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**Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

TreeHouse Education Ltd is committed to building a ‘culture of safety’ in which all the children in our care are protected from abuse, harm and radicalization.

As required by the Equality Act 2010, we ensure that we do not discriminate on the grounds of disability (including in relation to admission) and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a child is not placed at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled children in the ways that we organise and deliver our provision

The policy has been developed in accordance in the Children’s Acts 1989 and 2004 and in line with ‘Working Together to Keep Children Safe ‘ (2018) and ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (2023)

This policy will be adjusted as necessary with new KCSIE updates in September 2024.

TreeHouse Education will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of a child that may occur. The child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children’s Board – BSCB.

TreeHouses 1st Child Protection Officer (CPO) and Prevent Duty Officer is Nicola Lacey
TreeHouses 2nd Child Protection Officer (CPO) is Emily Walford

The CPO coordinates child protection issues and liaises with external agencies (eg social care, Ofsted).

**Child Protection**

**Child abuse and neglect**

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

* **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
* **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
* **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
* **Sexual harassment,** online sexual abuse and sexual violence between children. Online abuse can include sending abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages; sharing nude and semi-nude images and videos; and coercing others to make and share sexual imager
* **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.
* **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE\*)** is a form of abuse in which young people are tricked or pressured into taking part in sexual activity in return for something which can include; attention, love, food, shelter, cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, gifts or money.
* **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE\*) *is where a child may be*** forced or manipulated into committing criminal acts which could include; shoplifting, drug transportation or committing violence to others

\*Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.”

* **Domestic Violence** - any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling (is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour), coercive, threatening behaviour (an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim), 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
	+ Emotional

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)** – a collective term for a range of procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is sometimes referred to as female circumcision, or female genital cutting. The practice is medically unnecessary, is extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out, and in later life.

**Child-on-child abuse**

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Child-on-child abuse is taken seriously by staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of child-on-child abuse:

* Sexual activity (in primary school-aged children) of any kind, including sexting
* Upskirting - upskirting is typically when a photograph is taken under a person’s clothing without them knowing, for sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
* One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other (eg much older)
* One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (eg in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength)
* There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

***Signs of child abuse and neglect***

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

* significant changes in a child's behaviour
* deterioration in a child’s general well-being
* unexplained bruising or marks
* comments made by a child which give cause for concern
* reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, eg in the child home
* inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

***If abuse is suspected or disclosed***

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

* reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
* listen to the child but not question them
* give reassurance that the staff member will take action
* record the incident as soon as possible (see *Logging an incident* below).

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the incident straightaway. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact First Response directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that the Club is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

**Extremism and radicalisation**

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, including:

* feeling alienated or alone
* seeking a sense of identity or individuality
* suffering from mental health issues such as depression
* desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause
* associating with others who hold extremist beliefs

***Signs of radicalisation***

Signs that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

* changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or aggressive
* claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified
* viewing violent extremist material online
* possessing or sharing violent extremist material

**Serious Violent Crime**

Indicators that may signal a child may be at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime include:

* Unexplained gifts/new possessions – these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs
* Increased absence
* Change in friendship/relationships with others/groups
* Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
* Signs of assault/unexplained injuries

If a member of staff suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalized or involved with serious violent crime, they will record any relevant information or observations on a **Logging a concern** form, and refer the matter to the CPO.

**Logging a concern.**

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about radicalisation, will be recorded on the **Logging a concern** form as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

* date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern
* date and time at which the record was made
* name and date of birth of the child involved
* a factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child’s own words
* name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be given to the Club’s CPO who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

For concerns about **child abuse,** the CPO will contact First Response within the Children’s Social Care. The CPO will follow up all referrals to Social Care in writing within 48 hours. If a member of staff thinks that the incident has not been dealt with properly, they may contact Social Care directly.

For minor concerns regarding **radicalisation,** the CPO will contact First Response. For more serious concerns the CPO will contact the Police on the non-emergency number (101), or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. For urgent concerns the CPO will contact the Police using 999.

**Allegations against staff**

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

* The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident record** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
* The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours and to Ofsted as soon as possible but within 14 days. The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, and the Club will act upon their advice. Any telephone reports to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
* Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
* If appropriate the Club will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

**Promoting awareness among staff**

TreeHouse Education promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training. TreeHouse Education ensures that:

* the designated CPO has relevant experience and receives appropriate training in safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, and is aware of the Channel Programme and how to access it
* designated person training is refreshed every two years.
* safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff including online searches
* all staff have a copy of this Safeguarding Children policy, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation
* all staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and concerns about radicalisation
* all staff receive basic safeguarding training
* all staff receive basic training in the Prevent Duty
* staff are familiar with the Safeguarding File which held at our registered office
* the Club’s procedures are in line with the guidance in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)’ and staff are familiar with the guidance in ‘What To Do If You’re Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015)’.
* All staff to be aware of signs and symptoms of poor mental health and act accordingly.
* All staff to be aware of avoiding ‘working alone’ with children and the procedures thereof.

**Use of mobile phones and cameras**

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents’ permission.

* When outside on the field a member of staff may carry their personal mobile phone due to signal issues and will only use this in case of an emergency and in the presence of other staff members. No personal usage at all is allowed.
* All staff to understand the importance of online safety; not sharing or taking any photos of children in their care, not using phone for personal use during work periods, not sharing personal contact details with parents or children.

**Contact numbers**

**Bucks - LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): 01296 382070.
Bucks - First Response within Children’s Social Care – MASH Team -** **01296 383 962****between 9am to 5:30pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm Friday.** **0800 999 7677****before 9am, after 5:30pm (5pm on a Friday) or at weekends (Emergency Duty Team).**

**DFE Channel Helpline - 020 7340 7264
Police: 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency)
Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321
NSPCC: 0808 800 500
Ofsted: 0300 123 1231**

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| This policy was adopted by: TreeHouse Education Ltd | Date: 1st May 2024 |
| Last reviewed on:  | Signed: |
| To be reviewed on: 1st May 2024 |

Written in accordance with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014): Safeguarding and Welfare requirements: Child Protection [3.4-3.8]* and *Suitable People [3.9-3.13].Working together to safeguard children March 205 and What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused (March 2015)*