

Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for all staff and volunteers within Ambitious about Autism, including TreeHouse School and Ambitious College. It should be used in conjunction with the Child Safeguarding and Protection Procedure to prevent and reduce the risk of abuse to all children who use Ambitious about Autism's services or come into contact with staff or volunteers.

1.2 Background and need

This policy and its associated procedure are mandatory for all staff and volunteers, as they must be aware of their individual and collective roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect.

The policy and procedure are implemented within the framework of relevant national legislation and guidance which includes: Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, HM Government, March 2015, Safeguarding Disabled Children Practice Guidance, Department for Children, Schools and Families 2009; and Keeping Children Safe in Education, statutory guidance for schools and colleges, DfE, September 2016; Governance handbook for academies, multi-academy trusts and maintained schools.

These are the principal legislative and regulatory requirements for Ambitious about Autism to comply with in order to demonstrate effective safeguarding policy and procedure.

1.3 Link to Mission and Beliefs

Ambitious about Autism exists to help children and young people with autism to learn, thrive and achieve. This can only be attained if children and young people are safeguarded and protected from abuse and neglect.

1.4 Outcomes

As a result of the policy and associated procedure being followed, children will be better protected from the impact of abuse and neglect. The staff, volunteers, governors and trustees will take the necessary steps to safeguard and protect children including, where guided to in procedures, contacting statutory agencies or/and discussing concerns with parents/carers.

2. Key Principles

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount; this is enshrined in the Children Act 1989 and should be evident in all responses to any concerns of abuse and neglect.
- Children and young people with autism are children and young people first and as such have an equal right to protection from all types of harm and abuse; all staff and volunteers should advocate where necessary to ensure this principle is applied by all.
- Working in effective partnership with parents/carers, children, young people and statutory agencies should be demonstrable whenever there are concerns about abuse and neglect for a child.
- All staff and volunteers have a shared and individual professional responsibility to take appropriate steps to protect and safeguard children in line with this policy and associated procedure.

3. The Policy Statement

- This policy and associated procedure applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, governors and representatives of Ambitious about Autism, including agency, and volunteer staff.

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- Ambitious about Autism is committed to the prevention of and protection from abuse and neglect of all children who come into contact with the organisation through its staff, volunteers or representatives, in whatever capacity that contact occurs.
- Ambitious about Autism is committed to taking all necessary steps to stop abuse happening, whether that abuse is perpetrated by staff, volunteers, family members of children, members of the public or other children or young people.
- Ambitious about Autism is committed to its duty of care to children it has contact with. If there are concerns about staff or volunteers perpetrating abuse, it will facilitate any action required to address this without delay. This will include actions required to address abusive behaviours and attitudes. On occasions when staff have been dismissed because of concerns about abuse or neglect they will be referred by Ambitious about Autism to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and / or relevant professional bodies.
- Ambitious about Autism is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers of pupils and those who access Ambitious about Autism’s services and will therefore publish online the safeguarding policy and procedure. In addition, it will inform all parents annually that it has a duty to contact the local authority Children’s Social Care department if there are concerns that a child may be being abused.
- Ambitious about Autism is committed to providing a curriculum that enables children and young people to learn to keep themselves safe and how to raise concerns if they do not feel safe in all aspects of their lives.
- Ambitious about Autism is committed to ensuring that senior members of the organisation will be, without delay, fully briefed and consulted with by staff, on any concerns about abuse or neglect; the process for this is detailed in the procedure. The Headteacher of TreeHouse School is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school. The Principal is the DSL for Ambitious College. The Director of education (Charity Lead) is the DSL for all activities and staff not involved in TreeHouse School or Ambitious College.
- The Board of Trustees and the Governing Bodies of TreeHouse School and Ambitious College are responsible for reviewing the policy annually and ensuring that training is in place for the DSLs.
- Ambitious about Autism is committed to working with the current London Child Protection Procedures (as at March 2016 this means the 5th Edition, issued 2015) and the procedures of any local authorities where children reside.
- Ambitious about Autism is committed to working with the London Borough of Haringey Children’s Services and their Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if there are any concerns about, or perceived risks in respect of staff or volunteers in relation to TreeHouse School and Ambitious College, and Hounslow Childrens Social Care in relation to Ambitious College.
- Ambitious about Autism is committed to ensuring all staff and volunteers including those with designated responsibilities, have appropriate levels of up-to-date safeguarding training. This includes face to face training, online training, and reading the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 Part One and Code of Conduct Policy. The designated safeguarding lead and deputies undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. This training is provided every two years. In addition to their formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals but at least annually to keep up to date with any developments relevant to their role.

4. Risk Assessment

Should this policy and associated procedure be ignored or disregarded, the possible outcomes are:

- **For children and young people** – placed at further risk of harm and neglect.
- **For staff and volunteers** – may be subject to inquiry, investigation internally or externally for failing to take appropriate steps, internally may then be subject to a disciplinary process.

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- **For the Designated Safeguarding Leads, the Chief Executive, Board of Trustees, the TreeHouse School and Ambitious College Governing Bodies** – possible inquiry and report from the Charities Commission and regulators or recommendation from local authorities to regulators.
- **For Ambitious about Autism** – possible risk of public scrutiny and ultimately risk of prosecution and/or additional inspections from Ofsted, and ultimately deregistration. All of the above can lead to negative media attention and damage to the reputation of the charity and its services.

5. Definitions

Children - as in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 respectively, **a child** is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children - is defined for the purposes of this policy 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 and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection - is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – has the lead statutory responsibility for all safeguarding and protection matters within the charity as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016.

6. Legislation and Regulation requirements

For Ambitious about Autism to meet its regulatory and statutory responsibilities the following legislation and associated guidance are of significance. (N.B. this is not an exhaustive list).

Legislation

The Children Act 1989.

The Children Act 2004.

Education Act 1996

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Children and Families Act 2014

Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

Guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016

Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. March 2015

What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused. Advice for practitioners. March 2015.

Preventing youth violence and gang involvement, practical advice for schools and colleges, Home Office.

What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited. DfE June 2012

Safeguarding Disabled Children Practice Guidance. (DCSF 2009).

Safeguarding Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced. (DCSF 2008)

Use of reasonable force in schools. DfE July 2013.

Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties (DfES 2002).

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