

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Staff at Balance Alternative Provision understand their statutory obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare and protection of children and young people. All staff have a minimum of an annual Safeguarding Training session on national and local issues, and any changes to the KCSIE document updated for the start of the academic year 2024/25.

Core Principles

Our work with children and young people integrates the core principles of the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 document. Balance Alternative Provision has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of the young people entrusted to its care by establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

At Balance Alternative Provision we know that all staff have a part to play in safeguarding students at the provision. We create an environment where children are safe, feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to. All students are aware that there are adults at the provision who they can approach if they are worried. These include teachers and non-teachers. Their concerns or disclosures will be taken seriously.

Staff at Balance Alternative Provision understand that because of the daily supervision of students, they need to remain alert to the signs of possible emotional, physical, sexual and neglect.

Prior to a student starting at Balance Alternative Provision, all safeguarding information should be shared by the host school including what the safeguarding concerns are, which external agencies are involved, and risk assessments shared (if applicable).

Where there are any safeguarding concerns about any students at Balance Alternative Provision, staff should complete a Safeguarding Concern Form, pass to the DSL within 30 minutes. The DSL will scan the form and send to the DSL/Child Protection Officer at the host school; on the same day as the disclosure.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be Andrew Dean.

The DSL will co-ordinate action on both child protection and safeguarding at Balance Alternative Provision, ensuring that all staff and students know who the DSL is and that they are aware of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and of their responsibility to complete a Safeguarding Concern form and give to the DSL within 30 minutes.

Safeguarding Concern Form

Please hand to DSL within 30 minutes of a disclosure.

Date and time	Name	Year Group
Disclosure details? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHO?		

Completed by: _____ Date _____

Time/ date scanned and sent to home school: _____

Actions taken:	Outcome:

Staff CPD

Balance Alternative Provision is committed to supporting and training all staff in matters relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding.

The Keeping Children Safe in Education documentation will form most of the annual safeguarding training.

Alongside this training will be given to staff on national and local safeguarding issues such as:

- Child on child abuse
- SVH
- Peer on peer
- Up skirting
- Bullying
- CSE/ CCE
- Types of Abuse
- Mental well being
- Suicide and Self harm
- Prevent
- LGBTQ+
- Filtering and monitoring standards

Recruitment of Staff

Balance Alternative Provision will ensure that safe recruitment practices are followed in checking the suitability of all staff to work with children. If there are any volunteer or guest speakers at the provision without a DBS, they will not be left unsupervised and will wear a red lanyard. Visitors with DBS checks will sign in and be given a blue lanyard. Safer recruitment procedures will be followed when recruiting staff at Balance Alternative Provision.

Abuse of Trust

All staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards students is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be exemplary. Disciplinary action can be taken if professional standards are not upheld.

Staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is important to have a culture of openness and transparency and a consultation with the Designated Officer/LADO will happen if staff have:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed, 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 that indicates they would pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved in a way or may have behaved in a way that may not be suitable to work with children.

All records (paper copies) will be securely held, separate from the main child's/young person's file and in a locked secure cabinet.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to Police, LADO or NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure an action. Referrals must be made to the LADO within one working day.

If a member of staff or volunteer is suspended pending an investigation of a child protection nature, they will be kept at home.

Staff Personal Information

Under no circumstances should any member of staff give any personal information or contact details to any young person at the provision.

Safeguarding Contextual Areas

Children who may be particularly vulnerable:

- missing education/missing from education/persistently absent
- disabled or have special educational needs (SEND)
- young carers
- Children in Care (CIC)
- privately fostered children
- affected by health conditions
- affected by family in prison or parental offending
- affected by domestic abuse
- affected by substance misuse/drug use
- affected by mental health issues including self-harm and eating disorders
- affected by poor parenting
- at risk of Fabricated or Induced Illness
- at risk of gang and youth violence
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying including cyber, homophobic, racist etc.
- live transient lifestyles
- LGBT (lesbian gay bisexual transgender)
- missing from home or care
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexuality
- vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation

- vulnerable to faith abuse
- involved directly or indirectly in child sexual exploitation (CSE) or trafficking do not have English as a first language
- at risk of Honour Based Violence (HBV) including; female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

Peer on peer abuse - sexting/cyberbullying/sexual assaults

Child on child abuse, will always be taken seriously and acted upon, under the appropriate policy e.g. safeguarding, bullying, not dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. These issues will be part of PSHE lessons and discussions. Any hate crime/incident will be reported through local reporting mechanisms.

Incidents will be handled in line with the most recent guidance (07.04.21) from Ofsted and the DFE Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools: terms of reference - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

All incidences of peer-on-peer abuse, including:

- sexual harassment, sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence); sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

All the above and any other forms of child-on-child abuse will be recorded & reported and will be managed through our behaviour policy and procedures, and a full range of sanctions will be considered proportionate to the incident. Where ongoing investigations are underway, our provision and the host schools will consider a range of strategies in the best interests of the students and their families, taking advice from other agencies involved.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages. They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, laptops - any device that allows you to share media and messages.

Online Safety

Students increasingly use mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive communications, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography, encouraging radicalisation or face-to-face meetings.

As a measure to keep children safe online and to assist in the prevention of bullying, mobile phones are not permitted in the provision. They are confiscated at the start of the day and returned at the end of the day.

Cyberbullying and sexting by students, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and in the absence of a child protection concern, will be managed through our anti-bullying and confiscation procedures.

Chat rooms and some social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and students are not allowed to access these sites in the provision. Some students will undoubtedly be 'chatting' outside school and are informed of the risks of this through PSHE/ RSE. Parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using social media.

Acceptable IT use for staff and students will be enforced and parents are informed of expectations regarding online safety.

Students will be requested to sign a contract regarding using ICT appropriately when at Balance Alternative Provision. Any online safety issues will be recorded on a Safeguarding Concern Form and shared with the host school immediately. All

Signposting of appropriate resources to support parents in monitoring their child's online usage, particularly for home learning activities, is readily available. Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, 'NSPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK

Increased expectations and responsibilities around the schools filtering and monitoring IT systems

- The DSL should take lead responsibility for the above.
- Staff Safeguarding and Child Protection training should include an understanding of the above.
- Reiteration that schools should follow the recently published DfE publication of Filtering and monitoring standards and guidance.
- Governing bodies/proprietors strategic training should include an understanding of the above and should review the above standards with IT staff and service providers.
- Schools should consider meeting the Cyber security standards.
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should reflect the individual schools' approach to the above on school devices and networks.

SEND Students

We know disabled children are 3-4 times more likely to suffer abuse than those without disabilities and can be disproportionately impacted by bullying. Our staff are alert to this and do not ignore signs and indicators nor dismiss them as 'part of the disability'. Additional time and communication means will be in place to allow children to communicate effectively with staff. The following link provides further guidance.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-disabled-children-practice-guidance>

Equality Act

Confirmation that provisions within the Equality Act allow schools to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students with certain protected characteristics in order to meet their specific need. A school could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment. There is also a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim wants or needs, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.

This is a serious crime and is never the victim's fault even if there is some form of exchange. The police team can be contacted for extra support and information (they do not take the place of your usual reporting procedures).

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is when there is a power imbalance, where children are used by individuals or gangs to take part in criminal activity; this can include drug running, stealing etc. The child often believes they are in control of the situation. Violence, coercion, and intimidation are common.

'County Lines' is a national issue involving the use of mobile phone 'lines' by groups to extend their drug dealing business into new locations outside of their home areas. For more details on this, see the following links, showcasing the National issue and guidance for the Wakefield area.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-childrenand-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>
Local CSE procedures in Wakefield

<https://www.wakefieldscp.org.uk/professionals-and-practitioners/criminal-exploitation-children-vulnerable-adults-county-lines-guidance/>

Domestic Abuse

This does not have to include violence to be classed as abuse. 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. We will be mindful of how this affects children and that our staff may themselves be victims.

The abuse can be, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Children who are absent from Education

A child absent from education, which includes within the school day, is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation. Unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. All staff will be aware of the signs of risk and individual triggers including travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

Host schools will be notified by 10am if students have not arrived at Balance Alternative Provision.

Students leaving the site unauthorised

If any young person leaves the site during the day, a member of staff will make a telephone call to both the school and the emergency contact given. A full detailed report will be sent to the student's host school via a Safeguarding Concern Form.

The contact details of the school's DSL/Child Protection Officer and the student's emergency contact details are located at Balance Alternative Provision. The young person may have to be reported to the police as a missing person.

Changes to KCSIE September 2024

Two key updates:

- **Regular Updates:** The guidance stipulates that safeguarding and child protection updates should be delivered frequently through emails, e-bulletins, and staff meetings. At a minimum, these updates should occur annually, ensuring that staff remain equipped with the latest skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

- **Online Safety:** Staff must be well-versed in the expectations, roles, and responsibilities related to filtering and monitoring online activities. Understanding these elements is vital for creating a secure online environment for students.

Online Technology

The DfE acknowledges the significant role of technology in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. The guidance highlights several critical points:

- **Dual Risks:** Children face risks both online and offline, and these risks often occur simultaneously. School staff must be vigilant in recognising and addressing these dual threats.
- **Peer-to-Peer Online Abuse:** The document identifies the growing concern of children abusing other children online. This abuse can manifest in various forms, such as:
 - Abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages.
 - Non-consensual sharing of indecent images, particularly within chat groups.
 - Sharing of abusive images and pornography with individuals who do not wish to receive such content.

Addressing Sexual Violence and Harassment Online

The guidance calls attention to the complexities surrounding sexual violence and harassment occurring online. Schools and colleges must be aware of:

- **Complex Factors:** Online sexual violence and harassment can introduce numerous complex issues, including widespread abuse across multiple social media platforms. This can result in repeat victimisation and significant psychological harm to the victims.
- **Integrated Approach:** The guidance stresses the need for an integrated approach to address incidents of sexual violence and harassment, recognising that these incidents often intersect with face-to-face interactions.

Terminology changes in KCSIE 2024

Revised definition of Safeguarding

The definition of 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' now aligns with the updates in Working together to safeguard children 2023. The new definition includes early intervention, protection from harm, online and offline, and promoting the best outcomes for all children.

Key points are:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment at home, whether that's within or outside the home, including online.

Early help

Early help has been broadened to include a wider range of concerns. The new listing now includes:

- Frequently go missing from education, home or care.
- Have experienced multiple suspensions or are at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Have a parent or carer in custody or are affected by parental offending.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation

A welcomed update is the inclusion of 'exploitation' in the statutory guidance. The headings now reflect the potential for abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The definition of abuse has expanded to highlight that witnessing the ill-treatment of others, such as domestic abuse, is harmful to children.

Terminology change – 'deliberately missing education'

The term 'deliberately missing education' has now been replaced with 'unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education'. This change acknowledges that children missing school may be at risk of harm and can serve as a warning sign for various safeguarding concerns.

Key points to remember:

- A paragraph has been included in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR to comply with DPA/UK GDPR requirements.
- New text added to ensure schools understand that they're responsible for any pupil attending alternative provision.
- Holding and sharing information has been added for designated safeguarding leads.