

Child Protection Policy



“Because of their day to day contact with individual children during the school terms, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.”

(Working Together under the Children Act 1989)

1. Purpose

A.1 ‘All organisations that work with children and families share a commitment to safeguard and promote their welfare.’ (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010)

B.1. Children’s Act 2004 – Section 10 requires co-operation between bodies in a local authority to improve the well-being of children, which include protection from harm or neglect.

C.1 Section 11 requires organisations to make arrangement for ensuring their functions, and services provided on their behalf, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

1.1 An effective whole-centre child protection policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected behaviour when dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school’s commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns, referrals and monitoring may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the student.

2. Introduction

2.1 Action Learning takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. “The welfare of the child is paramount” (Children Act 1989.)

2.2 There are three main elements to our child protection policy;

- a) Prevention through the creation and maintenance of a positive and safe learning environment, identifying any welfare concerns and taking action to address them.
- b) Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.
- c) Support to students who may have been abused

2.3 This policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers and visitors to Action Learning.

2.4 Action Learning recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation, although limited information collection will be required in order to complete the referral to the school

3. Action Learning

We recognise that for our students, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to prevent abuse. We will therefore:



- a) Establish and maintain an environment where students feel safe and secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- b) Ensure that students know that there are adults within Action Learning who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- c) Through vocational learning, develop students' understanding awareness and resilience
- d) Include in the vocational curriculum approach, opportunities for PSHE, which equips students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse
- e) Include material which will help students develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to employability and vocational subject areas.
- f) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.

4. Framework

Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 All adults working with, or, on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them, to be familiar, and comply with, all relevant child protection procedures. There are, however, key people within schools and Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. Action Learning report all safeguarding and child protection issues to the said school or provision – to the CP safeguarding officer.

5.2 Action Learning also ensures that any staff that need any support that is also readily available for them.

5.3.1 Section 175 (2) and (3) of the Education Act 2002 impose an obligation on the Governing Body to ensure they make arrangements for ensuring functions relating to the conduct of an alternative education centre are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people.

5.3.2 Action Learning also ensures that it has:

- A child protection policy, reviewed annually and referred to at every given and appropriate opportunity which conforms to Children's Services and legal guidance
- A policy which includes provision for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers and for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers.



- g) Establish and maintain an environment where students feel safe and secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- h) Ensure that students know that there are adults within Action Learning who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- i) Through vocational learning, develop students' understanding awareness and resilience
- j) Include in the vocational curriculum approach, opportunities for PSHE, which equips students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse
- k) Include material which will help students develop realistic attributes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to employability and vocational subject areas.
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- A policy which includes provision for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers and for dealing with child protection issues.



- All staff and volunteers to receive regular, appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively.
- 5.3.3 Action Learning Centres are responsible for ensuring that the school follows safe recruitment processes. As part of the Action Learning Centres recruitment policy all staff must be DBS vetted.
- 5.4 The Managers are responsible for creating a safe environment, for making sure all staff are aware of child protection procedures and for implementing child protection procedures where allegations are made against members of staff.
- 5.5 The Designated Child Protection Coordinator (Managers):
- Will refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant agency
 - Organise training for all staff and is responsible for implementing child protection procedures
 - Act as a source of advice and support to colleagues
 - To ensure Action Learning Centres child protection policy is reviewed annually and updated.
 - Keep detailed accurate, secure written records of referrals or concerns separate in a lockable cabinet where only certain staff members can obtain them.
 - Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training
 - To ensure that where a student leaves, the students' child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible.
- 5.6 The Designated Child Protection Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the contacts with Social Care staff, attending CIN meetings and ensuring the correct and necessary staff members are informed of contact and actions required / taken for new / open cases.
- 5.7 Staff are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and awareness training. There may be other adults at Action Learning Centres who rarely work unsupervised, more usually working alongside tutors. However, the Managers will ensure they are aware of the policy and the identity of the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator.
- 5.8 Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to Action Learning Centres who receive a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator or Manager. In absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought the attention of the most senior member of staff.



5.9 The Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (Manager) will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the school.

6 Training and Support

6.1 All staff will receive regular training on child protection issues and steps will be taken to ensure that all new staff receive prompt training. In addition to protecting children, the training also enables staff to be more aware of their own vulnerabilities and to take steps to minimise these. All staff should be clear about the circumstances in which physical contact is allowed by law and by any local policy (which may further restrict these).

6.2 Action Learning Centres will ensure that the Designated Child Protection Officer and Manager also undertakes training in inter-agency working that is provided by the Children Education & Families and refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep knowledge and skills up to date. Temporary staff and volunteers who work with students at Action Learning Centres will be made aware of the arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.

6.3 Support will be available for staff from the Managers in the first instance, and where there are concerns about queries about child protection.

6.4 All staff have access to advice and guidance on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are referred to in the staff handbook.

7. Professional Confidentiality

7.1 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the student. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a student nor should they agree with a student to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (Manager) and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

7.2 Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a “need to know basis” only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentiality to themselves.

8. Records and Monitoring

8.1 Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Action Learning Centres is clear about the need to record any concern held about student’s within our



establishment, the status of such records and when these records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

8.2 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

8.3 These file notes are kept in a confidential file, which is separate to other files, and stored in a secure place in the Managers office. In the same way notes must be kept of any students who is being monitored for child protection reasons.

8.4 If a student transfers Action Learning Centres, these files will be copied for the new establishment and forward to the new student's new school marked confidential and for the attention of the receiving school's Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator.

9. Attendance at Child Protection Conferences & Core Groups

9.1 When a student is placed on the Child Protection Register and is, therefore, a student with a plan, it is the Designated Child Protection Coordinator's responsibility to ensure that the child is monitored regarding their attendance, welfare and presentation. Action Learning Centres should ensure that they are represented at any school, social care meetings; that there is a record of attendance and issues discussed. All concerns about the child protection plan and / or the student's welfare should be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting.

10. Supporting Students At Risk

10.1 Action Learning Centres recognizes that students who are abused or who witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place.

10.2 Action Learning Centres may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, whilst Action Learning Centres their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

10.3 Action Learning Centres will endeavor to support students through a)
Vocational subjects to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation b) promotion of a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued c) The implementation of the Action Learning Centres behaviour management policies and rewards system d) A consistent approach agreed by all staff which will endeavor to ensure the student knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued e) Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the students and their families f) a



commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the students' best interest to do so g) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations h) Recognition that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse so staff who work in any capacity with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse staff who work in any capacity with students with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and / or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse i) Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

10.4 This policy should be considered alongside other related policies within Action Learning Centres. This is the Behaviour Management Policy (including our policy on bullying).

11. Safe Staff

11.1 Pre-employment screening – although it affords no guarantees that child protection issues will not arise, the managers will ensure that appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out on all staff including voluntary helpers. It is illegal to offer employment that involves regular contact with young people under the age of 18 to anyone who has been convicted of specific offences and / or is included on lists of people considered unsuitable for such work. The Action Learning Centres will also ensure that references are taken up from an applicant's last/current employer; any gaps in an employment history will be fully explored and qualifications checked.

11.2 It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents are similarly displayed when members of staff are accused of abuse.

11.3 Only authorised agencies may investigate child abuse allegations (School, Social Care Services, the Police or in some areas, the NSPCC). Whilst it is permissible to ask the student(s) simple, non-leading questions to ascertain the facts of the allegation, formal interviews and the taking of statements is not. (unless requested by the school or a party dealing with the allegation)

11.4 The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff is set out within Section 11 of the SET procedures.



11.5 The manager should in the first instance contact the school that the child comes from. Through discussion and consultation, a decision will be made whether to make a referral to Children's Social Care Services, or if any further investigation is to be made by the school. Where the allegation is against the manager, the school will take this action.

11.6 If for any reason it is decided that a referral to Social Care Services is not appropriate, it will be necessary to address matters in accordance with the school procedures in liaison with the HR Advisor.

12. Use of the Premises by other Organisations

12.1 Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, using Action Learning Centres premises, Action Learning Centres will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection.

13. Whistleblowing

13.1 We recognise that students cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

13.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary they should speak to the manager.

14. Policy Review

Action Learning Centres is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this.