

Child Safety and Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to all staff, mentors and volunteers working for or engaging with participants, whether in the UK, or internationally either as a permanent member of staff, contractor or freelancer, mentor or volunteer and regardless of seniority or role.

Everyone has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, regardless of how a child might come into contact with us.

Engaging with children

Tellus Education Group Ltd. engages with children across the globe through the services that we provide and has a legal duty to ensure that all the children we engage with have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity. It is an obligation we take very seriously.

The company will not tolerate any form of child abuse including online grooming, possession and distribution of child abuse images. Any such behaviour will result in the company taking disciplinary action and, potentially, summary dismissal. Should the company become aware of past or current convictions or upheld disciplinaries for gross misconduct that suggest there may be a risk to children, these will be considered in accordance with relevant legislation and alongside the requirements of the Child Protection policy.

Policy Objectives

- Safeguarding children, including child protection, is everybody's responsibility.
- To ensure all staff, mentors, volunteers, contractors and freelancers are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children in all areas and activities of the company.
- To ensure that staff know what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of a child or concerned about the behaviour of an adult who works with children.
- To ensure staff know where they can go for advice and support if they are not sure about any aspect of working with children.

Definition

Safeguarding is to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process and focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Meridian School of English is a trading name of Tellus Education Group Ltd.

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The child protection policy and safeguarding policy apply to all children up to the age of 18 years of age.

What is Child Protection?

Child protection is the response to the different ways in which a young person's or child's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health is damaged by the actions of another person.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be as damaging to a child as physical abuse.

An abused child can experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It can often happen over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event, and increasingly it can happen online.

We know that children are more vulnerable to abuse because they have a disability, or because they are experiencing parental and child mental health issues, bullying, parental or child substance misuse, (such as drugs or alcohol), and behavioural issues including exclusion from education, social isolation etc.

Types of abuse

The Government guidance document *Working Together to Safeguard Children* describes four categories of abuse; these guidelines can be considered appropriate for vulnerable adults too:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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 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.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in viewing, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions of Abuse as cited in: Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2018, Appendix A: Glossary, P: 102-105)

Grooming

Grooming is defined as developing the trust of an individual or his or her family for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Grooming can happen both online and in person.

Safeguarding Children Online

If you have any online safeguarding concerns, whether related to online grooming or child abuse images, these must be referred to our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Julie Orchard julieo@tellusgroup.co.uk or our Designated Safeguarding Person, Peri Eskell perie@tellusgroup.co.uk immediately. They are responsible for taking the necessary action to refer to and alert the appropriate agencies. Regardless of how you have become aware of online child abuse images, be it via your personal or work e-mail account, you must refer it in accordance with this policy.

All those coming into contact with young people are required to follow our Online Safety and Social Media Policy.

Online Abuse

Is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks or playing games online. Sexual abuse can happen online too.

Dealing with a Disclosure

You may be concerned about the welfare of a child for a number of reasons. For example: you may have observed an injury; witnessed or heard an interaction between children or between an adult and a child; you may be concerned about bullying or inappropriate use of mobile phones; you may know of someone who has been, or is, accessing or sharing child sex abuse images; a child may exhibit inappropriate sexualised behaviour or awareness, or look neglected or withdrawn in their behaviour; or a child might make a disclosure to you that they or someone they know is being abused.

If a child says they want to tell you a 'secret' or they disclose information that may suggest they are at risk of, or have been, abused it is important that you tell them that you cannot keep secrets and that, depending upon what they tell you, you may have to tell someone else in order to keep them safe. In the majority of cases the child will disclose to you anyway as, quite often, a child will have prepared themselves to make a disclosure.

It is important that you:

- React calmly.
- Be aware of your reactions.
- Keep your response short and simple.
- Be aware of your own non-verbal messages.
- Don't stop a person from talking freely.
- Observe and listen but do not ask for more information unless necessary for safety reasons or critical incident.
- Record in written form immediately after the discussion
- Tell them that when you have spoken to someone they will be told what is going to happen next.

Should anyone have any concerns or discomfort with pupil online communication please report this to the Designated Safeguarding Person, Peri Eskill (perie@tellusgroup.co.uk) or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Julie Orchard (julieo@tellusgroup.co.uk).

In most situations the child is unlikely to be in immediate danger, but if they are you must contact the police.

Safe Recruitment

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) carries out criminal record checks for specific positions, professions, employment, offices, works and licences included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and those prescribed in the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) regulations.

All staff are required to have a DBS check in place prior to the individual undertaking their role. Should an application still be in progress, the individual will be supervised during any lessons.

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For online lessons via Teams or other platform, we advise that young people are supervised by their own parent/guardian and our student meeting policy settings are set to not allow any direct messaging between students outside of classes.

Consent

Informed consent from the child, parent, legal guardian or organisation with parental responsibility for the child must always be obtained in advance of working with children in any capacity and documented evidence of consent must always be kept.

- Each child and young person should be formally registered within the group. The information includes a consent form which their parent/guardian must complete.
- Attendance register: a register should be kept for each session.

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