

Safeguarding Policy

ACE Mentoring takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm. We have clearly laid down and recognised procedures for dealing with abuse or suspected abuse which is in line with recommendations made by the Local Authorities in which we work, Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023), Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023) and the Prevent Duty (September 2023).

Safeguarding can be summarised as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- 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 possible outcomes

Forms of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. All types of abuse outlined below are forms of significant harm.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes Significant Harm but consideration should be given to the following:

- The severity of ill-treatment which may include the degree and extent of physical harm including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- The duration and frequency of abuse and neglect
- The extent of premeditation.

The following outlines specific forms of harm:

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.

Emotional abuse

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 include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.



These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as 'upskirting', involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

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 or shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Abuse, in whatever form, always constitutes serious harm to the child. We endeavour to be alert to the possibility of abuse and have knowledge of and use without delay, the system in place for dealing with actual or suspected abuse. In the first instance we will follow the safeguarding procedures for the school in which we have a concern. If we feel this process is insufficient, this will be escalated through local authority guidelines.

Disclosures during a Mentoring Session

If a child begins to talk about an abusive incident, he/she will be allowed to speak. No leading questions will be asked, or words suggested. The concern or the child's comments will be accurately and legibly recorded in writing. Confidentiality is never promised to the child. We will try our best to reassure the pupil that they are taking the concern seriously and they will be supported.

Identification & Reporting

If we are concerned of abuse or neglect through a child's behaviour, appearance or through a disclosure we will immediately inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Should they not be available, the matter will be referred to the most senior member of staff in school. All concerns will also be followed up via email, so an electronic record of the report is maintained.

Staff Training

Our mentor, Alex Cameron has a Level 3 Certificate in Safeguarding, a DSL level certification. He also engages in frequent refresher training on KCSIE, Prevent and e-safety.



Safeguarding Compliance

All procedures, where relevant follow guidance from:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023)
- Prevent Duty (September 2023)