**Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and guidance**

**Control of Document:**  Senior Leadership Team

**Policy Aims and Intention:**

• To create an environment that promotes well-being and ensures personal safety and security for children and young people.

• To ensure safeguarding by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained to a high standard, follow correct guidance and are supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to concerns in response to current legislation and guidance.

• To actively engage with other partners including the police by complying with legislation and statutory duties around Prevent.

• To ensure that staff are trained in recognising factors that can make young people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Responsibility Group: Safeguarding and EDI Lead, ACL Safeguarding Group

Original Date of Acceptance: 19 December 2008

Last Review date: August 2020

Next Review date: August 2021

Audience: All staff, volunteers, employers, partners, learners and other members of the public in contact with those working with children and young people.

**The Policy**

For the purpose of this document the use of the term learner is inclusive of apprentices.

This policy has an appendix regarding Covid-19 which covers how safeguarding policies and processes might differ when compared with business as usual. This will be updated as appropriate.

This Policy outlines ACL’s procedures when responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and young people aged under 18 years and promoting children and young people’s welfare.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and young people and their families has a role to play in safeguarding them. This includes all staff and volunteers within our organisation. Children includes everyone under the age of 18. ‘Children’ therefore means ‘children and young people’ throughout.

**The definition of child protection** can be described as:

• Protecting children from maltreatment.

• Preventing impairment of children’s health or development.

• Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

• Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully’. (*The Children Act 2004)*

Whilst the legislation and procedures are different when responding to Child safeguarding concerns and Adult Safeguarding, most of the principles and procedures for staff are the same.

Adults are defined as people aged 18 years and above.

Safeguarding is not limited to incidents that happen in our centres, harm can take a variety of forms within or outside of family groups and all staff need to take this into consideration.

‘Keeping Children safe in Education’ *September 2020,* gives definitions and additional advice and guidance relating to specific wider areas of abuse which are: Children missing from education, Children and the court system, Children with family members in prison, Child sexual exploitation, County Lines, Serious Violence and Gang Involvement, Domestic abuse, Homelessness, So called ‘honour-based violence, FGM, Radicalisation, Peer on peer abuse.

**Management of Safeguarding:**

The service has a Safeguarding Lead with overall responsibility, and a Safeguarding Officer there are also staff who have Designated Safeguarding Officer training to ensure cover at all times. All staff have responsibilities for ensuring processes are implemented.

There is a Safeguarding Group which will support with developing and embedding practice and procedure throughout all areas of Adult Community Learning. This includes a Counsellor who is a member of the ACL forum with specific responsibility for safeguarding and members of the Essex Safeguarding Boards.

**Method of Implementation**

The Service will:

* Establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe and secure, are able to talk and are listened to.
* Ensure a culture of zero tolerance of abuse and other harmful behaviours
* Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and/or carers and colleagues from partner or referral agencies.
* Follow ECC employment processes including a rigorous recruitment, interview and appointment system to ensure that all staff and volunteers have appropriate, skills, qualifications and attitude to work in the educational sector, including working with adults with care and support needs
* Undertake DBS checks and other appropriate checks on all academic staff regardless of the type of provision, all staff who have an enhanced check will register for the DBS Update service. Basic checks will be repeated every 2 years.
* Carry out Risk Assessments to protect all learners under 18 years of age. Risk assessments will be spot checked regularly by the Safeguarding Lead. Attendance most be monitored in line with the attendance policy and they must be contacted promptly in the case of non-attendance.
* Train all staff (including members of the ACL Council Forum) at an appropriate level as soon as they commence employment. This will be Safe and Equal Partnership training, either the on-line or face to face training and Prevent training either Gov. on-line or the appropriate ETF prevent module. Online safety training is mandatory and all staff can access this through the VLE. A workbook is available for volunteers to complete. All staff will be kept informed about safeguarding responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings, ACL newsletter, awareness training and access to information and policy documents through the intranet and VLE. All staff will be made aware of ACL’s duties and expectations around Prevent and radicalisation and have sufficient training to understand factors which make learners vulnerable to extremist ideas and know what action to take. Employers are made aware of safeguarding responsibilities and complete a training workbook. All staff will be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or action of colleagues.
* Recognise that learners who have learning difficulties and disabilities can be vulnerable to abuse so that staff working in any capacity with such individuals will be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse
* Provide a clear learner charter on acceptable behaviour which is widely publicised throughout the service and drawn to the attention of all learners at induction.
* Ensure our approach to safeguarding is learner centred and staff consider at all times what is in the best interests of the learner.
* Provide Information on both Safeguarding and Prevent to learners both in the Centres and workplace via the ACL website, VLE, ACL videos, course introductions and posters, ensuring that all learners are able to recognise abusive actions and behaviours as such and understand procedures for reporting concerns. An information card is also given to all learners. Learners with learning disabilities on supported programmes will have appropriate safeguarding awareness built into induction of the courses they attend, an easy read information card is provided.
* Ensure that publicity and notice boards provide a high profile for safer practices and learning
* Ensure quality assurance in safeguarding is embedded. It is vital that we establish and monitor quality; this is reflected in both our Observation of Teaching and Learning (OTL) processes and Self-Assessment Reports (SAR).
* Not allow its centres to be used by extreme groups nor allow the display or distribution of extremist leaflets or literature from its premises
* Be aware that looked after and previously looked after children may have been abused or neglected and work together with other agencies, taking prompt action to safeguard these children when necessary.

**The Safeguarding Lead will ensure that either they or the Safeguarding Officer:**

* Investigate concerns and make appropriate referrals to Social Care Direct following the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Safeguarding Adults Guidelines and the SET Child Protection procedures, advise staff, and offer support when needed. Make appropriate referral to other organisations when needed including calling the police when necessary.
* Act as a single point of contact for Prevent. The Safeguarding Lead is aware of processes for referring to the channel programme where necessary. A service Prevent and Safeguarding Implementation plan will be regularly updated
* Undertake and update training every two years and will maintain contact with the Local Authority Safeguarding Boards, being aware of and following local arrangements.
* Keep and maintain a central concern log. Keep all records confidential, in line with statutory guidance and GDPR, ensuring due regard to principles which allow both sharing and withholding personal information.
* When working with partners or commissioning/sub-contracting learning the bidders safeguarding policies and procedures will be checked before finalising contracts
* Ensure support is provided for staff distressed by any disclosure of abuse. Essex County Council counselling service may also be used.

**Types of Abuse** (click on the links to find out more)

**Physical abuse**

Deliberate, physical act of hurting of a child which might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment (including actual or threatened physical attacks, verbal assault or neglect).

**Sexual abuse and exploitation**

(Including rape, other sexual assault, under age “consensual” sex, threatened touching or inappropriate sexual remarks)

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch 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 commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Sexual abuse Includes Upskirting ( taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing with the intent of obtaining sexual gratification or causing them humiliation, distress or alarm, which is now a criminal offense.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

‘Exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something as a result of engaging in sexual activities. This may take many forms, from seeming ‘consensual’ relationships to serious organised crime by gangs and groups.’

It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see himself or herself as a victim of exploitation. Perpetrators of CSE can be from within or from outside a child or young person’s family. If, any staff or volunteer is concerned a child is being sexually exploited follow the procedures set out in this document. <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/279511/step_by_step_guide.pdf>

**Domestic abuse**

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. 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.

**Child Criminal exploitation**

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Emotional abuse and exploitation**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a 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. Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s peers. It may causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Faith abuse**

The national action plan on faith abuse aims to address child abuse linked to faith or belief. This includes concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175437/Action_Plan_-_Abuse_linked_to_Faith_or_Belief.pdf>

**Honour based abuse**

HBA is incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community, it includes FGM and forced marriage as well as practices such as breast ironing. It often involves a wider network of family and can have multiple perpetrators.

**Forced marriage**

A forced marriage is one in which one or both spouses do not (or cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/70188/forced-marriage-guidelines_English.pdf>

**Gangs and youth violence**

This includes street gangs for whom crime and violence are a core part of their identity.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-schools-and-colleges-on-gangs-and-youth-violence>

**Financial abuse and exploitation**

Including misappropriation of the personal finances of young people using our services.

**Children and the court system**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in a criminal court, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed.

**Child missing from education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and College staff should follow the procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/395138/Children_missing_education_Statutory_guidance_for_local_authorities.pdf>

**Child missing from home or care**

When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from their family home or from local authority care.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care__3_.pdf>

**Children with family members in prison**

Children who have a family member sent to prison are more at risk of poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health

**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.

**Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. These can include:

• 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 disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs

• Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

**Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.

When faced with a situation of one child or young person behaving inappropriately towards another, a decision needs to be made about whether the problem behaviour constitutes bullying or a child protection concern. This is a decision that needs to be reached by the Designated Safeguarding Officer, in consultation with staff members responsible for the child and if necessary other relevant partners such as Social workers.

**Institutional abuse**

Where the rituals and routines mean young people have to sacrifice their lifestyle to conform with those of the institution.

**Discriminatory abuse**

Including that based on race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, personal circumstances.

**Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism**

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. Terrorism is the use of threat of action designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Children may be exposed to ideas which could lead to anti -social or criminal behaviours and/or behaviours which endanger individuals and communities. It is essential that staff and volunteers are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of our organisation’s wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences. We will aim to provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments. We will be mindful of the risk of children being exposed to extremist materials via the internet. If, any staff member or volunteer is concerned a child is at risk of becoming radicalised or has been, follow the procedures set out in this document. <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118194/channel-guidance.pdf>

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs by which young women are at risk of being exposed to genital mutilation either in the UK or by being sent overseas. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. If, any staff or volunteer is concerned a child has experienced FGM or is at risk follow the procedures set out in this document. **If a disclosure is made that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18, this must be reported to the Police, this is a statutory duty for teachers and is mandatory.** <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/safeguarding%20children%20from%20female%20genital%20mutilation%20-%20factsheet.pdf>

**Sexting**

Sexting is the exchange of self-generated sexually explicit images, through mobile picture messages or webcams over the internet.

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=UK_GO_S_E_GEN_New_Grant_NSPCC_Sexting&utm_term=definition_of_sexting&gclid=CLPgs6a4_cYCFbQatAodY7AK3A&gclsrc=aw.ds>

**Upskirting**

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

**Teenage relationship abuse**

Young people and teenagers experience as much relationship abuse as adults. Domestic violence is still a ‘hidden’ issue in our society; and it is even more so for teenagers. This is exacerbated by the fact that adolescents can be more accepting of, and dismissive about, this form of behaviour than adults.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/teengirls/Pages/relationshipviolence.aspx>

**Mental health**

Positive mental health is more than the absence or management of metal health problems; it is the foundation of wellbeing. Mental health problems can indicate possible other abuse is taking place or has taken place. Childhood abuse can have a lasting impact into adulthood. If staff are concerned that a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern they should speak to the Designated safeguarding Lead r<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213761/dh_124058.pdf>

**Private Fostering**

This is a fostering arrangement that is essentially made privately for the care of a child under 16 (18 if they are disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention it should last more than 28 days.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274414/Children_Act_1989_private_fostering.pdf>

**County Lines**

Criminal exploitation of children or people who are vulnerable is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

**Serious Violence**

*Staff must be aware of signs that vulnerable learners may have been approached by or are involved with people associated with criminal networks or gangs*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-schools-and-colleges-on-gangs-and-youth-violence>

**Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/about-homelessness/>

**What to do if you have a concern** (please also see flowchart at back of document)

Children/young people can be put at risk of harm through a variety of actions: inadequate observation of policies and procedures and failures to act, for example a reluctance to investigate allegations, whether proven or unsubstantiated and whether relating to incidences taking place within ACL provision (including outreach centres) or disclosure or abuse taking place at home, in residential accommodation, day centres, etc. For ACL this could translate as inadequate reporting and monitoring procedures

Peer on peer abuse must be taken seriously and the ACL Charter referred to. Allegations made about this must be investigated and dealt with through the safeguarding procedures and victims supported. It must be understood that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as banter.

Concerns can be discussed with your line manager in the first instance; if they are not available please do not delay in passing the information on. Concerns and disclosures should be reported immediately via MyConcern. If you think the concern is urgent or if you are unsure it is safeguarding or need to discuss please contact the Safeguarding Lead/Officer or one of the designated Officers.

**Ways that allegations might be made against another child/young person**

* A child or parent/carer might make a direct allegation against another child or young person
* A child or parent/carer might express discomfort with the behaviour of another child or young person that falls short of a specific allegation.
* Another child, member of staff or volunteer may directly observe behaviour from one child/young person towards another that gives cause for concern
* The organisation may be informed by a parent or by the police or another statutory authority that a child or young person is the subject of an investigation
* A child or young person may volunteer information that he/she has harmed another child or is at risk of doing so, or have committed an offence against or related to a child.

If it is behaviour that could be described as child abuse and has led to the victim possibly suffering significant harm, then it must be dealt with under child protection procedures. This should include all incidents of sexual assault and all but the most minor incidents of physical abuse.

**Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention**

* A child might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
* A child might make a direct disclosure about another child
* A child might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
* A member of staff might be concerned about a children’s appearance or behaviour or about the behaviours of a parent or carer towards a child
* A parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
* A parent might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure

**Talking to a child who has told you that he/she or another child is being abused**

* Respond calmly; listen to what is said without showing either disbelief or shock
* Don’t judge, accept what is said
* Jot down some notes, if this isn’t possible at the time as soon as you can, be as accurate as you can, use the child’s own words
* Keep the original notes as they can sometimes be needed in court
* Reassure the child that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
* Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
* Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it, do not promise confidentiality.
* Let the child tell his or her whole story. Don’t try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
* Ask the child what he/she would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don’t make or infer promises you can’t keep.
* It is not your job to investigate; this can only be done by trained professionals
* Concerns about data protection must not prevent staff and other professionals sharing information and working together to obtain a full picture in order to support the child.

Any member of staff or volunteer with suspicions or if told of an incident of abuse or neglect of a child or young person, whether at home, school, at our organisation or elsewhere must report this to the Safeguarding Lead who may need to make an immediate referral to Childrens Social Care/Police.

Issues that will be taken into account are:

* The child’s wishes and feelings
* The parent’s right to know (unless this would place the child or someone else in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
* The impact of telling the parent
* The current assessment of the risk to the child and the source of that risk
* Any risk management plans that currently exist.

**Child in need of support and early help**

Sometimes concerns about a child may not be about abuse. Staff and volunteers may be concerned that a child or family need some help in making sure all of a child’s needs are met or to address a particular problem. Therefore, it is vital that all staff and volunteers are aware of the need to provide support as soon as a problem emerges, at any time in a child’s life. The following steps should be taken if you think that a child or young person might benefit from early help service.

* Record the indicators that suggest that the child or young person might benefit from early help provision.
* Discuss your concerns with your manager and/or the designated safeguarding lead.
* Once there is agreement from all involved in the discussion, make arrangements to discuss this as a possibility with the most appropriate person in the family. Sometimes this may involve several discussions.
* Make a brief record of your conversations and discuss them with your manager so that a way forward can be planned.

Staff and volunteers must remember that they are acting in a position of trust, they may be seen as role models by children and young people and must therefore act in an appropriate manner at all times.

**Keeping Ourselves Safe**

The following guidelines aim to outline good practice, promote the personal safety of staff and volunteers and protect them from potential allegations while helping to safeguard adults and young people:

•Always seek the person’s permission before touching them.

• Avoid being left alone in a room with an individual, if this does happen make sure the door is left open, and that another staff member knows what you are doing.

•Report concerns or worries about other staff members or volunteers to the appropriate person following the safeguarding procedures

• Record all incidents and accidents accurately on an incident report form and inform your line manager at the earliest opportunity.

•If a learner is accidentally injured as a result of a staff member or volunteers actions, seems distressed in any way, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, always report such incidents as soon as possible to your line manager and make a written report.

• If a learner appears to develop an infatuation with you don’t encourage this and report the situation to your line manager.

•Ensure consent forms are signed when taking photographs of all learners

**In order to keep yourself safe, do not:**

• Spend time alone with learners in closed classrooms – please leave doors open or use public spaces

•Give learners personal details such as home phone number, personal mobile number, private email address and home address – If you want to offer email contact please use your ECC e-mail address or communicate through the VLE

•Give learners lifts in your car, however short the journey or except lifts from learners

•Take learners to your home or visit their homes

•Arrange to meet learners outside an organised activity or service.

• Invite or accept invitations from learners as a friend on social networking sites such as Facebook

If these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full prior knowledge and consent of your line manager and where applicable the person’s support worker or key worker.

**Never:**

• Engage in sexually proactive activities with learners.

• Encourage or allow learners to become emotionally dependent on you.

• Enter areas designated only for the opposite sex.

• Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.

• Allow learners to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use it yourself.

• Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a learner, even in fun.

• Let any allegation made be ignored or go unrecorded.

• Do things of a personal nature for learners that they can do themselves.

• Promise to keep information secret.

**Physical contact and learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties**

Touch can contribute to a multi-sensory approach and supports our learners to make sense of their environment. It is supportive and comforting and can help develop trust and build relationships between learner and staff. Touch offers meaningful communication to our learners and prevents periods of isolation and loneliness, which can manifest itself in difficult or self-stimulating behaviours.

**It is acceptable to touch learners in order to:**

• Function as the main form of communication or reinforce other communication, e.g. hand on shoulder while speaking.

• Give physical support and guidance.

• Give reassurance – communicate security and comfort

• Act to give protection in a potentially dangerous or hazardous situation

• Respond to learner’s use of physical contact for communication and making social connection

**It is not acceptable to touch learners in order to:**

• Exploit or coerce the learners

• Satisfy your own needs at the expense of the learner by forcing affection

• Use touch to correct a learner

• React in anger

• Have sexual contact

**Be aware of the following:**

• Physical contact being misunderstood and triggering sexual arousal – be tuned in to feedback signals from learners

• Learners may sometimes indulge in touches to intimate areas of a member of staffs body when there is no sexual intent or understanding, if this happens withdraw from the learner or cease to touch, don’t give significant negative feedback at the time as this may reinforce the behaviour.

• Whenever possible give regard to the learner’s right to accept and withdraw from physical contact

**Guidelines**

• Know why you are doing it, and be able to explain

• Respect the learners rights to withdraw if they so wish

• If the use of physical contact is part of the learners’ objectives then record this in their ILP

• Get to know your learners well, read signals, if you are not happy or comfortable with a situation, back away.

• Where possible have other staff present in the room

**Use of reasonable force**

If circumstances mean that force may need to be used to safeguarding a person the decision is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned and should always depend on individual circumstances. The term reasonable force covers a broad range of actions that require a degree of physical contact; it may be passive physical contact such as standing between learners or blocking their path or physical contact such as leading them by the arm. Reasonable means using no more force than is needed.

**Allegations involving staff/volunteers**

For concerns about staff /volunteers including supply staff or if there is a suspicion or an allegation is made against a staff member contact your line manager immediately. If the concern is about your line manager or a Senior Manager contact the Safeguarding Lead who will liaise with the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). If you do not feel able to share your concerns please refer to the ECC Whistle Blowing Policy. If there is a concern raised and it is felt that it is not being acted on by the Safeguarding Lead, then it can be referred directly to Childrens services / Adult Social care. Concerns regarding allegations about staff must also be addressed following part 4 of KCSIE.

**Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

All Line Managers will consult with and advise all staff on the implementation of this policy.

Incidents relating to this policy and its effectiveness will be evaluated by the safeguarding group and reported through the annual Self-Assessment cycle and quality improvement planning and the ACL Safeguarding Annual Report.

**Links to other ACL policies**:

Adult safeguarding Policy

Attendance Policy

Computer Use Policy

Learning Support Policy

Equality and Diversity policy

Exclusion Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Harassment and bullying policy

Visitor and External Speaker policy

ECC Safer Recruitment

ECC Code of Conduct

ECC Whistle Blowing policy

Staff handbook

ACL Charter



**See also pages13-15**