SAFEGUARDING

V10 SEPTEMBER 2026

Author	Training and Quality Manager
Review Date	August 2027

Tilford House, Farnham Business Park, Weydon Lane, Farnham GU9 8QT
t. 01252 514999 **e.** info@overworld-amp.uk **w.** www.overworld-amp.uk

Version 2 Mar 23	Full re-write to Schools Model Child Protection Policy, Procedure and Guidance
Version 3 Sep 23	Substantial re-write
Version 4 Oct 23	Added code of conduct
Version 5 Jun 24	Stronger content on digital safeguarding, e.g. online reputation, grooming, use of reflective surfaces for upskirting, and confiscation procedures. Clarification of procedures and more detailed risk indicators across high-risk themes.
Version 6 Sep 24	Updated statutory references in line with KCSiE 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Expanded sections on sexual harassment, online safety, and child-on-child abuse, reflecting national safeguarding priorities. Refined procedures for identifying, recording, and reporting concerns, with greater clarity around escalation routes. Improved definitions and inclusion of emerging concerns such as gender-based violence, honour-based abuse, and modern slavery. Increased emphasis on trauma-informed practice, intersectionality, and neurodiversity, aligning with whole-setting safeguarding culture.
Version 7 June 25	Addition of My Concern. Added clarity on low-level concerns and whistleblowing channels. Expanded content on harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) and contextual safeguarding. Reference to local Thresholds of Need guidance. Document oversight of staff training records
Version 8 Sep 25	Violence Against Women and Girls: New section on virginity testing and hymenoplasty. Teenage Relationship Abuse: RSHE Guidance (July 2025) referenced and linked. Sexism and Stereotyping: New section added in line with RSHE Guidance (July 2025). Technologies: Added references to misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, and generative AI (KCSIE 2025). Online Safety and Social Media: Link to generative AI guidance from KCSIE 2025 included. Safeguarding Processes: New section on Alternative Provision with links to government guidance.
Version 9 May 26	Updated DDSL structure, contact information and safeguarding leadership details.
Version 10 Sep 26	Added and updated safeguarding themes to reflect KCSiE 2026, including AI and emerging technologies, online harms, cybercrime, care experienced young people, neurodivergence, vaping, and updated terminology relating to the sharing of nude and semi-nude images. Improved readability and removal of any procedural duplication.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION....3
2. SCOPE....3
3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE....3
4. AIMS....4
5. DEFINITIONS....4
6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES....5
7. PART 1 – HIGH RISK AND EMERGING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES....7
8. PART 2 – SAFEGUARDING ISSUES RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS....14
9. PART 3 – OTHER SAFEGUARDING ISSUES THAT MAY POTENTIALLY HAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE.17
10. PART 4 – SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS....19
11. MONITORING AND REVIEW....19

1. INTRODUCTION

Overworld AMP Limited ("the Provision") is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every young person who accesses its services. Safeguarding underpins all aspects of the Provision's work and is everyone's responsibility.

The Provision delivers education and support for young people aged 8–25 years, many of whom are neurodivergent, have experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences, disrupted education, or have additional social, emotional or mental health needs. The Provision recognises that these experiences may increase vulnerability to abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding risks.

The Provision adopts a relationship-led, trauma-informed and neuro-affirming approach to safeguarding. Safe, inclusive and supportive environments are promoted where young people feel valued, respected and listened to, enabling them to engage, develop resilience and achieve positive outcomes.

This policy sets out how the Provision promotes a strong safeguarding culture, fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities and works collaboratively with young people, families, commissioners and partner agencies to protect young people from harm.

The procedures for recognising, recording, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns are detailed in the *Young Person Protection Policy*.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to:

- 2.1.1 All young people aged 8–25 years accessing the Provision.
- 2.1.2 All employees, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and anyone working on behalf of the Provision.
- 2.1.3 Visitors, commissioners and partner organisations, where relevant to safeguarding responsibilities.

2.2 Safeguarding responsibilities: the Provision recognises that safeguarding responsibilities differ according to the age and circumstances of the young person.

- 2.2.1 Young people under the age of 18 are safeguarded in accordance with relevant children's legislation and statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
- 2.2.2 Young people aged 18 and over who have care and support needs, or who are otherwise at risk of abuse or neglect, are safeguarded in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and local adult safeguarding procedures.
- 2.2.3 Regardless of age, the Provision is committed to creating a safe environment and responding promptly to any safeguarding concerns.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

This policy is informed by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 (where applicable)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)

- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales

This policy should be read alongside all the Provision's policies and the Employee Handbook.

4. AIMS

The aims of this policy are to:

4.1 Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all young people.

4.2 Foster a culture where safeguarding is understood to be everyone's responsibility.

4.3 Support the early identification of need and timely intervention.

4.4 Ensure safeguarding concerns are recognised, shared and acted upon promptly.

4.5 Work collaboratively with young people, families, commissioners and partner agencies to safeguard those accessing our services.

4.6 Promote inclusive, trauma-informed and neuro-affirming practice that recognises the individual strengths, needs and experiences of every young person.

4.7 Meet statutory, contractual and regulatory safeguarding responsibilities.

5. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

5.1 SAFEGUARDING: is the action taken to protect children and adults at risk from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm, while promoting their welfare, wellbeing and right to live safely.

5.2 YOUNG PERSON**:** for the purposes of this policy, refers to any individual aged 8–25 years accessing the Provision.

5.3 CHILD PROTECTION: forms part of safeguarding and relates to protecting children under the age of 18 who are suffering, or are likely to of suffer significant harm.

5.4 ADULT AT RISK: is a person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs, or who are otherwise at risk, are safeguarded in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and local adult safeguarding procedures.

5.5 STAFF: includes all employees, volunteers, agency workers, contractors, governors (where applicable) and anyone working on behalf of the Provision.

5.6 PARENT OR CARER: includes birth parents and anyone with parental responsibility or caring responsibilities, including adoptive parents, guardians, foster carers and kinship carers.

5.7 DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL): has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the Provision.

5.8 DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS (DDSLS)Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads support the DSL in carrying out safeguarding responsibilities and act on the DSL's behalf where delegated or in the DSL's absence.

5.9 MYCONCERN: is the Provision's secure electronic safeguarding recording system used to record, manage and monitor safeguarding concerns.

5.10 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD (SAB): is the statutory multi-agency partnership responsible for coordinating safeguarding arrangements for adults at risk within a local authority area.

5.11 LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO): manages allegations that an adult working with children may have behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child, committed a criminal offence against a child, or behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children.

5.12 EARLY HELP: is the support provided to children, young people and families as soon as additional needs emerge, with the aim of preventing concerns from escalating. Staff should share any concerns with the DSL so that appropriate support can be considered.

5.13 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE: is the local authority service responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The Provision will work collaboratively with Children's Social Care where there are concerns that a child may be suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm.

5.11 ADULT SOCIAL CARE: is the local authority service responsible for safeguarding adults with care and support needs who may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. The Provision will work collaboratively with Adult Social Care where safeguarding concerns relate to a young person aged 18 or over.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 **Designated Safeguarding Lead** has lead responsibility for safeguarding and young person protection within the Provision, including online safety. The DSL will have sufficient authority, time, training, resources and support to fulfil the role effectively. Safeguarding activities may be delegated to appropriately trained Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads; however, ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding remains with the DSL and cannot be delegated.

The DSL will:

6.1.1 Lead and promote a positive safeguarding culture in which young people are listened to, concerns are recognised and reported, and safeguarding is understood as everyone's responsibility.

6.1.2 Act as a source of safeguarding advice, support and expertise for staff, including supporting staff when making referrals or responding to safeguarding concerns.

6.1.3 Manage and oversee safeguarding referrals, including referrals to Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, the Police, Prevent/Channel, the LADO and other relevant agencies, as appropriate.

6.1.4 Liaise and work effectively with safeguarding partners, commissioning organisations, education providers, local authorities and other professionals involved in safeguarding and supporting young people.

6.1.5 Ensure safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions and actions are recorded clearly, factually and securely, including the rationale for decisions to make or not make referrals, and that information is shared lawfully and appropriately.

6.1.6 Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for the secure storage, access, retention and sharing of safeguarding information in accordance with this policy and the Provision's Data Protection and GDPR Policy.

6.1.7 Promote effective engagement with parents and carers where appropriate, recognising that decisions about involvement and information sharing must be guided by the safety, welfare and individual circumstances of the young person.

6.1.8 Work with relevant staff and external professionals to ensure safeguarding, welfare, SEND, mental health, attendance, engagement and educational needs are considered holistically.

6.1.9 Maintain oversight of online safety and ensure the Provision's arrangements for managing online and digital safeguarding risks, including filtering and monitoring where applicable, are understood and reviewed appropriately.

6.1.10 Ensure staff have access to and understand the Provision's safeguarding policies and procedures and receive appropriate safeguarding information, training, updates and support.

6.1.11 Ensure safeguarding policies, procedures and practice are reviewed regularly and remain consistent with relevant legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and commissioning requirements.

6.1.12 Maintain appropriate safeguarding knowledge and training, including DSL and Prevent training, and keep knowledge and skills up to date through regular safeguarding updates and professional development.

6.1.13 Promote a culture in which the wishes, feelings and lived experience of young people are heard and considered, recognising that some young people may experience additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting concerns.

6.1.14 Monitor safeguarding practice, identify themes or emerging risks and use learning from concerns, incidents, referrals and reviews to support continuous improvement.

6.1.15 Ensure effective DSL/DDSL cover arrangements are maintained and understood by staff.

6.3 **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)** will support the DSL and fulfil safeguarding responsibilities in their absence or as delegated.

The DDSLs will:

6.2.1 Be trained to the same standard as the DSL and maintain appropriate safeguarding knowledge and skills.

6.2.2 Act as a source of safeguarding advice and support to staff and respond to safeguarding concerns in accordance with the Provision's policies and procedures.

6.2.3 Manage safeguarding concerns, referrals, information sharing and liaison with other agencies where delegated or required.

6.2.4 Support the consistent implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures and champion effective safeguarding practice within their areas of responsibility.

6.2.5 Ensure safeguarding concerns, actions, discussions and decisions they manage are recorded accurately, securely and without unnecessary delay.

6.2.6 Promote a culture where young people are listened to and concerns are recognised, shared and acted upon appropriately.

6.2.7 Provide safeguarding cover and undertake delegated DSL functions where required.

6.4 **The Senior Leadership Team** will:

6.3.1 Promote safeguarding as a shared responsibility.

6.3.2 Ensure safeguarding remains central to decision-making and service delivery.

6.3.4 Support a culture of openness, accountability and continuous improvement.

6.5 **All Staff** will:

6.4.1 Promote the safety, wellbeing and welfare of young people.

6.4.2 Build positive, professional relationships based on trust and respect.

6.4.3 Maintain professional curiosity and an attitude of "it could happen here".

6.4.4 Record and report safeguarding concerns promptly using MyConcern.

6.4.5 Complete mandatory safeguarding training and remain familiar with safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and the Provision's safeguarding policies.

6.6 **Young People** are encouraged to:

6.6.1 Contribute to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

6.6.2 Share concerns with a trusted adult.

6.6.3 Engage in opportunities that promote their safety, wellbeing and independence.

6.6 **Parents, Carers and Commissioners**

The Provision works in partnership with parents, carers, commissioners and relevant agencies to promote the safety, wellbeing and positive outcomes of young people.

Parents, carers and commissioners are encouraged to:

6.6.1 Share relevant information that supports safeguarding and wellbeing.

6.6.2 Work collaboratively with the Provision to promote positive outcomes.

7. PART 1 – HIGH RISK AND EMERGING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

The Provision recognises that safeguarding concerns may arise from a wide range of circumstances and that young people may experience multiple, interconnected vulnerabilities.

Staff must remain alert to potential indicators of harm, as detailed below, and follow the procedures set out in the *Young Person Protection Policy*. Further information about the safeguarding issues outlined in this section can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and the relevant statutory guidance.

7.1 Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding recognises that abuse, harm and exploitation can occur outside the home, including within peer groups, educational settings, communities and online environments.

The Provision recognises that understanding a young person's relationships, experiences and wider environment is essential to assessing safeguarding risk.

Staff should be aware that:

- abuse may occur in multiple contexts;
- risks may be linked to peers, locations or online activity;
- exploitation often occurs outside the family home;
- multiple vulnerabilities may increase safeguarding risk.

7.2 Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

The Prevent Duty requires education providers to have due regard to preventing people from being drawn into terrorism.

Radicalisation can affect any young person regardless of age, background or circumstances.

Staff should be aware of indicators including, but not limited to:

- significant changes in behaviour or presentation;
- expressing extremist views or intolerance;
- increased secrecy or social isolation;
- accessing extremist material online;
- association with individuals or groups promoting extremist ideologies.

7.3 Gender Based Violence / Violence Against Women and Girls

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by certain forms of violence and abuse; however, anyone can experience gender-based violence regardless of their sex or gender. Staff should remain alert to safeguarding concerns relating to:

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Virginity Testing and Hymenoplasty
- Forced Marriage
- Honour-Based Abuse
- Teenage Relationship Abuse

Each of these issues is outlined below:

7.3.1 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. It involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs, for non-medical reasons.

FGM is illegal in the UK.

Staff should be aware of indicators including, but not limited to:

- a planned extended visit abroad;
- discussions about a special ceremony or becoming a woman;
- prolonged or unexplained absence;
- difficulty walking, sitting or standing;
- changes in behaviour following travel.

Mandatory reporting duties apply where a known case of FGM is identified in a child under 18.

7.3.2 Virginity Testing and Hymenoplasty

These are forms of violence against women and girls and are illegal in the UK.

Virginity testing involves examining female genitalia to determine whether sexual intercourse has occurred. Hymenoplasty is a procedure intended to reconstruct the hymen.

Staff should be aware of indicators including, but not limited to:

- disclosure by the young person;
- family pressure relating to marriage or honour;
- concerns about travel abroad;
- anxiety regarding relationships or family expectations.

7.3.3 Forced Marriage

Marriage entered into without the free and full consent of one or both parties is considered forced. It is a form of abuse and may involve physical, emotional, psychological, financial or sexual coercion.

Staff should be aware of indicators including, but not limited to:

- sudden absence from education;
- restrictions on friendships or independence;
- excessive family control;

- self-harm, anxiety or depression;
- fear of upcoming travel abroad.

7.3.4 Honour-Based Abuse

Is abuse committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family or community. It may include forced marriage, FGM, coercive control or other forms of abuse.

Anyone can be affected.

Staff should be aware of indicators including, but not limited to:

- family or community pressure;
- fear of bringing shame on the family;
- restrictions on friendships, relationships or lifestyle;
- threats, intimidation or coercion;
- concerns relating to travel abroad.

Staff should never attempt to mediate with family or community members where honour-based abuse is suspected.

7.4 Teenage Relationship Abuse

This is a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening or violent behaviour within a romantic or intimate relationship. It can occur in person or online and may affect any young person, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Staff should be alert to:

- controlling or possessive behaviour;
- isolation from friends or family;
- excessive monitoring through technology or social media;
- fear, anxiety or changes in behaviour;
- unexplained injuries or distress.

7.5 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Young People

The Provision recognises that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between young people of any age or gender and will never be tolerated or dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys".

All concerns will be taken seriously, recognising that both the young person harmed and the young person displaying harmful behaviour may require support.

Staff should be alert to:

- unwanted sexual comments or jokes;
- inappropriate touching or sexualised behaviour;
- sharing of sexual images without consent;
- online sexual harassment;
- disclosures of sexual assault or coercion.

7.6 Sexism and Stereotyping

The Provision promotes equality, respect and inclusion and recognises that sexism, misogyny and harmful stereotypes can contribute to abuse, discrimination and violence.

Staff should be alert to:

- sexist language or behaviour;
- misogynistic attitudes;
- discriminatory comments;
- harmful gender stereotypes;
- online content promoting prejudice or violence.

7.7 Upskirting

Upskirting is a criminal offence involving the taking of images beneath another person's clothing without their knowledge or consent.

Staff should be alert to:

- inappropriate use of mobile phones or recording devices;
- attempts to obtain intimate images without consent;
- behaviour placing others' privacy at risk.

7.8 The Trigger Trio

The Trigger Trio refers to the combination of domestic abuse, parental mental ill health and parental substance misuse. The presence of one or more of these factors may increase safeguarding risks for young people.

Staff should consider the cumulative impact of these issues when assessing wellbeing and safeguarding concerns.

7.8.1 Domestic Abuse

The Provision recognises that domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children and young people, whether they experience it directly or witness it within the home.

Staff should be alert to:

- anxiety, fear or withdrawal;
- changes in behaviour or presentation;
- frequent absences;
- unexplained injuries;
- caring responsibilities beyond the young person's age.

7.8.2 Parental Mental Health

Parental mental ill health does not in itself indicate that a young person is at risk, however, it may affect parenting capacity and the wellbeing of children and young people.

Staff should be alert to:

- increased caring responsibilities;
- unmet physical or emotional needs;
- poor attendance or engagement;
- changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing.

7.8.3 Parental Substance Misuse

Parental misuse of alcohol or drugs may affect a young person's safety, wellbeing and development.

Staff should be alert to:

- unmet basic needs;
- poor attendance or punctuality;
- fatigue or poor concentration;
- caring responsibilities;
- changes in behaviour or presentation.

7.12 Young Carers

A young carer is a child or young person who provides care or support to a family member because of illness, disability, mental ill health or substance misuse.

The Provision recognises that caring responsibilities may affect attendance, engagement, wellbeing and progress.

Staff should be alert to:

- tiredness or fatigue;
- anxiety or emotional distress;
- reduced participation;
- caring responsibilities that are inappropriate for the young person's age.

7.9 Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Young People (MET)

The Provision recognises that young people who go missing or are absent from education, home or care may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and serious harm. Safeguarding concerns should always consider the wider context of a young person's circumstances.

7.9.1 Young People Missing or Absent from Education

Prolonged or repeated absence from education may be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation or unmet need.

Staff should be alert to:

- unexplained or repeated absence;
- patterns of non-engagement;
- sudden changes in attendance;
- concerns about a young person's whereabouts or welfare.

7.9.2 Young People Missing from Home or Care

Young people who go missing from home or care are at increased risk of abuse, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Staff should be alert to:

- repeated missing episodes;
- unexplained absences;
- reluctance to discuss whereabouts;
- unexplained money, gifts or possessions;
- changes in behaviour or peer groups.

7.9.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

A form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity.

Staff should be alert to:

- unexplained gifts or money;
- older friends or relationships;
- missing episodes;
- sexualised behaviour;
- changes in emotional wellbeing;
- online grooming or exploitation.

7.9.4 Child Criminal Exploitation (Including County Lines)

Occurs where a child or young person is manipulated or coerced into criminal activity for the benefit of another person or group. County lines is a form of child criminal exploitation involving the movement of illegal drugs and money.

Staff should be alert to:

- going missing;
- unexplained money, clothing or possessions;
- carrying drugs, weapons or cash;
- changes in friendships;
- increased secrecy;
- unexplained travel.

7.9.5 Serious Violence

The Provision recognises that some young people may be at increased risk of serious violence through exploitation, criminal activity, gangs or peer associations.

Staff should be alert to:

- unexplained injuries;
- possession of weapons;
- significant changes in behaviour;
- increased absence;
- association with individuals involved in violence.

7.9.6 Trafficked Children and Modern Slavery

This involves the recruitment, movement or exploitation of individuals through coercion, deception or abuse of vulnerability.

Staff should be alert to:

- frequent movement between locations;
- fear of authority;
- lack of control over personal identification or finances;
- signs of exploitation;
- unexplained work or travel.

7.9.7 Child Abduction

Child abduction is the unlawful removal or retention of a child from the care of those with parental responsibility.

Staff should be alert to:

- concerns about unauthorised collection;

- threats of removal from the UK;
- family disputes affecting a child's safety;
- disclosures relating to abduction.

7.9.8 Returning Home from Care

Young people returning home from care may require additional support as they adjust to changes in their circumstances. The Provision recognises that transitions can increase vulnerability and will work collaboratively with families, commissioners and partner agencies to promote safety, stability and positive outcomes.

7.10 Technologies

The Provision recognises that online safety is an integral part of safeguarding. Digital technologies, social media and emerging technologies provide valuable opportunities for learning, communication and creativity but may also expose young people to abuse, exploitation, harmful content and other safeguarding risks.

Online risks continue to evolve and may include the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI), generative AI, deepfakes, misinformation, disinformation, online influencers and other digital platforms that may promote harmful, illegal or extremist content.

7.10.1 Online Safety, Social Media and Emerging Technologies

The Provision recognises that online safety is an integral part of safeguarding. Young people may be exposed to abuse, exploitation, harmful content, misinformation, disinformation and inappropriate online relationships through the use of digital technology.

Staff should be alert to:

- changes in online behaviour;
- excessive or secretive use of technology;
- contact with unknown individuals online;
- exposure to harmful or inappropriate content;
- online bullying or harassment.

7.10.2 Cyberbullying

This is bullying that takes place through digital devices or online platforms and can have a significant impact on a young person's wellbeing.

Staff should be alert to:

- reluctance to use technology;
- anxiety after using devices;
- withdrawal from social interaction;
- changes in mood or confidence.

7.10.3 Making and Sharing Nude and Semi-Nude Images, including images generated using AI, Videos and Live Streams

This can place young people at risk of harm and exploitation. The Provision recognises that such incidents require a safeguarding response that considers the age, vulnerability and circumstances of those involved.

Staff should be alert to:

- disclosures regarding image sharing;
- coercion or pressure to share images;
- concerns about online relationships;

- distress following online activity.

7.10.4 Online Sexual Abuse

Online sexual abuse may include grooming, coercion, exploitation, image-based abuse or exposure to inappropriate sexual content.

Staff should be alert to:

- secretive online activity;
- inappropriate online relationships;
- requests for images or personal information;
- significant changes in behaviour following internet use.

7.10.5 Gaming

Online gaming can provide positive opportunities but may also expose young people to exploitation, inappropriate contact, harmful content or financial abuse.

Staff should be alert to:

- excessive gaming;
- contact with unknown individuals;
- requests for personal information;
- unexplained spending or gifts and follow the refer to the Provision's *Gaming Policy*.

7.10.6 Online Reputation

The Provision recognises that online activity can have a lasting impact on a young person's wellbeing, relationships, education and future opportunities. Staff should encourage safe, respectful and responsible online behaviour.

7.10.7 Grooming

Grooming is the process by which an individual builds a relationship with a child or young person to manipulate, exploit or abuse them. Grooming can occur in person or online.

Staff should be alert to:

- secretive relationships;
- unexplained gifts or money;
- attempts to isolate the young person;
- changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing;
- increased online communication with unknown individuals.

7.10.8 Cybercrime

The Provision recognises that young people may become victims or perpetrators of cyber-enabled crime, including hacking, phishing, malware, ransomware and unauthorised access to computer systems.

Staff should be alert to:

- unusual online activity;
- discussions about hacking;
- misuse of school or personal devices;
- unexplained access to online accounts.

8. PART 2 – SAFEGUARDING ISSUES RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS

The Provision recognises that some young people may have additional needs or circumstances that increase their vulnerability to abuse, neglect or exploitation. Safeguarding practice will always consider the individual needs, strengths and lived experiences of each young person.

8.1 Homelessness

Homelessness or the risk of homelessness can have a significant impact on a young person's safety, wellbeing and educational engagement. Homelessness may increase vulnerability to abuse, exploitation, criminal activity and poor physical or mental health.

Staff should be alert to:

- disclosures of housing insecurity;
- sofa surfing or temporary accommodation;
- family breakdown;
- financial hardship;
- concerns about a young person's safety or welfare.

8.2 Young People and the Court System

Involvement with the criminal or family court system may affect a young person's wellbeing, education and safeguarding needs.

Staff should be alert to:

- increased anxiety or emotional distress;
- changes in behaviour or engagement;
- confidentiality and information-sharing requirements;
- the need for additional support during legal proceedings.

8.3 Young People with Family Members in Prison

The imprisonment of a family member may have a significant emotional, social and practical impact on a young person and may increase vulnerability to safeguarding concerns.

Staff should be alert to:

- changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing;
- increased caring responsibilities;
- financial hardship;
- stigma, isolation or bereavement-like responses.

8.4 Young People with Medical Conditions

The Provision recognises that medical conditions may affect a young person's safety, wellbeing and ability to access education. Safeguarding arrangements will consider the individual needs of each young person and work collaboratively with parents, carers, commissioners and health professionals where appropriate.

Staff should be alert to:

- changes in health or presentation;
- barriers to participation;
- medication or treatment requirements;
- the impact of medical conditions on wellbeing.

8.5 Special Educational Needs, Disabilities (SEND) and Neurodivergence

Young people with SEND and those who are neurodivergent may face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers to recognising, reporting or communicating abuse.

Safeguarding practice will be person-centred, recognising that behaviour, communication and presentation often reflects unmet needs, distress or previous trauma rather than deliberate non-compliance.

Staff should be alert to:

- communication differences;
- barriers to reporting concerns;
- increased vulnerability to bullying, abuse or exploitation;
- assumptions that behaviour is solely related to a diagnosis or disability;
- the need for reasonable adjustments to promote safety and engagement.

8.6 Mental Health

Positive mental health is fundamental to wellbeing and that mental health concerns may, in some cases, be an indicator that a young person is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns.

Mental health concerns should not automatically be viewed as safeguarding issues; however, staff should consider mental health alongside all other information when assessing a young person's welfare.

Staff should be alert to:

- significant changes in behaviour or presentation;
- persistent low mood, anxiety or emotional distress;
- self-harm or suicidal ideation;
- withdrawal from education or relationships;
- behaviours indicating increased vulnerability or risk.

The Provision adopts a proactive, relationship-led approach, working collaboratively with young people, families and partner agencies to promote wellbeing and access appropriate support.

8.7 Looked After Children and Care Leavers

The Provision recognises that looked after children, previously looked after children, and care leavers may have experienced trauma, instability or disrupted relationships which can increase their vulnerability to safeguarding concerns.

Staff should be alert to:

- changes in emotional wellbeing or behaviour;
- difficulties forming trusting relationships;
- increased vulnerability to exploitation or abuse;
- transitions between placements or services;
- the need for consistent, relationship-based support.

8.8 Young Adults (18–25 Years)

The Provision recognises that young adults aged 18–25 may continue to require safeguarding support, particularly where they have care and support needs, experience additional vulnerabilities or are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safeguarding practice will reflect the principles of the Care Act 2014 and work collaboratively with Adult Social Care and partner agencies where appropriate.

8.9 Young People Questioning their Gender

The Provision recognises that some young people may question, explore or express their gender identity. Questioning or exploring gender identity is not, in itself, a safeguarding concern.

Staff should respond with dignity, respect and without judgement or assumptions, recognising that each young person's circumstances and needs are individual.

Staff should remain alert to any associated safeguarding or welfare concerns, including:

- bullying, discrimination or harassment;
- abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- family conflict or rejection;
- coercion or undue influence;
- self-harm, suicidal ideation or deterioration in emotional wellbeing.

Detailed guidance for staff, including responding to disclosures, involving parents and carers, information sharing and practical arrangements, is contained within Appendix 5 – Supporting Young People Exploring Gender Identity of the Young Person Protection Policy.

9. PART 3 – OTHER SAFEGUARDING ISSUES THAT MAY POTENTIALLY HAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

The Provision recognises that a range of additional factors may affect a young person's safety, wellbeing and vulnerability. While these issues may not always meet the threshold for statutory safeguarding intervention, they should be considered alongside all other available information when assessing risk.

9.1 Bullying

The Provision recognises that bullying can have a significant impact on a young person's emotional wellbeing, physical health and ability to engage in learning. Bullying may occur face-to-face or online and can affect anyone.

Staff should be alert to:

- changes in behaviour or mood;
- reluctance to attend or engage;
- withdrawal from peers or activities;
- unexplained injuries or damaged belongings;
- repeated conflict between young people.

9.2 Prejudice-Based Abuse

The Provision is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and recognises that prejudice-based abuse can have a significant impact on a young person's safety, wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Prejudice-based abuse may be motivated by hostility or discrimination relating to a person's actual or perceived protected characteristics, including

- disability,

- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex,
- sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

It may also include misogyny, sexism and other harmful attitudes or behaviours that target individuals or groups.

Staff should be alert to:

- discriminatory language or behaviour;
- harassment, bullying or victimisation;
- hate-related incidents;
- social exclusion or intimidation;
- harmful attitudes or behaviours influenced by online communities or influencers.

9.3 Drugs, Vaping and Substance Misuse

The Provision recognises that the misuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription medication, vaping products and other substances may increase safeguarding risks and adversely affect a young person's health, wellbeing, judgement and engagement.

Substance misuse may also be linked to exploitation, criminal activity, mental health concerns or other safeguarding issues.

Staff should be alert to:

- changes in behaviour or presentation;
- possession of substances, vaping devices or paraphernalia;
- unexplained deterioration in attendance or engagement;
- association with individuals involved in substance misuse;
- concerns that substance misuse may be linked to exploitation or criminal activity.

9.4 Faith Abuse

Faith or belief should never be used to justify abuse, neglect, exploitation or harmful practices. The Provision respects all faiths and beliefs while recognising that safeguarding concerns may arise where beliefs or practices place a young person at risk.

Staff should be alert to:

- fear or distress linked to religious practices;
- coercion or manipulation;
- isolation from peers;
- harmful practices carried out in the name of faith or belief.

9.6 Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent, close relative or legal guardian for 28 days or more. The Provision recognises its duty to identify potential private fostering arrangements and work with the relevant local authority where appropriate.

Staff should be alert to:

- changes in living arrangements;
- uncertainty about who has parental responsibility;

- inconsistent information about carers;
- disclosures indicating the young person is living with someone who is not a close relative.

10. PART 4 – SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

10.1 Partnership Working

The Provision recognises that safeguarding is most effective when agencies work together. The Provision works collaboratively with young people, parents, carers, commissioners and partner agencies to promote safety, wellbeing and positive outcomes. Further information is provided in the *Young Person Protection Policy*.

10.2 Information Sharing

The Provision recognises that timely, necessary and proportionate information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. Information will be shared with parents, carers, commissioners and partner agencies where it is lawful, appropriate and in the best interests of the young person. Further information is provided in the *Data Protection and GDPR Policy* and the *Young Person Protection Policy*.

10.3 Safer Recruitment

The Provision is committed to safer recruitment and selection, ensuring that appropriate recruitment procedures, pre-employment checks, vetting, induction and supervision are in place to promote the safety and wellbeing of young people. Further information is provided in the *Recruitment and Selection Policy*.

10.4 Safeguarding Training

The Provision ensures that all staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role, including induction, mandatory safeguarding training, regular updates and ongoing professional development. All staff are required to read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). Further information is provided in the *Staff Supervision, Training and Support Policy*.

10.5 Allegations Against Adults

The Provision manages allegations and low-level concerns in accordance with statutory guidance and the *Young Person Protection Policy*.

10.6 Quality Assurance

The Provision is committed to maintaining high standards of safeguarding practice through regular monitoring, supervision, audit and review. Safeguarding arrangements are evaluated to ensure they remain effective, reflect current legislation and statutory guidance, and promote continuous improvement.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance or organisational practice require. The review will consider safeguarding practice, learning from safeguarding concerns, audits, feedback and emerging risks to ensure the policy remains effective and reflects current best practice.