

## **Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy**

Classroom Teachers Ltd place agency workers into schools, colleges, nurseries and alternative provisions to assist schools and local authorities in providing a quality education, for children and vulnerable adults.

Classroom Teachers are thoroughly committed to safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and harm, and we expect everyone who works for the agency to share this commitment.

We follow all national guidelines to ensure that the highest levels of safeguarding and child and vulnerable adult protection are maintained by all workers.

### **We do this by:**

- Following DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2022 and DBS Guidelines on the recruitment and selection of agency staff including annual Enhanced DBS Disclosure with Children's Barred List checks included and Adult's Barred List check if necessary.
- Ensuring that agency workers confirm they have read part 1 of KCSIE including 'Annex: Further Information' and will keep up to date with any changes and understand their duties and responsibilities to keep children safe.
- Sending out Safeguarding newsletters to staff regarding any relevant changes to legislation and guidance.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of Classroom Teachers Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection policy and procedures.
- Ensuring DfE and DBS guidelines on dealing with allegations regarding agency staff are followed.
- Making the company's policies on Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection, Procedures for Managing Allegations and Complaints accessible to all schools and agency workers.

### **Key Principles**

- All children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection from abuse.
- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately within DfE and DBS recommended guidelines.
- Anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document
- Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations. An adult may be vulnerable if he/she:
  - Has a learning or physical disability
  - Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
  - Has a reduction in physical or mental capacity
  - Is in the receipt of any form of healthcare
  - Is detained in custody
  - Is receiving community services because of age, health or disability
  - Is living in sheltered or residential care home
  - Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

### **Definitions of Abuse and Neglect**

Abuse: Form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This

can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Physical Abuse:** a form of abuse which 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 adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing 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, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example 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 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as Child-on-Child Abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of the school's policy and procedures for dealing with it

**Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adults basic physical, educational, emotional or medical needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or vulnerable adult's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

For more information visit: <https://tacklechildabuse.campaign.gov.uk>

### **Early Help and safeguarding issues**

All agency workers should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

In the first instance workers should discuss early help requirements with the designated safeguarding lead. Workers may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.

Any child may benefit from early help, but workers should have an awareness of particular behaviours, for example, drug taking and or alcohol misuse and deliberately missing education can be signs that children might be at risk.

Other safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE); Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE); County Lines; Cybercrime; Domestic Abuse; Homelessness; Mental Health; Modern Slavery; Preventing radicalisation; The Prevent duty; Forced Marriage

*Please note this is not an exhaustive list but an indicator of some key issues of which workers may become aware.*

Further information can be found in [KCSIE](#). Appendix A has further safeguarding definitions.

### **Radicalisation and Extremism**

Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind.

Extremism is defined as the holding of extreme political or religious views. Staff have a duty to report concerns about pupils in line with the Prevent guidance, if they suspect that a child is at risk of radicalisation. These concerns should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school.

The Home office has produced key resources, workshops and training programmes to help you understand Prevent and how to keep students safe from extremism and radicalisation this can be found on the following link: <https://educateagainsthate.com/teachers/prevent-training/>

Classroom Teachers will refer any member of its workforce who they believe has attempted to radicalise pupils or preach extremist ideals to either the Local Authority or the Police.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Further guidance and resources can be found on this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resourcepack>

### **Online Safety**

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

**Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.

**Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.

**Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

**Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

If you feel your students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Agency workers should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines. Contact with children and vulnerable adults both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, OnlyFans, chatrooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, webcams and other handheld devices. (Given the ever changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Agency workers should not request or respond to any personal information from children and vulnerable adults other than which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

Agency workers should not give their personal contact details to children and vulnerable adults, for example; e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, social media account details etc. If children and vulnerable adults locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the Agency workers, they should not respond and must report the matter to their line manager. The child or vulnerable adult should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has produced some further information about Online Safety <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/teachers-and-school-staff>

Also please see **Classroom Teachers Online tutor** policy for more information.

### **Child on Child abuse**

All workers should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse) and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.

It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer on peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to bullying, physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images/videos and upskirting.

If staff have any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse, they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead in the school/college/establishment.

### **Mental Health**

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child or vulnerable adult has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children and vulnerable adults regularly and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-andbehaviour-in-schools--2>

### **Identifying Abuse**

The following list outlines ways in which abuse may be identified. It is not intended that this is an exhaustive list and it is not the agency workers sole responsibility to determine if abuse is occurring, but to report their concerns:

- Changes in behaviour; immediate or over a length of time
- Increased absence - A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals
- A significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm
- Bruises and injuries that do not reflect the activity the child is involved in and where the explanation does not confirm with the injuries
- Fear of certain adults
- Being involved in offending
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by or involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs
- Use of sexually explicit language and actions
- The child or vulnerable adult tells you that they are being abused
- A third party tells you that the child or vulnerable adult is being abused
- A child or vulnerable adult seems to be a loner and does not integrate with the group
- A child or vulnerable adult whose appearance deteriorates hygienically and or physically

Some disabled, young children or vulnerable adults may feel more vulnerable in making others aware of the abuse due to them relying on the abuser.

Whilst it is important that a partnership approach is adopted to ensure that safety and the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, it is of equal importance that all concerned are confident that the information they provide will only be disclosed where it is in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult to do so.

### **Professional curiosity**

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

### **Allegation Disclosure**

The following guidelines should be used when an allegation is disclosed by a young person to a member of Classroom Teachers workers:

#### **1. Listen and reassure**

- Maintain confidentiality but do not make promises that you cannot keep, and explain that the information will have to be passed on and what action you will be taking in this regard.
- Be calm.
- Be reassuring and make it clear that you are glad that they have told you - Show that you are taking the child or vulnerable adult seriously and that you understand and believe them.
- Keep questions to a minimum; if you have to ask questions keep them open and not leading.

**Points to note when dealing with a disclosure**

- Try not to display any kind of shock or disapproval.
  - Do not jump to conclusions.
  - The young person or vulnerable adult may regard the experience as either bad or painful, they may not feel guilty or angry.
  - Be aware of your own feelings which may be different to those of the young person or vulnerable adult.
  - Take care of yourself by ensuring that you have an opportunity to discuss your feelings with someone at a later stage.
  - Do not destroy any evidence as it may be used later in a court of law.
  - An Initial disclosure, even if retracted, must still be referred to the relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead.
2. In an emergency (i.e. a serious incident, the child is in need of medical attention or a crime may have occurred) call 999.
  3. Recording Information It is essential that the details of the alleged abuse be recorded correctly and legibly as this will be critical later on in the proceedings. This should be done immediately and certainly within 24 hours.
  4. Informing the appropriate contacts If abuse has been disclosed to you or you suspect that it is happening you must inform the relevant Designated Safeguarding Officer within a school/local authority/organisation (for agency workers ) or to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (for internal Classroom Teachers staff).
  5. Referral to Relevant Authorities cases where Classroom Teachers have ceased to use the services of an educator or might have ceased to use those services had the educator not ceased to provide them, for reasons of child and vulnerable adult protection, will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Teaching Regulation Agency where necessary.

Referrals will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**General conduct when working with young people and vulnerable adults**

Classroom Teachers expects its agency workers to fulfil their duty to keep children and vulnerable adults safe and to protect them from physical, emotional, and sexual harm.

All agency workers are expected to contribute to:

- providing a safe environment for children to learn in education settings
- identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting.

All Classroom Teachers agency staff are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to safeguard Children and to protect themselves from allegations of abuse.

Stated below are the standards of behaviour required of Classroom Teachers agency workers in order to fulfil their roles to ensure that a positive culture and climate is created during all activities involving contact with young people and vulnerable adults.

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment e.g. no secrets).
- Treat all young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from young people and vulnerable adults.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust.



- Ensuring that during any residential events, adults do not enter the rooms of young people/vulnerable adults or invite young people and vulnerable adults to their rooms unless there are exceptional reasons for doing so.
- Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people and vulnerable adults or using inappropriate language.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- To refrain from taking any photographs, videoing or audio recording of pupils or vulnerable adults without prior written consent.

### **Unacceptable practices**

The following should never be sanctioned:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people or vulnerable adults away from others.
- Making personal contact with young people or vulnerable adults by email, telephone, post or any means without parental consent.
- Taking young people or vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Allowing young people or vulnerable adults to travel on their own with you in a vehicle.
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- Sharing a room with a young person or vulnerable adult.
- Engaging in a toilet with young people or vulnerable adult unless another adult is present or permission is given. Agency staff should avoid using toilets that are used by school pupils or vulnerable adults.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate contact.
- Allowing or encouraging abusive peer activities.
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to or within hearing of a young person or vulnerable adult even in fun.
- Reducing a young person or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a young person or vulnerable adults to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Doing things of a personal nature for young people or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves.
- Physically restraining a young person or vulnerable adults unless the restraint is to:
  - prevent the injury of the young person/vulnerable adult/other young person/yourself
  - prevent damage to any property
  - prevent or stop the commission of a criminal offence

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