



Venture  
Learning

**Arrangements for Safeguarding  
and Child Protection  
at Venture Learning**

**Document Owner**

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This document sets out the arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Venture Learning , a bespoke KS3/4 alternative provision located in Netherfield, Nottinghamshire.

Venture Learning is committed to Safeguarding and encourages a strong culture of vigilance in this area.

This document forms part of the integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read alongside:

- Venture Learning: Managing Allegations Against Adults Working within the provision Policy;
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2019;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018
- Local arrangements for managing allegations issued through The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004;
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017; and
- The Education Act 2002.
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings - May 2019

For the purpose of this document the following terminology should be considered:

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Provision, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**DSL** refers to the designated safeguarding lead at the Provision.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.



## Key Staff and Contacts

### Provision Based Contacts

Name	Role
Rhys Griffiths	Managing Director; Head of Provision
Rhys Griffiths	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Holly Crann	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Holly Crann	eSafety Lead
Rhys Griffiths	Prevent Duty Lead
Holly Crann	Attendance point of contact.
<b>All of the above can be contacted via the Head of Provision on: 0115 9876621</b>	

### Other Useful Contacts

Agency / Contact	Contact Details
Education Welfare Coordinator, Nottinghamshire County.	Phone: 0115 876 2965
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Nottinghamshire County Council	0300 500 80 90 Mash.safeguarding@nottscc.gov.uk
Children's Social Care – Emergency Duty Team Nottinghamshire County Council Nottingham City Council	0300 456 4546 0300 131 0300 / 0115 876 1000
Designated Officer (LADO) Nottinghamshire County Council  Nottingham City Council	Hazel McKibbin 0115 9773921  Tina Wright 0115 876 5501 Tina.wright@nottinghamcity.go.uk
Child Line	0800 1111
NSPCC Information Service	0808 800 5000
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285



### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

- has the status and authority within the Provision to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, with regular updates
- acts as a source of support and expertise within the Provision
- has a working knowledge of local procedures
- makes staff aware of training courses and the latest policies on safeguarding
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate
- ensures that when a student leaves the Provision, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main student file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the Provision's contribution to child protection plans
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangement.
- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated annually.

### **The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

Is trained to the same level as the DSL and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of students. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

### **Children and Young People who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage



- at risk of being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

### **Children with special educational needs or disabilities**

Venture Learning recognises that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect such as:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

### **Allegations against staff or volunteers**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, our set procedures must be followed.

If you have a concern about an adult working within the Provision, please contact:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Rhys Griffiths	Head of Provision	<b>0115 9876621</b>

If your concern relates to the Head of Provision, please contact:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Stephen Fern	Finance Director	07712 707607

### **Staff training**

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

All staff will undertake training each September or at the onset of their employment covering as a minimum:

- Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect (including online safety)
- Local procedures for responding to concerns
- The Provision's behaviour policy
- Response to children that go missing in education
- The staff code of conduct



## **Safer recruitment**

Our Provision complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2019) and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements. by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history.

- At least one member of each recruitment panel will have completed safer recruitment training within the last 2 years.
- All relevant staff are made aware of the disqualification and disqualification by association legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant information.
- The Provision obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the Provision have been appropriately checked.
- The Provision maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

## **Volunteers**

All volunteers working with the Provision will be risk assessed and will undergo checks prior to commencing their work in the Provision, their contact with students and the supervision provided to them.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

## **Contractors**

The Provision checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised whilst students are on-site.

## **Site security**

Visitors to the Provision, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the Provision's safeguarding and health and safety regulations. The Head of Provision will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## **Extended school and off-site arrangements**

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the Provision, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site on behalf of our Provision we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our students attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.



## **Teaching our students about safeguarding**

Our students will receive education in relation to safeguarding through our curriculum. This may take the form of student briefings, external providers and pastoral sessions. We track our safeguarding education for young people to ensure that all aspects are covered through our curriculum and that students are getting a balanced understanding.

We ensure that staff knowledge is up to date through regular training to enable as to respond to the needs of the students.

## **Child Protection Procedures**

### **Recognising abuse**

To ensure that our students are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2019) refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse.

### **Taking action**

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- record the incident
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

### **If you are concerned about a student’s welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a student may be at risk. The student’s behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the student the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff must report these early concerns. If the student does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the student, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.



## **If a student discloses to you**

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a student talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the student know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL. The point at which they tell the student this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the students staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not be afraid of silences
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the student’s mother think about it
- at an appropriate time tell the student that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the student what will happen next
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- record the incident as soon as possible. Concerns must be recorded before the end of the working day
- seek support if they feel distressed.

## **Notifying parents**

The Provision will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a student with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the student. Therefore, if the Provision believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.





## Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the student and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL (or Deputy in their absence). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) emphasises that any member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the student's pastoral file.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the student and/or parents to share sensitive information within the Provision or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information without consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Head of Provision to consider.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent Provision staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

## Early Help

Within Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council there are a number of Early Help support routes to ensure that families receive targeted support and intervention when needed. Nottingham City's Children and Families Direct operate a 'front door' policy whereby all referrals are made through the same route and are then triaged ensuring that the correct support pathway is in place. Early Help may include CAF or Priority Families, which could be led by a trained member of the team, or targeted family support, which is led by a community team of support works working for the local authority.



## **Referral to children's social care**

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The student (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

## **Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy are unavailable.
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the student's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

## **Escalating concerns**

Staff need to be aware of those times when concerns may look as though they are not progressing to an outcome or some form of action. This may be indicated by:

- difficulty in getting hold of the DSL;
- staff not being satisfied about the decision of the DSL;
- staff aware that a colleague has not passed on a concern;
- external agencies not accepting a referral from an Provision when it is felt one is needed;
- staff not aware of what has happened to their concern because of a lack of feedback.

It is important that staff do not close down a concern because they feel "stuck" or "they can't do anymore". It is important to escalate concerns.

If there are concerns about the work of an external agency the Provision will follow the escalation steps outlined in the locally agreed procedures documents.

The important principle is not to allow a concern to be "closed down" without it having received the necessary attention, assessment and resolution.

If the options above have been explored fully and the concern still isn't being handled effectively and therefore placing the child or young person at risk, it is important that you continue to escalate your concerns by contacting the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.



## **Specific Safeguarding and Child Protection Issues**

### **Children with sexually harmful behaviour**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the Provision's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a student's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a student's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.

### **Children missing education**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The Provision will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the Local Authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the Provision day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

### **Peer-on-Peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment**

The Provision recognises that students may become victims of abuse from other students.

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.

Staff will report instances of peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment through the normal safeguarding concern process and recognise that support must be provided to both the alleged victim and abuser.

The Provision behaviour policy is available on the Provision website under the 'school policies' heading. The behaviour policy offers guidance around appropriate responses, sanctions and follow up work that is required whereas an incident of peer on peer abuse is discovered.

### **Children and the court system**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. The families of children may also be subject to child arrangements processes through the family court system.

We recognise that both circumstances may be stressful for children and appropriate support will be provided in line with local and national guidance.

### **Sexual exploitation of children**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation.



Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

The Provision includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

### **Honour-Based Violence**

'Honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBV are abuse.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so Provision staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by a female student about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. This should be done with the support of the DSL so that wider concerns for the child or young person are also considered. This will also enable the Provision to support the staff member through this process.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. Provision staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a student about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to England.



## **Radicalisation and Extremism**

The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

Provision staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable students to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the Provision follows the DfE advice Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

Our PREVENT Contact for Venture Learning is PC 1359 Atlas Iqbal from Special Branch at Nottinghamshire Police. He can be contacted on 101 x 3101359

## **Private fostering arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a student may be in a private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DSL and the Provision should notify the Local Authority of the circumstances.

## **Looked after children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The Provision ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority's virtual head for children in care.

## **Children with family members in prison**

Children who have family members that are sent to prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The Provision recognises that these children may need support. Support will be provided in line with guidance from the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders and local agencies.



## **Criminal exploitation of children (County Lines) and serious violence**

County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”.

It involves child criminal exploitation as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as ‘cuckooing’.

County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

Provision staff are vigilant to those children and concerns will be shared with the DSL and are given additional training in this area during the annual INSET presentation.

### **Domestic abuse**

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

### **Homelessness**

Being homeless, or being at risk of becoming homeless, presents a real risk to a child’s welfare.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support.

The DSL will be able to support students facing homelessness in supporting and signposting through appropriate agencies and support networks within the locality.

### **‘Upskirting’**

‘Upskirting’ typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence and may constitute sexual harassment.

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

Venture Learning is committed to embedding contextual safeguarding practice into its Culture of Vigilance.



## **Appendix One**

### **Four categories of abuse**

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is 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 (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is 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 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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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**

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 (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 (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**

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 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 care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.





## Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

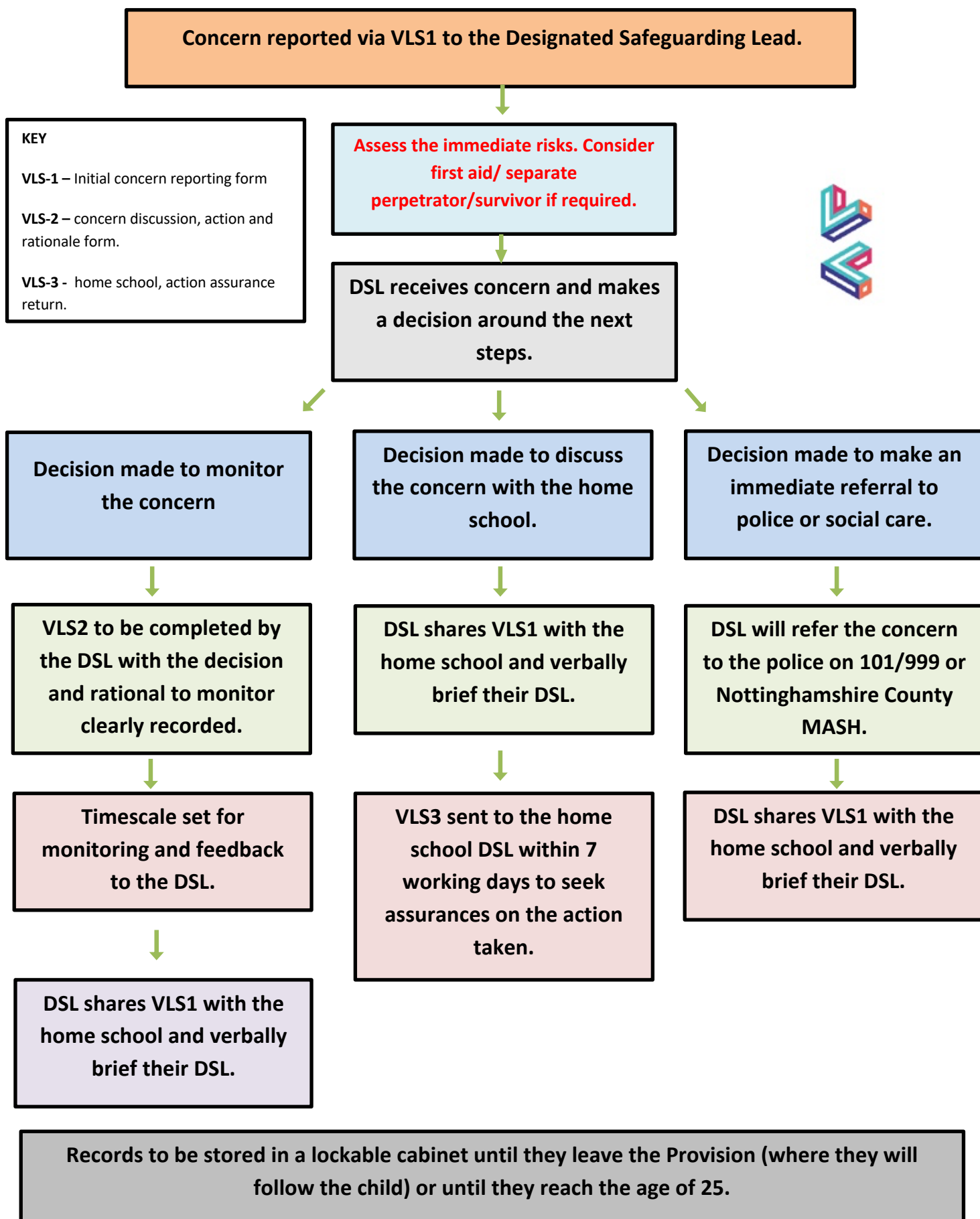
- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.





## Appendix Two – Concerns Flowchart



## Appendix 3 – COVID 19 Response

### Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for educational provisions to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools, and all childcare providers, were asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This sub-section of Venture Learning's Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements.

### Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the local authority (LA) and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to attend in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home. **\*Venture Learning currently has no students on placement with an EHCP\***

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

The Head of Provision and DSL (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Venture Learning will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Rhys Griffiths.

### Do vulnerable children have to continue to go to an education setting?

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school name will explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent or carer.



Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, Venture Learning or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Venture Learning will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend an school, including remotely if needed.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

Venture Learning and social workers will agree with families whether children in need should be attending. Venture Learning will then follow up on any student that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Venture Learning will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, Venture Learning will, when communicating with parents and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place, or discontinues, Venture Learning will notify their social worker and continue to contact and communicate with the child through parents/carers.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Venture Learning has a Designated Safeguarding Lead and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Rhys Griffiths

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Holly Crann

A trained DSL or deputy will be available to be contacted via phone at all times: **07587 408 996**

If the site is open and any students are expected to attend there will be a DSL or Deputy DSL on site at all times. All staff are aware of the DSL and must continue to follow reporting safeguarding concern procedures (Appendix 2) if they have any concerns when maintaining contact with students at home.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training due to cancellations and difficulties accessing training sessions during the outbreak.

All existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The Designated Safeguarding Lead should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

During the COVID-19 period any referrals about staff misconduct should be made by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).



Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the Head of Provision is aware, on any given day, which staff and students are expected on site, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Venture Learning will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Online Safety**

Venture Learning will continue to provide a safe environment, including online.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **Children and online safety away from school and college**

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in Venture Learning's Teaching & Learning Policy and staff should continue to adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct.

Venture Learning will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some simple things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

### **Supporting children not in school**

Venture Learning is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.



A record of regular communication should be kept for every student. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. Full-time students will be contacted three times per week and part-time students two times a week.

Venture Learning and its Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider any referrals as appropriate.

Venture Learning recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Staff at Venture Learning must be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

### **Supporting children in school**

When children are required to be on site, either because they are classed as vulnerable or where there is no option for care at home due to parents being critical keyworkers, Venture Learning will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Venture Learning will continue to be a safe space. The Head of Provision will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, maximising safety.

Venture Learning will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of coronavirus.

Where Venture Learning develops concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – the Head of Provision may make a decision to close the site for the safety of the students. If this is the case, parents of attending students will be contacted immediately and regularly as long as this remains the case. As soon as staff levels are appropriate, parents/carers should be informed immediately.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Venture Learning recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Venture Learning will listen carefully, and work with the young person, family and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded via the safeguarding process and appropriate referrals made.

