recording a verbal disclosure by a child use their words)? Where? When (date and time of incident)? Any witnesses?</b>

<b>Professional opinion where relevant (how and why might this have happened?)</b>

<b>Note actions, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed.</b>

<b>Action to be taken/recommendations from Designated Safeguarding Officer.</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>

**APPENDIX B: Actions where there are concerns about a child (flowchart)**



**Appendix C: Allegations against R.E.A.L. staff including supply staff and volunteers**

**ALLEGATIONS AGAINST R.E.A.L. STAFF, INC SUPPLY STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

If you become aware that a member of staff may have:

- behaved in a way that may have harmed a child or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

**The child and/or alleged abuser SHOULD NOT be questioned but a record made of what has been reported**

Report immediately to the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead who, unless there is evidence to prove the allegation is correct, will:

**Report to your LADO  
(Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations)**

**Take advice from Human Resources**

If the DfE procedures are **NOT** to be followed the LADO will agree with you an appropriate response (e.g. the school to undertake enquiries)

If the DfE Procedures **ARE** to be followed, a strategy meeting will normally be held by phone or in person. Normally the Head Teacher, the LADO, HR and often Police are invited. Information is shared, risks to children considered and appropriate action agreed - e.g. S47 Children Act enquiries, school enquiries, disciplinary measures or (unusually) criminal proceedings. A record of the meeting will be made and further meetings held every 4 weeks until a conclusion is agreed

**Your LADO will:**

1. Consider the relevant facts and concerns re the adult and child/ren, including any previous history
2. Decide on next course of action, usually straight away, sometimes after consultation with others such as HR



## Appendix D: Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

Children are susceptible to being drawn to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is part of our safeguarding responsibility.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **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.

There are now duties imposed on schools and other agencies in relation to the DfE guidance The Prevent Duty (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>). The prevent duty is now incorporated into our existing policies. Further advice in relation to this is within Keeping Children Safe In Education in relation to:

- **Risk assessment**
- **Working in partnership**
- **Staff training**
- **IT policies**
- **Building children's resilience to radicalisation**

Where we are concerned about individual children we will follow the referral pathway defined. The essence of our policy, however, is that we seek to protect children and young people from being drawn into, and against, the messages of all violent extremism. This includes and is not restricted to ISIL, AQ, Far Right, Neo Nazi, White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

The use of social media and the internet as tools to radicalise young people cannot be underestimated. We recognise that those that seek to recruit young people to follow extremist ideology often target those who are already vulnerable in some way and that exposure to extreme views can make young people vulnerable to further manipulation and exploitation.

As an organisation we are clear that we have a duty to safeguard young people from such dangers and we will actively promote resilience to such risks through our Personal, Social, Health and Relationships Education curriculum, assemblies and our SMSC, anti-bullying work and our Online Safety Policy.



## Appendix E: Child Criminal and/or Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy

R.E.A.L. Education adheres to the relevant Safeguarding Partnership's procedure in relation to child criminal and/or sexual exploitation.

This is our policy to summarise our position. We recognise that child criminal and/or sexual exploitation is a high profile issue both nationally and locally. 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.

We recognise that child criminal and/or sexual exploitation can cause a great deal of harm to a child, including physically, emotionally, educationally and socially. Where it exists it can also cause harm to communities and academies.

### Child Criminal Exploitation Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)



Child sexual exploitation can happen in a number of ways to both boys and girls, for example it can happen in the virtual world through various social media and this can still cause significant harm. It can happen through inappropriate relationships such as older boy/girlfriends or through parties, gangs or organised abuse.

Some children will be particularly vulnerable to being exploited, for example if they have had a chaotic upbringing or if they are in care or go missing, involved in gangs or being bullied. We recognise however that any child can become a target for exploitation, particularly where the internet and social media are involved. This is because the normal life events that go with being a child or teenager in today's age can be a challenge and make them susceptible to being groomed and exploited.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of CSE:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

As an organisation we recognise that prevention is the best position with regard to CCE/CSE. We seek to support children to develop confidence and build resilience. We will endeavour to support their age appropriate knowledge and raise awareness and understanding of what CCE/CSE is, to understand the risks of CCE/CSE and to spot the warning signs for themselves and also their friends and peers and by doing so keep safe.

If prevention is not possible we aim to identify children who are at risk of, or being exploited very early. Early intervention is key to effectively working with the child to prevent or reduce the level of risk. Once they have been groomed some children will find it difficult to withdraw from their abusers and we need to contribute to helping to protect them. Some children feel that they are in a relationship with these people. We commit to working with our inter-agency partners to safeguard and protect children.

Much of this work will be through our programmes of personal, social and health education (PSHE) or through our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) work. An important part of educating our children is focussing on what is a healthy relationship and issues of consent. This will also target potential abusers at an early age with the intention of helping to shape their attitudes to others.

We want to have a culture where the welfare of children is actively promoted and staff and learners are vigilant. As part of this children will feel listened to and safe.



### County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism will be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral will be undertaken by the DSL/DDSL alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.





## Appendix F: So-called ‘Honour-based’ Abuse

So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses 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. All forms of so-called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubts you should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV they should follow the normal reporting procedures protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children’s social care.

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Where FGM has taken place there is now a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining learners, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still discuss any such case with the academy’s designated safeguarding lead and involve children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

### Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage 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. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example).



Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

#### Breast-ironing

Breast Ironing is practised in some African countries, notably Cameroon. Girls aged between 9 and 15 have hot pestles, stones or other implements rubbed on their developing breast to stop them growing further. In the vast majority of cases breast ironing is carried out by mothers or grandmothers and the men in the family are unaware. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has updated the So-Called Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage guidance to recognise breast-ironing as child abuse. CPS legal guidance makes clear to police and prosecutors that breast-ironing is a crime even if it is said that the victim has consented.

Further information is available in the following documents: Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation and Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance: Handling cases of forced marriage.



## Appendix G: Children Absent from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child being absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow the normal R.E.A.L. procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and attendance. All learners must be placed on both registers. R.E.A.L. Education must inform their local authority of any learner who is going to be removed from the admission register where the learner:

- has been taken out of R.E.A.L. by their parents and written notification has been received from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has been certified by the a medical official as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend education before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend education after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to education at the end of that period;

The local authority must be notified when R.E.A.L. Education is removing a learner from its register for any of the grounds above.



## Appendix H: Youth Produced Sexual Imagery

Youth produced sexual imagery is the definition R.E.A.L. Education uses for the activities usually known as sexting. These activities for the purpose of this advice is simply defined as images or videos generated:

by children under the age of 18, or of children under the age of 18 that are of a sexual nature or are indecent.

These images are shared between young people and/or adults via a mobile phone, handheld device or website with people they may not even know. There are many different types of sexting and it is likely that no two cases will be the same. It is necessary to carefully consider each case on its own merit. It is important to apply a consistent approach when dealing with an incident to help protect yourself, the school and the child. The range of contributory factors in each case also needs to be considered in order to determine an appropriate and proportionate response. All staff should be familiar with this policy.

Dealing with Incidents:

### **STEP 1: Disclosure by a child**

A disclosure should follow normal safeguarding practices. A child is likely to be very distressed, especially if the image has been circulated widely and if they don't know who has shared it, seen it or where it has ended up. They will need support during the disclosure and after the event. They may even need immediate protection or a referral to Social Care.

The following questions will help decide upon the best course of action:

- Is the child disclosing about themselves receiving an image, sending an image or sharing an image?
- What sort of image is it?
- Is it potentially illegal or is it inappropriate?
- Are the Safeguarding Policy and practices being followed? For example, is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on hand and is their advice and support available?
- How widely has the image been shared and is the device in their possession?
- What device is it on?
- Does the child need immediate support and/or protection?
- Are there other children and/or young people involved?
- Do they know where the image has ended up?

The situation will need to be handled very sensitively to ensure our Safeguarding and On-line Safety policies and practices are adhered to.

### **STEP 2: Searching a device**



In a R.E.A.L. site-based context, it is highly likely that the image will have been created and potentially shared through mobile devices. It may be that the image is not on one single device: it may be on a website or on a multitude of devices. It is important to establish the location of the image but be aware that this may be distressing for the young person involved, so be conscious of the support they may need.

The revised Education Act 2011 brought significant new powers and freedoms for teachers and schools. Essentially, the Act gives schools and/or teachers the power to seize and search an electronic device if they think there is good reason for doing so. A device can be examined, confiscated and securely stored if there is reason to believe it contains indecent images or extreme pornography.

- When searching a mobile device, the following conditions should apply:
- The action is in accordance with the academy's Safeguarding and On-line Safety policies
- The search is conducted by the Head of Schools or a person authorised by them
- The DSL or a deputy is present
- The search is conducted by a member of the same sex
- If any illegal images of a child are found, you should consider whether to inform the police. Any conduct involving, or possibly involving, the knowledge or participation of adults should always be referred to the police.
- If an "experimental" incident is not referred to the police, the reasons for this should be recorded in writing. Always put the child first.
- Do not search the device if this will cause additional stress to the child/person whose image has been distributed.

Never:

- Search a mobile device even in response to an allegation or disclosure if this is likely to cause additional stress to the child UNLESS there is clear evidence to suggest that there is an immediate problem
- Print out any material for evidence
- Move any material from one storage device to another
- View the image unless there is a clear reason to do so (see above) Send, share, copy or save the image anywhere
- Allow children to do any of the above

Always:

- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Record the incident
- Act in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and procedures
- Inform relevant colleagues/senior management team about the alleged incident before searching a device
- Confiscate and secure the device



#### When to refer to the Police

- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.
- If there is an indecent image of a child on a website or a social networking site, then you should report the image to the Police and the site hosting it.
- The sharing of sexual imagery of people under 18 by adults as this constitutes child sexual abuse and should always be reported to the police.
- Any incidents with aggravating factors, for example, a young person sharing someone else's imagery without consent and with malicious intent, should generally be referred to police and/or children's social care.
- Young people under the age of 18 sharing adult pornography or exchanging sexual texts which don't contain imagery.



## Appendix I: Online Safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

R.E.A.L. Education has in place an Online Safety Policy that allows the protection and education of the learner community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate. There is also a strict no mobile phone policy in place.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

**content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;

**contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and

**conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

Our online safety measures include:

- appropriate filters in place;
- monitoring online usage in school
- mobile phones cannot be used whilst learning
- staff training

Where children are asked to learn online at home we follow the Department for Education's advice including: [safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers](#) and [safeguarding-and-remote-education](#) (add link)

### Safeguarding Protocols for Online Teaching

1. Always follow the protocols within the Online Safety Policy
2. Only communicate with learners using Google Meet
3. Keep communication with learners restricted to normal working hours
4. If any contact or work causes safeguarding concerns, you should report these in to the DSL
5. Do not arrange to meet/tutor individuals or small groups of learners
6. Ensure you have a clear background with no unwanted imagery
7. All participants must be aware when lessons are recorded
8. You should not use Facetime, Skype, or similar to provide support for learners
9. Ensure you will not be interrupted by other family members. Language must be professional and appropriate, including any other adults or children in the vicinity



10. Ensure the camera angle is straight ahead, stable and focused on head and shoulders
11. Wear suitable clothing - remember you are visible at all times
12. Address learners by their name and always sign off all communication with your professional title.