

# **WEST END STAGE SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

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## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by West End Stage on an annual basis.  
Policy reviewed and agreed by West End Stage in July 2023  
Due for review in July 2024.



## **1. Policy Statement**

West End Stage (herein referred to as 'WES') has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children and young people with whom it interacts. Children and young people occupy a central place within WES and our work. We strongly believe that all children and young people have the right to be treated fairly, justly and have the right to freedom from abuse and harm. This policy details the legal requirements, organisational procedures, and best practice as applicable to all staff. This policy applies to all WES staff, including those who work on a freelance basis. Our policy ensures that all our staff are carefully selected and vetted, have the relevant qualifications and experience, and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children and young people in their care. We aim to offer comprehensive advice to WES staff members with regards to legal requirements and good practice. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. We have procedures in place to address poor practice, and to help any child/young person who appears to be at risk, or who appears to be a victim of abuse. We will offer help and support when a child/young person tells us that they are affected by these issues. The terms "child", "children", are used to refer to anyone under the age of 18. The terms "young person", "young people" are used to refer to any WES participant aged 18 or over. We will not tolerate bullying. Incidents of bullying will be investigated and treated seriously. Action will be taken to stop the bullying.

### **The purpose of this policy:**

- To protect children and young people who attend WES.
- To provide staff with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

**Everyone at WES has a responsibility for Safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children, young people and 'individuals at risk' (including 'adults at risk').**

### **1.1. Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up based on law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people, namely:

- Children's Act 1989
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children's Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children's and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational need and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support



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children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities: HM Government 2014

- Care Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children and young people; HM Government 2015
- Working together to safeguard children; a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: HM Government 2015
- The Child (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2018

### **1.3 We recognise that:**

- The welfare of the Child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children's Act 1989
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have an equal right to protection from all types of harm and abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young peoples' welfare

### **1.4 We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- Valuing them, listening to them and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- Recruiting staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies that need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage allegations against staff appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that occurs



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- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people and staff, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Inform each child who the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems or concerns
- Recognise the individual needs of the child e.g. recognising when a child may be tired and need a break

### **1.5 Equality Statement**

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm of abuse. Staff need to have a high level of awareness with children who have ALN and promote a culture where children are able to make their wishes and feelings known in respect of their care and treatment.

### **1.6 Confidentiality Statement**

WES recognises that all matters relating to child protection and safeguarding are confidential, however there is a balance between child protection and the right to privacy. The Safeguarding Lead will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only. Staff must understand that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets, which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

## **2. Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

The **CEO and Principal of WES** is: **Mark Puddle**

The **Designated Safeguarding Officer** is: **Clare Waller, Course Manager**

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) leads upon policy development, implementation and reporting, including:

- Reviewing and updating the organisation's safeguarding policy on an annual basis or when necessary
- Leading upon contact with Local Authority Social Services in the event that a child/young person is at risk of harm
- Managing complaints about poor practice and allegations against staff
- Collecting monitoring data on all safeguarding activities across the organisation
- Ensuring safer recruitment procedure and promoting safeguarding across the organisation
- Acting as a "front-line" point of contact for any persons concerned about the welfare of a child/young person
- Contributing to the review and update of the safeguarding policy and procedures



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- Providing guidance to staff concerned about a child protection issue
- Keeping accurate records of concerns about children and young people and actions taken
- Ensuring that policy and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people from harm, including:

- Being vigilant of the signs that may indicate a child/young person is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm
- Reporting any disclosures or concerns, as soon as possible, to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- When taking a disclosure from a child/young person remembering not to ask any leading questions
- Demonstrating model behaviour when working with children and/or 'individuals at risk' including 'adults at risk'.

Staff responsibilities will be detailed in all employment contracts.

The nearest MASH team (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) is located at The Medical Centre, 7e Woodfield Road, London, W9 3XZ

### **3. Recruitment and Selection of Staff**

Safe recruitment and selection practice is vital in safeguarding and protecting children and young people. WES recognises and takes seriously its responsibility to adopt practice which minimises risk to the children and young people by ensuring that measures are in place through this practice to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children and young people or who are unsuitable to work with them. The safety and well-being of children and young people is kept in mind at all times throughout the recruitment and selection process. WES will ensure that:

- Appropriate checks are carried out on new staff/volunteers
- The safety of children and young people is explicitly stated in job descriptions and person specifications
- WES carries out enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for relevant roles
- WES has an open door policy, this means at any time a full time member of staff may enter space to observe a teaching session. This offers transparency and an opportunity to feedback and reflect on good practice.
- WES will ensure that permanent and freelance staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people.



#### **4. Code of Conduct: offline and online**

All staff are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour when working with children and/or adults and this code of conduct sets out clearly the expectations of WES with respect to this. The purpose of the code is not to stifle creativity or prevent building rapport and good working relationships rather it's to clarify expectations and avoid the possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpretations of behaviour. By following this code of behaviour staff will be promoting the welfare of the children and adults with whom they work and will be preserving both their own professional reputation and that of the company.

##### **4.1 Permitted behaviours**

- Always work in an open environment wherever possible
- Treat all children and adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of each child, young person or adult first, before achieving goals
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Report any incidents or concerns that cause them to believe that a child or an adult is at risk, or is likely to be at risk of significant harm in line with our safeguarding procedures and this includes any safeguarding allegations against any colleagues too
- Co-operate with any vetting and recruitment requirements appropriate to your role and responsibilities

##### **4.2 Non-permissible behaviours**

The following behaviours are not allowed (and in some instances, may be unlawful) for any person to:

- Use their position to intimidate, bully, threaten, injure, discriminate against, coerce or undermine any child or adult
- Allow bullying between participants to be tolerated
- Use their status or position to form or promote relationships with any child or adult participants either face to face or online, which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so
- Make sexually suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures to, or in the presence of a child or adult participants
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow children or adults to use inappropriate language without discussion about it
- Encourage or assist others to break the law in any way
- Smoke/vape, drink alcohol or take drugs in the company of children or adult participants
- Invite a child or adult participant that you have met through your employment, performance or teaching into your home



- Engage in, or attempt to engage in a sexual or inappropriate relationship with child or adult participants
- Possess indecent images of children or unauthorised images of participants
- Put yourself in a position where you are alone with children or adults at risk away from organisational premises, such as taking them out on trips unaccompanied by other adults or transporting them alone, unless the reason for this is part of a work plan authorised by the Principal and with the consent of parents/carers where required
- Breach confidentiality or seek information to which you have no right of access
- Reduce a child or adult participant to tears as a form of control
- Give out personal contact details, including social networking sites and accounts, to participants
- Change clothes in a public area or enter a room where children may be changing their clothes

### **4.3 Appropriate physical contact**

Staff members must be aware of issues related to touching and the ways in which this might be misconstrued. This relates particularly to any sensitive areas of the body. There are times when it is inevitable and/or appropriate for staff to have physical contact with a pupil/student, for example to make physical corrections, but it is crucial that they do so in an appropriate and professional way.

- Only use touch when it is necessary in relation to the activity. Demonstration is far safer to do and avoids any misunderstanding
- Explain and then seek the agreement of the child or adult participant prior to initiating any physical contact with them if it is necessary during teaching or other activities
- Ensure disabled participants are informed of and comfortable with any necessary physical contact to support their full participation and learning
- If participants initiate touch themselves, such as a hug, then manage this carefully so that your own position is not compromised.
- Staff members may legitimately physically intervene to maintain a student's safety or prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or causing damage to property.

### **4.4 Abuse of a position of trust**

When working with children and adults on behalf of WES, staff and freelancers are acting in a position of trust. Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise because of this relationship.





Young people of 16 or 17 can legally consent to sexual activity but they may still be relatively immature emotionally. It is essential that those who may be in a position of trust recognise this vulnerability and ensure it is not exploited.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a young person under 18, it is an offence in certain circumstances for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that young person, or to cause or incite that young person to engage in or watch sexual activity even if the young person appears to consent. Therefore, given this principle, WES expects:

- Any behaviour, which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the child or adult participants, must be avoided.
- Any sexual relationship within a position of trust relationship is not permitted so long as the relationship of trust continues.

### **4.5 Relationships between adults**

If a member of staff or freelancer intends to have a romantic as opposed to professional relationship with an adult participant (i.e. aged 18 or over) then they must inform the DSO to determine and agree how to manage that situation for all parties concerned. WES will not permit a personal relationship between someone teaching or chaperoning an adult participant and in such circumstances alternative arrangements must be made.

### **4.6 Communicating with child or adult participants**

The following sections of the code of conduct are about expected behaviour when communicating with children and adults by phones, mobile devices, email, social media and apps:

#### **4.6.1 Phone Contact**

Teaching staff:

- Teaching staff should in no circumstances make or receive calls or texts to or from children and young people using their personal mobile phone numbers.

Chaperones:

- Due to the nature of the job of chaperoning students at WES, Chaperones are permitted to send and receive texts and calls from children and young people using their personal mobile phones.
- Students should only be contacted in relation to WES related activities and during the time that they are residential students at WES.
- Chaperones should delete all contact details for students as soon as they have left their care.
- Should a student contact a chaperone after they have left their care, the chaperone should politely and appropriately end the communication.





#### **4.6.2 Social Media Contact**

WES staff, permanent or freelance, must not do any of the following on their personal social media accounts:

- Send or accept any friend requests from WES members on Facebook
- Request to follow WES members on other social media platforms
- Send or respond to any private messages from a WES Student on social media

WES does not expect its staff to protect their personal Twitter/ social media accounts (thereby making sure their tweets/content is only visible to followers approved by the account holder) however it does ask all staff to respect their association with the organisation when posting on open social media sites.

#### **4.6.3 E-safety code of conduct - communication with children via all mobile devices, on social media and apps**

The term e- safety is defined here as the process of limiting the risks to children, our staff/freelancers when communicating via the internet, digital and mobile devices and using social media. Social media includes blogs, Wikis, online communities, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

There is a wide range of ways with which to communicate with children and this is a rapidly changing environment as new technologies, applications and social media sites merge. No code of conduct for e-safety can cover these separately. However, there are broad behaviours that we expect all staff to adhere to safeguard children and adults and themselves in respect of using all these forms of media, devices, apps and social networking sites:

#### **4.6.4 Content**

- When communicating with child or adult participants online you should observe the same rules of behaviour as if speaking with them in person that is by being professional - polite, respectful, not swearing or saying anything (using the written word, images or icons) that could be regarded as sexual innuendo, bullying or discrimination.
- Ask yourself whether the content of the message could be misunderstood or misinterpreted by someone else.
- Don't use any text speak abbreviations or symbols/emoticons even if you ordinarily use these in your personal life. The exception to this is when working with those with educational needs (SEND) where symbols are a normal part of their communication mode.
- Never disclose non-public and confidential information about WES and its staff/freelancers or the people with whom we are working.
- Do not say anything or re-tweet any posts that could be deemed offensive, controversial, bullying or socially inappropriate in any way.
- Contact with children and adult's participants online should only be for WES purposes only.



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- Do not send any illegal or inappropriate content (written, images or icons) including sexting which is illegal.
- Do not use social media to view or distribute indecent images of children. Taking, making, sharing and possessing indecent images and pseudo photographs of people under 18 is illegal.

### **4.6.5 Openness and scrutiny**

- Always communicate with children and adult participants in a way that is open to others to see if necessary.
- Do not use private messaging facilities on social networks or apps rather if it needs to be private then do this by email exchange or phone and note the conversation afterwards.
- Ensure there is always a record of such conversations that would be open to others to check if necessary.
- It should always be clear who the communication is from when x is communicating with a participant.
- There should be no use of anonymous apps – that is where the sender can remain anonymous.

### **4.6.6 Recording**

Only use social media and apps where there is a permanent record of what's been said and sent thereby being open to scrutiny e.g. the use of Snapchat is not appropriate. Do not use any personal devices to take pictures or film child or adult participants.

### **4.7 Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

If anyone has concerns that someone is breaching the code of behaviour then she/he/they should contact either the principal or DSO. That person will then determine the necessary course of action according to the seriousness of the breach.

**Any breaches of the code of conduct will be taken seriously and acted upon as necessary. In some instances, this may result in disciplinary action or the initiation of the safeguarding allegation process.**

WES wants everyone to feel confident about coming forward if they do have concerns about breaches. Hierarchy, status or prestige of the person who has breached the code must not prevent this from happening.

## **5. Photography and Video Recording**

- Parental/guardian consent for photography or video recording of any child is given when booking a place.
- Photographs and videos of children and young people will be stored in a designated folder that is only accessible by designated WES staff.



- Any camera owned by WES and used by staff for the purpose of photographing children and young people engaged in WES activity must have its memory wiped as soon as content has been transferred to the designated WES folder.
- WES will ensure that any professional photographers or video-makers contracted by WES to make photos/videos of children under the age of 16 and vulnerable adults have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which is dated within the last 3 years, inclusive of their period of engagement.
- WES will announce at all performances that “Video and photography is not permitted during the performance”.

### **6. Residential and Overnight Activity**

Many WES students take part in our summer school on a residential basis and consequently stay within the care of WES overnight. In such circumstances, WES will ensure that the following considerations are made:

- Staff members over the age of 18 will sleep in separate but nearby quarters.
- Where bathroom or toilet facilities are shared, children and young people will be placed in accommodation of the same gender (where appropriate).
- Whilst residing in our accommodation, all students will be assigned to a Chaperone, who will be responsible for that student for the duration of the course.
- Should a student have any concerns or worries, they will be able to discuss these with their Chaperone.
- Chaperones are on site 24 hours a day and will provide their students with a mobile number, which can be used 24 hours a day.
- Although it is not mandatory, we highly recommend students provide their Chaperones with a contact number so that they can be contacted in the case of an emergency.
- No student must enter any flat that is not their own.
- There is strictly no smoking, consumption of alcohol or the use of drugs by any students, regardless of age, on site
- All students must be back in their own flats by 10pm each night
- No student may take prescription drugs without the clear written permission of their parents provided at the beginning of the week

### **7. First Aid**

- If administering first aid that requires physical contact, a member of staff will (except in an emergency or should the student be unresponsive) ask the permission of the student before initiating any treatment.
- Where possible all first aid treatment will take place in the presence of another member of staff.

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- There will be always be at least two first aid trained members of staff on site
- All first aid incidents will be logged in the 'First Aid Book'. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that all medical treatment and medication is logged in the 'First Aid Book'.
- All staff will be vigilant and take into consideration the medical needs or treatment mentioned by the purchaser upon booking a place (provided in the application form)
- The First Aid Station will be clearly signed in the main foyer of the all buildings at the summer school
- It is the responsibility of WES to inform a student's parent or guardian if the student is taken ill while at WES.

### **7.1 Minor Accident, Illness or Incident or Emergency**

- A first aider will make an appropriate decision on any action or non-action required. If the child does not need hospital treatment the child will be treated at WES, returned to classes but be kept under supervision for the remainder of the session.
- If the injury/illness is such that first aid treatment seems inappropriate but the condition does not warrant hospitalisation, the parent/carer will be contacted immediately and asked to collect their child. Until they arrive, the child will be kept under supervision and as comfortable as possible.

### **7.2 Major Accident, Illness or Incident Emergency**

- A first aider will make an appropriate decision on any action or non-action required. He/she/they will assess whether the child needs to go straight to hospital
- If the child needs to go to hospital, an ambulance will be called and the parent/carer will be contacted. A member of staff will accompany the child to hospital
- If the child does not need to go to hospital but needs to go home the parent/carer will be contacted to collect their child (or they may return to accommodation if a residential student).

## **8. Anti Bullying Policy**

- All students attending WES must adhere to our Anti Bullying Policy.
- Staff must respond to any incident of bullying as outlined in the WES Anti Bullying Policy.

## **9. Lost or Missing Children**

Even when all precautions are properly observed, emergencies can still arise. Therefore, staff will undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition



points between sessions. If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts, the following procedure will be activated:

- The member of staff in question will inform both the principal and the rest of the staff team that the child is missing and a thorough search of the entire premises will commence. Staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- The Principal will nominate a member of staff to search the area surrounding the premises. All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the premises.
- If after 15 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the Principal will inform the police and then the child's parent/carer.
- While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children.
- The Principal will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Principal will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all she/he can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.

### **10. Identifying & Responding to Concerns About a Child/Young Person**

At times WES staff may have to respond to concerns about the welfare of children and young people. This could relate to the actual or alleged harm of a child/young person. Alternatively a child/young person we are working with may disclose abuse directly to you. This section provides information and guidelines on our procedures in these situations.

#### **10.1 Identifying Types & Indicators of Abuse**

In order to effectively protect children and young people against harm all staff should be familiar with the various types and key signs of abuse. The Government's Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) details four key types of abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

All staff are required to acquaint themselves with indicators of abuse (please see appendix 1).

#### **10.2 Radicalisation**

WES recognises the positive contribution it can make towards protecting children and young people from radicalisation to violent extremism. Radicalisation is the process by which individuals come to support terrorism or



violent extremism. There is no typical profile for a person likely to become involved in extremism, or for a person who moves to adopt violence in support of their particular ideology. Although a number of possible behavioural indicators are listed below, staff should use their professional judgement and discuss with other colleagues if they have any concerns:

- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession of violent extremist literature including electronic material accessed via the internet and communication such as e-mail and text messages
- Behavioural changes
- The expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

If staff have any significant concerns about a child/young person beginning to support terrorism and/or violent extremism, they should discuss this with the DSO immediately.

### **10.3 Female Genital Mutilation**

It is illegal in the UK to subject a child to female genital mutilation (FGM) or to take a child abroad or aid or abet someone to take a child out of the country to undergo the procedure – Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Despite the harm it causes, FGM practising communities consider it acceptable to protect their cultural identity. The age at which girls are subject to FGM varies greatly from shortly after birth to any time up to adulthood. The average age is thought to be 6 - 12 years but it is also thought that the age at which girls are mutilated is dropping.

Staff should be alert to the following indicators:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practise FGM
- A child/young person may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
- A child/young person may confide that they or a sister or family member is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion
- A child/young person may request help from a teacher or another adult
- Any girl/young person born to a woman who has suffered FGM or has a sister or relative who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at potential risk

Any information or concern about a child/young person or member of their family being at risk of FGM must be reported to the DSO as a matter of urgency. This may be treated as an immediate child protection referral to the child/young person's home borough.



### **10.4 Hearing a Disclosure**

If a child/young person says or indicates that they are being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child/young person is being abused, you should follow the below guidance:

#### RECEIVE:

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and react calmly so as not to frighten the child/young person
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as possible

#### REASSURE:

- Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Tell the child/young person they are not to blame and that it was right to tell; I am glad you came to me
- It is important that you do not promise to keep it a secret as your professional responsibilities may require you to report the matter. If you make this promise to a child/young person and then break it, you confirm to the child/young person yet again that adults are not to be trusted

#### REACT:

- Take what the child/young person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child/young person who has a speech disability and/or differences in language
- Do not ask 'leading' questions, for example 'what did they do next?' (This assumes they did!), or 'did they touch your private parts?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and that of the child/young person) in any later prosecution in court
- Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to

#### RECORD:

- Make some brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour
- Be specific when noting the words used by the child/young person

#### REMEMBER:

- To share your concerns with the DSO who will take the matter forward

### **10.5 Reporting Allegations, Suspicions or Concerns**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at WES to decide whether or not a child/young person is being abused or might be abused. However, there is a responsibility to act on concerns to protect children and young people in order





that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child/person.

If you become aware of any issue or complaint relating to the welfare or wellbeing of children and young people then you should raise these with the DSO who will be responsible for documenting your concern. All concerns will be considered and a decision reached as to whether the concern should be referred to Social Services.

### **10.6 Making a Referral to Social Services**

If a decision is made to raise a concern with Social Services, it will be the responsibility of the DSO to formally report this concern. If, for any reason, the DSO is unable to lead on this process then the Principal will make the referral. WES will make all referrals within 24 hours of a serious concern or disclosure coming to light. When a referral is made, WES will record the name and role of the children and young people's services member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call/referral.

If a concern is allayed and a decision is made not to make a referral then WES will still be required to record details of the concern and details as to why a referral was not made. This information may become relevant later on if further concerns emerge.

## **11. Allegations of Misconduct or Abuse by Staff**

In the event of allegations being made against an employee, WES has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and employee. The following procedures will be applied when there is an allegation that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that they/he/she is unsuitable to work with children

There may be up to 3 strands in considering a concern or an allegation:

- A Police investigation of a criminal offence
- Enquiries and assessment by the Children's Services Trust to ascertain whether a child or young person needs protection or needs services
- Consideration by Principal of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

The person to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further and should:

- Treat the matter seriously
- Avoid asking leading questions and keep an open mind

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- Communicate with the child (if the complainant) in a way that is appropriate to the child's age, understanding and preferred language or communication style
- Make a written record of the information (where possible in the child's own words), including:
  - When the alleged incident took place (time and date)
  - Who was present
  - What was said to have happened
- Sign and date the written record
- Report the matter immediately to the principal or DSO in his absence or where the principal is the subject of the allegation



## **APPENDIX 1 - DEFINITIONS & SIGNS OF ABUSE**

In order to effectively protect children and young people, staff should be familiar with the key signs and indicators of abuse, which are detailed below:

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child/young person. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury.

A delay in seeking medical treatment for a child/young person when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children and young people with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

Patterns of bruising that are suggestive of physical child abuse include:

- Bruises that are seen away from bony prominences;
- Bruises to the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands;
- Multiple bruises in clusters;
- Multiple bruises of uniform shape;
- Bruises that carry the imprint of an implement;
- Cigarette burns;
- Adult bite marks;
- Scalds.

Although bruising is the commonest injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and nonaccidental fractures can occur without bruising. Any child/young person who has unexplained signs of pain or illness should be seen promptly by a doctor.

Behaviour changes can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation;
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts;
- Flinching when approached or touched;
- Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather;
- Depression; or withdrawn behaviour;
- Running away from home.

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse happens where there is a relationship between a carer and a child/young person and can manifest in the child/young person's behaviour or physical functioning. Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children, young people and vulnerable adults who appear well-cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. Emotional abuse can



also take the form of children and young people not being allowed to mix/play with other children and young people.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- Failure to thrive or grow;
- Sudden speech disorders;
- Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour, e.g., sulking, hair twisting, rocking;
- Being unable to play; or fear of making mistakes;
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour;
- Self-harm.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves the use of a child/young person for gratification or sexual arousal by a person for themselves or others. Adults who use children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to meet their own sexual needs abuse young people of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the behaviour of children/young people/vulnerable adults which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases children/young people/vulnerable adults who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas;
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas;
- Sexually transmitted disease; vaginal discharge or infection;
- Stomach pains;
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down.

The following changes in behaviour may also indicate sexual abuse:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn);
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people;
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level;
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts;
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money;
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults;
- Sexual drawings or language.

### NEGLECT

Neglect results in a child/young person suffering significant harm or impairment of development as a result of being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. Neglect can be a very difficult form of abuse to recognise.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Hunger, sometimes stealing food from others;
- Constantly dirty or smelly;
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight;
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

### HATE AND MATE CRIME

Hate crime is where a crime is committed against a person specifically because of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation. If an adult at risk is specifically targeted as a victim of crime this is a hate crime.

Mate Crime is where someone befriends an adult at risk with the intention of exploiting or abusing them. The person often believes they are their 'friend' but will go on to be abused e.g. financially, physically or psychologically.

### FORCED MARRIAGE

Forced Marriage is where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to make sure the marriage takes place. Under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Forced Marriage is now a criminal offence to force someone to marry; therefore, the Police must always be contacted as quickly as possible.

### HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE

Honour Based Violence is a crime; therefore, if it is suspected or the person discloses abuse, the Police must always be contacted as quickly as possible. Honour Based Violence (or killing) is used by people who want to defend the reputation of their family or community. It can also include enforced isolation from their community.

### FGM (FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION)

FGM involves procedures that involve total or partial removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. Predominantly carried out on young girls, it is considered child abuse and is illegal in the UK.

### BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It's usually

repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child/ young person both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. You can't always see the signs of bullying. And no one sign indicates for certain that a child's being bullied.

But you should look out for:

- belongings getting "lost" or damaged
- physical injuries such as unexplained bruises
- being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- not doing as well at school
- asking for, or stealing, money (to give to a bully)
- being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- problems with eating or sleeping
- bullying others

### GROUPS MORE VULNERABLE TO ABUSE

Certain individuals or groups of children may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect because of risk factors in their family or environment, or because of the way they are perceived by their carers.

Recognising these vulnerable groups may enable the staff team to take steps to promote and safeguard the well-being of such children and to respond appropriately to concerns.

It is important, however, not to stigmatize families because of the presence of particular risk factors; whilst the risks of maltreatment may be higher, the majority of children within these vulnerable groups are loved and cared for and do not experience abuse.

Parental factors: Young or single parents, parents with learning difficulties, those who themselves have experienced adverse childhoods and those with any mental health problems, including problems of drug or alcohol abuse, and those who live with intimate partner violence and abuse are all more at risk of abusing or neglecting their children. They may often need extra support in meeting their children's needs and may be more vulnerable to the stresses inherent in parenting.

Social factors: Families living in adverse social environments, for example due to poverty, social isolation or poor housing may also find it both materially and socially harder to care for their children. Where such issues are affecting a child's care, it may be possible to intervene to support the family at an early stage before the child suffers harm.

Child factors: Age plays an important role in the patterns of child abuse. Younger children are much more vulnerable to physical abuse and neglect, with at least 10% of all abuse involving children under the age of 1. In contrast, sexual abuse more often (though not exclusively) involves older children, particularly girls.



## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for West End Stage Summer School

Children with disabilities are much more at risk of experiencing abuse of all kinds. A wide variety of factors may contribute to that risk including sometimes greater dependence on carers, increased stresses on the carers and difficulties for the young person to communicate concerns. It is also well documented that people with disabilities face barriers when accessing health services. Attention should therefore be given to supporting the needs, including the dental needs, of children with disabilities and being alert to signs, symptoms and behavioural indicators that may indicate abuse or neglect.

