

## Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service (THAMES)

### Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

#### Overview

This policy applies to all THAMES staff working either as an employee or as an external provider of services (e.g. workshop leaders, volunteers, visiting artists, students) working on behalf of THAMES. THAMES is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect everyone working for THAMES to share this commitment. We all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe and are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

#### The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children and young people who receive THAMES' services.
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

#### Legal Framework

This policy has been devised using the following:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

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- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children including Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education guidance Sept 2020

It should be read alongside other Council policies and procedures including:

- The THAMES' Staff Handbook
- Advice provided by the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Board
- Online teaching guidance (ongoing)
- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety
- Complaints and Whistleblowing procedures
- Safer Recruitment

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989).
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency communication needs or other issues.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff, and volunteers.

- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and by involving parents and children appropriately.

## Contacts

- Iain Wilson (Tel: 020 7364 0431), Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Jak Berry: Manager: Instrumental/Vocal Music (Tel: 0207 364 0431)
- THAMES Office Manager: Hayley Cook/Frances Cherry (Tel: 0207 364 0431)  If a child is at immediate risk of harm contact the police on 999.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO – see below) can be contacted Monday to Friday: 9-5pm on 020 7364 0677 or by email on [LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk). There is an out of hours contact number for evenings and the weekend 020 7364 4079.

## The Role of the LADO

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is the person who should be notified when it has been alleged that someone who works or volunteers with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she or he may pose a risk of harm to children
- inappropriate relationship between a professional and a child
- behaviour in private life that is or could lead to a safeguarding concern.

The role involves having oversight of allegations about practitioners which meet the above criteria, ensuring that these allegations or concerns about adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way. It is also important to ensure that the voice of the child or young person is heard and taken into account at every stage.

The LADO sits within children services in the Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service.

The responsibilities of the local authority in relation to the LADO role are outlined in Working Together 2019 and chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures 2017 which addresses the management of allegations against adults who work with children and young people.

### Why do we need to contact the LADO?

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 Document states that: "Any allegation should be reported immediately to a senior manager within the organisation. The Designated Officer should also be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the Police".

It is everyone's responsibility to protect children and safeguard all in our care. Organisations must have a safeguarding policy and part of the policy must state about the procedure for managing an allegation.

Confidentiality and information must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- protect children
- facilitate enquiries
- avoid victimisation
- safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected
- manage disciplinary/complaints aspects.

### What happens once a referral is accepted?

A referral will be accepted by the LADO if it meets the criteria set out above. Please see the referral form on the Tower Hamlets website for more information about whether allegations meet the criteria.

Referrals will be subject to an initial evaluation and where appropriate involvement of other sectors including the police, social care, employers and regulatory bodies. The initial evaluation will focus on the nature of the concern, safeguarding for the particular child and appropriate consideration for

the practitioner concerned. Allegations Against Staff and Volunteer (ASV) strategy meetings are also convened by the LADO to manage specific situations.

Each agency will use their own procedures to investigate an allegation. The LADO will offer guidance around any safeguarding concerns, for example an individual's contact with children while the allegations are being investigated.

### What should practitioners do?

If tutors have concerns about a practitioner working or volunteering with children they should discuss these concerns with their manager, and/ or their organisation's designated safeguarding lead. This discussion should help to clarify whether the criteria for making a LADO referral has been met. If so, any practitioner can make a referral using the form on the council website.

If it is still unclear whether the criteria has been met after this discussion, practitioners can contact the LADO on 020 7364 0677 for consultation and advice.

You should not hesitate to call to discuss any safeguarding concern that you may have relating to an allegation of professional abuse against children.

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## 1. Definitions

### Child

A child is any person under the age of 18

### Vulnerable adult

A person who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - Lead person responsible for safeguarding and child protection.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) - Works with the DSL and other DDSL's with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Reports to the DSL.

Designated Safeguarding Team (DST) - The DSL and DDSLs comprise the team who hold ongoing responsibility for safeguarding leadership. When appropriate the team will work with and report to

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the DST with responsibility for Safeguarding. The safeguarding team roles are assigned to leaders across the organisation as appropriate and support contextual safeguarding assessment.

Wider support is available from the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Board, Tower Hamlets LADO, and other appropriate organisations advised by the LADO. The team will also work with advisors regarding Looked After Children and Care Leavers

### Other children and young people

Young people over the age of 18 would not be considered to be either children or vulnerable adults; however THAMES has a continuing commitment to their safety and wellbeing. Whilst there will usually not be a statutory responsibility to refer such matters to Social Services, the below policy and procedures should be followed with regards to identifying and reporting abuse and dealing with disclosure. This information should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will consider how THAMES and/or external agencies can support the person to ensure their physical and emotional wellbeing.

### Past Abuse

Any disclosure of past abuse should also be dealt with in accordance with this policy and associated procedures. This is to ensure that any criminal activity is dealt with appropriately and action can be taken to reduce the risk of future abuse.

### Child Protection file

The DSL is responsible for recording all child protection concerns in the child protection folder. This is kept in a secure, password-protected folder. Only the DSL and DDSL may have access to ensure confidentiality. The information can be shared with appropriate agencies when it is a statutory matter. The DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with a new school or college to continue to support victims of abuse and have the support in place for when the child arrives.

## 2. Safeguarding procedures in different settings

THAMES works in multiple settings with children and young people of different ages and with a variety of different organisations. As such, all THAMES staff must be aware of their responsibilities and the procedures in the different settings they work in. These can be categorised into four groups:

1. Work in schools: This includes one to one teaching, groups tuition and ensembles/groups that THAMES tutors deliver in schools. THAMES Tutors have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding Policy in each school they work in and who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is in each setting.
2. Out of school hours activities: This includes working at the Saturday and Wednesday Music Centres and working with other ensembles such as the Tower Hamlets Youth Orchestra.
3. The THAMES Office and Professional Development Centre (PDC): The procedures for this setting are as outlined in this policy and any concerns should be reported to the THAMES Office Manager and DDSL.
4. Projects with partner organisations: These are covered by this policy and any concerns should be reported to the Head of THAMES (DSL). THAMES Tutors should also familiarise themselves with the safeguarding policies of the partner organisations if working on a project.
5. External events & performances: These are covered by this policy and any concerns should be reported to the Head of THAMES (DSL). THAMES Tutors should also familiarise themselves with the safeguarding policies of the partner schools/organisations/venues involved in the external event or performance.

## 3. What to do if a child/vulnerable adult discloses something to you

All children and young people must be able to place their trust and confidence in any adult working for THAMES. They must feel confident and comfortable that they can speak about any worries or concerns they may have and that they will be listened to, taken seriously and responded to appropriately. All staff must therefore know what to do if a student chooses to talk to them about any matter which raises child protection concerns.

All staff must:

- Listen to what the student is saying without interruption and without asking leading questions.
- Respect the student's right to privacy but not promise confidentiality.

- Reassure the student that he/she has done the right thing in telling.
- Explain to the student that in order to keep him/her safe from harm the information that has been shared must be passed on.
- Report what was has been disclosed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy if not available) for that setting.
- Record, as soon as is practicable, what was said using the student's own words.
- Sign and date the record.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Assess any urgent medical needs of the pupil.
- Consider whether the pupil has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm.



Confirm whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff.

- Consider whether the matter should be discussed with the pupil's parents/guardians or school whether to do so may put the pupil at further risk of harm because of delay or the parent's possible actions or reactions
- Seek advice if unsure that a child protection referral should be made. The DSL or DDSL will decide whether or not to make a referral to the pupil's school. In some cases the Tower Hamlets LADO will advise on what to do.

If a referral is not considered appropriate at that stage, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make full written records of the information that they have received detailing the reasons for their judgement that the matter was not referred to the local authority.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy is not available, advice can be sought from the Tower Hamlets LADO.

- The Local Authority Designated Officer can be contacted Monday to Friday: 9-5pm on 020 7364 0677 or by email on [LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk). There is an out of hours contact number for evenings and the weekend 020 7364 4079.
- You can call the NSPCC helpline at any time for advice or reporting in an emergency 0808 800 5000
- If you believe a child or vulnerable adult to be in immediate danger, you should call 999.

#### 4. Recognition and Response to Abuse

THAMES Tutors working in the schools are particularly well placed to notice any physical, emotional or behavioural signs that suggest a pupil may be suffering, or at risk of, significant harm. Harm means the ill-treatment or impairment of a child or vulnerable adults mental and physical health and/or development, including that caused as a result of witnessing the illtreatment of another person and we understand that not all children and young people will choose to talk, but may communicate through different ways. We will always be aware of and alert to any possible indicators that a student is suffering harm.



All staff will report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- All staff will receive regular safeguarding training in order that their awareness to the possibility of a child or vulnerable adult suffering harm through physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect remains high. This will include training about radicalisation/the PREVENT strategy and the legal obligation for teachers to report FGM carried out on a girl under the age of 18 to the police. This training normally takes place at the beginning of the Academic Year on the second day of Staff INSET.
- All staff will be aware that mental health problems can be an indicator of harm or potential harm. Immediate action will be taken where this presents a safeguarding concern.
- We will ensure that the training our staff undertake contains opportunities for learning about those specific areas of child protection about which everyone working in education should be aware of and alert to.
- The Safeguarding Team will take a contextual approach to assessing child protection concerns and take into consideration the wider environmental factors that are present in a child's life and whether they impact on the threat to their safety and/or welfare.
- All staff, but especially the Safeguarding Leadership Team will consider whether children are at additional risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families.
- We understand the role that Early Help can play in supporting all children and particularly those at higher risk. The DSL and DDSL's will assess concerns and consider whether early help is the appropriate course of action in partnership with the relevant Tower Hamlets agencies as appropriate.

## 5. Providing a Safe Environment

All parents/guardians must feel secure in the knowledge that they are entrusting their children to adults who will strive to keep them safe. We will do this by:

- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within lessons, ensembles and projects. Ensuring that our staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and child protection according to their role and responsibilities and keep a record of all training undertaken.
- Ensure all staff and pupils adhere to procedures as outlined in the Staff Handbook and through other formal guidance provided throughout the year.



- Working in partnership with all other services and agencies involved in the safeguarding of children and young people.
- Always following safer recruitment procedures when appointing staff or volunteers to work for our organisation. All teachers and office team have enhanced DBS checks.
- Welcoming visitors in a safe and secure manner with appropriate signing in and out procedures.
- Undertaking risk assessments when planning activities or trips.

## 6. Attendance

We are aware that pupil attendance can be an indicator of potential risk of harm. It is acknowledged that, as an out of school provider, pupils may be absent from lessons for a number of reasons, none of which would suggest any risk of harm. However, the following procedures will help identify any patterns of attendance that indicate potential risk:

- Schools (and parents at the SMC) are expected to notify THAMES of any days/lessons they are unable to attend
- Teachers should appraise pupils' absence to identify any patterns and notify the office team so they can follow this up.
- Any uncharacteristic attendance patterns, including sustained absence without prior notification, should be immediately investigated with the support of the office team.

## 7. Pupil Behaviour

- We will always aim to maintain a safe, calm and respectful learning environment by expecting good behaviour from our pupils.
- We understand that peer on peer abuse is damaging for pupils and can include bullying, cyber bullying, physical abuse, sexual violence and harassment, sexting and initiation rituals

We will follow the procedures in cases of peer on peer abuse. We understand that the perpetrator may also be a victim of abuse and will need support for this side of the situation.

- We are aware that any physical response from a member of staff to a pupil's poor behaviour could lead to a concern being raised by the pupil or parent/guardian. And physical restraint should only be used as a last resort if a pupil poses either a danger to themselves or to another.
- We will include in incident records where physical restraint has been used.



- We will always notify parents/guardians of any such incident.

## 8. Bullying

- We aim to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is known to be unacceptable. We will always take seriously any reports of bullying and respond appropriately.
- We understand that bullying may take different forms and may include discrimination or harassment on the grounds of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, gender identity or pregnancy. Any such incident will be dealt with in accordance with our Guidelines.

## 9. Sexual harassment and sexual violence

- Sexual harassment and sexual violence are unacceptable. We understand that both can occur online, offline and simultaneously. We will challenge such inappropriate behaviour.
- We will always take seriously any reports and incidents of harmful sexual behaviour and respond appropriately. We understand that both staff and pupils can be victims.

## 10. Health & Safety

We have a Health & Safety Policy that demonstrates the consideration we give to minimising any risk to pupils, children and young people when on the premises and when undertaking activities out of college under the supervision of our staff.

## 11. Working Together with Parents/Guardians

### Pupil Information

We recognise the importance of keeping up-to-date and accurate information about pupils. All pupils are expected to provide us with accurate and up-to-date information and inform us of any changes, as outlined below:

- their own, accurate name, address, telephone numbers and email addresses
- names and contact details of their legal parent/guardian
- two emergency contact details (with an explanation if they differ from above)
- up-to-date health and medical information if necessary
- any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the pupil

### Confidentiality

- Information about children and young people given to us by themselves, their parents/guardians, or by other agencies will remain confidential. Staff will be given relevant information only where it is necessary in order to support the pupil's welfare, safety or learning.
- We are, however, under a duty to share any information which is of a child protection or safeguarding nature. We understand that this is in the best interests of the child and overrides any other duties we have regarding confidentiality and information sharing.
- We have a duty to keep any records which relate to child protection and safeguarding work undertaken by us or our partner agencies and to ensure that these are kept apart from the main pupil's record, stored securely and only accessible to key members of staff. We also have a duty to share such information with other agencies or partners, where this is justified as being necessary to ensure the continued safety and protection of the child.

### Parental Feedback Opportunity

Parents are invited to discuss their child with tutors in out-of-school settings such as the Saturday Music Centre (SMC). If you wish to do this it is important that meetings are arranged in advance so that appropriate time is given for any discussion.

## 12. Referrals to partner agencies

We have a duty to work with external agencies including the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Board as directed as part of our safeguarding responsibilities. If we have a reason to be concerned about the welfare of a pupil we will always seek to discuss this with the pupil's parents/guardians in the first instance. On occasion, according to the nature of our concern, it may be necessary for us to make an immediate referral to Social Services when to do otherwise may put the child at risk of further harm either because of delay, or because of the actions of the parents/guardians.

## 13. Allegations against other pupils (children and young people)

Allegations may arise against other pupils which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and radicalisation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a child, some of the following features will be found. The allegation:

- Is of a serious nature, possibly a criminal offence
- Is made against someone who is older and refers to their behaviour towards someone younger or vulnerable
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this pupil
- Indicates that young people outside of the immediate learning environment/situation may be affected

When such an allegation is made, it should be referred to the DSL or DDSL who will discuss with DBS/Social Services and/or the police as appropriate.

## 14. Safeguarding concerns raised by external agencies

If THAMES receives information from an external agency that a young person raises safeguarding concerns, we will work as advised to ensure other children and young people are kept safe and they themselves are not open to malicious allegations.

## 15. Safer Recruitment

We follow guidance for safer recruitment and have a secure Safer Recruitment policy. This is in line with the Tower Hamlets Council Human Resources Recruitment Policy across the Council.

## 16. Induction

We will always provide newly appointed staff with appropriate guidance about safe working practice, boundaries and propriety and explain the consequences of not following the guidance. All staff are provided with the THAMES Staff Handbook and whilst induction always begins with full staff INSET it continues with a 6 monthly probationary period which includes one to one discussions and support for particular needs.

## 17. Continuing Professional Development

We will ensure that all staff receive regular training in child protection and safeguarding. This normally takes place once a year (in mid-September) at the start of the Academic Year.

## 18. Concerns or Allegations

We will always act on concerns or allegations that relate to safeguarding. If staff members have concerns about another staff member then this should be referred to the Head of THAMES (DSL) or DDSL. Where there are concerns about the DDSL these should be referred to the Head of THAMES and where there are concerns about the Head of THAMES (DSL) this should be referred to the Head of Education and Partnerships or to Tower Hamlets' Human Resources Department. This will include when a staff member is involved in an incident outside of THAMES work which does not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children.

## 19. Dismissal

We will always refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service any member of staff who is dismissed because of misconduct relating to a child or vulnerable adult and (in the case of potentially criminal behaviour) the police.

## 20. Safe Practice

We understand that all adults working in or on behalf of THAMES have a duty to safeguard all children and young people and promote their welfare. We aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for our pupils through the relationship we have with them and their parents/guardians

and will always seek to ensure that all adults working for THAMES behave in a manner that fosters this relationship.

We will ensure that all staff are clear about the expectations we have of their behaviour towards all children and young people and that any incident that falls below our expected standards will be dealt with appropriately. Teachers should refer to Appendix A for an outline of THAMES' expectations.

## 21. Monitoring and Reviewing our Policy and Practice

- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will continually monitor our safeguarding and child protection practices with support from the DDSL's and bring to the notice of the Head of THAMES or other appropriate bodies any potential weaknesses.
- The Head of THAMES (DSL) and DDSL's will work together on any aspect of safeguarding and child protection that is identified as an area for development over the coming year.
- Our policy will be reviewed annually by the THAMES Management Team.

## Appendices

The following appendices offer procedures, guidance and best practice when working with young people, to ensure a safe learning environment, and dealing with any safeguarding matters.

**Appendix A** – Safe Teaching Practices & Code of Conduct

**Appendix B** – Types of abuse and specific safeguarding issues

**Appendix C** – Recognising abuse and indicators of abuse

**Appendix D** – Responding to disclosure

**Appendix E** – Radicalisation and Extremism

## APPENDIX A – Safe Teaching Practices & Code of Conduct

### THAMES' Policies, Procedures, and Systems

In devising, implementing, and revising any policy/procedure/system that is relevant to young people, consideration must be given to making that policy/procedure/system appropriate to the developmental needs and capacity of young people, accessible to them, and where possible their input should be sought.

### Curriculum design

In setting up any new course (or course component) onto which children or vulnerable adults will be enrolled, safeguarding their well-being must be the main priority and this should take into account the developmental needs and capacity of young people.

### Provision of support resources for young people

The induction process will include appropriate information on THAMES' Safeguarding & Child Protection policy and procedures. This includes advice and guidance on keeping themselves and others safe, and details of how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### Safe Practices & Appropriate behaviour

All THAMES staff and volunteers are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour and good practice in order to create a positive culture and climate and protect staff from false allegations.

#### Always:

- Commit to upholding the highest standard of safeguarding and child protection, knowing that creating a safe environment for all is everyone's responsibility. Report any concern to a DSL or appropriate member of staff.
- Maintain high standards of personal behaviour. Dress appropriately, be friendly and approachable but professional in your interactions.
- Treat all pupils with equal respect and dignity, always putting their welfare first and before the achievement of any goals or targets.

- Consider how you setup the teaching space so that it is appropriate for the musical activities you will be engaging in and a safe space for pupils. Open doors and windows within earshot of others to promote openness and transparency.
- Be aware of and respect students' personal space at all times.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

Avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with a pupil away from others and behind closed doors or standing between them and the door of your teaching space.
- Any kind of physical contact. If physical contact is deemed necessary for aspects of instrumental or vocal teaching, ask permission first and explain clearly what will happen and why. Stop or avoid touching if the student does not give consent or seems uncomfortable. Report any physical contact having taken place for these reasons to a relevant member of staff.
- Standing over younger pupils or those who are sitting down, and in turn sitting lower than those that might be standing or otherwise. Try to match their eye level where at all possible.

Never:

- Make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to a child, such as innuendo, swearing, or discussing intimate relationships. Avoid sarcasm or remarks that could be misinterpreted.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching or rough physical contact.
- Engage in grooming behaviour or behaviour that could be perceived as grooming such as giving out personal contact details.
- Use criticism, disciplinary actions or intimidation as a form of control.
- Allow allegations or concerns to go unreported, unchecked or not acted upon.

## APPENDIX B – Types of abuse and specific safeguarding issues

Abuse is any form of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse is 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.

### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and 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.

## Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

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. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. 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.

We will consider the following CSE indicators:

- Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups.
- The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops.
- Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming.

However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

The above CCE indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant

### County Lines

Criminal exploitation of children 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. One of the key indicators would be missing episodes (from both home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National

Referral Mechanism should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation might appear consensual and can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults. Whilst age may be the most obvious, the power imbalance of perpetrators can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

#### Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. We will work with other agencies to support children to mitigate the negative consequences.

#### Discriminatory abuse

This may include any of the above types of abuse or bullying and harassment based on an individual's age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, gender identity or pregnancy

#### Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

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.

### Early Help

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves

### So-called ‘Honour-based’ abuse (include FGM and Forced Marriage)

So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or 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. Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon staff to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

If staff discover that FGM appears to have been carried out, this must be reported immediately to the Welfare and Guidance Manager who provide assistance in reporting to the police.

### Financial or material abuse

This is usually most likely to occur with vulnerable adults and may include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

### Peer on peer abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

### Sexual harassment and sexual violence

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all

victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual violence is defined as a sexual offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This includes rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he/they agree by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

### Up-skirting

Up-skirting is a highly intrusive practice, which typically involves someone taking a picture under another person’s clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear).

Perpetrators will face two years in prison. Where committed to obtain sexual gratification can result in offenders being placed on the sex offenders register.

### Specific safeguarding issues

There are a number of current, specific safeguarding concerns which are relevant to children and young people that we work with through our organisation. The Designated Safeguarding Officer and other designated staff will liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure they are up-to-date with current safeguarding concerns and that these are both disseminated to staff as appropriate and included in policy review and training.

The below list covers other current national and local safeguarding issues which could affect our pupils (children and young people):

- radicalisation (see appendix)
- bullying including cyber bullying
- county lines
- domestic violence
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- homelessness
- mental health
- private fostering
- sexting
- Serious crime
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking

### APPENDIX C - Recognising abuse and indicators of abuse (see also APPENDIX E)

Recognising abuse can be difficult. Some acts of abuse are extreme, cause visible damage and can be clearly identified: we tend to agree on these clear acts of abusive behaviour.

Other behaviours are not so easily identifiable.

It is important to think about the frequency, context and meaning they have for the victim. It may be difficult to recognise abuse because it is a painful subject for us, because we don't want to believe it happens, because we know and like the family or because it is too much responsibility. However, if we have any concerns, it is our responsibility to report them.

All staff should be alert to the welfare of the pupil our work brings us into contact with and be mindful that:

- all people have the potential to abuse a child or vulnerable adult, regardless of gender, race, culture or social class.
- children and young people with a disability are particularly vulnerable.
- where domestic violence is present or suspected in a household it is an important indicator of child abuse.

#### Indicators of abuse

A pupil may describe what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her, or someone else may express concern about the pupil. Other indications that a children and young people may be being abused include the following:

- Children missing from education, particularly repeatedly can be a vital warning sign.
- Unexpected or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- Mental Health problems
- Sudden and/or unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper, inability to focus, difficulty completing tasks).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Inappropriate or difficult social interaction with their peers.

- Variations in eating pattern (including overeating or loss of appetite).
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Poor (or changed) personal hygiene or presentation.

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is not for staff to decide whether abuse is taking place. Any staff noticing any signs of abuse should consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for advice and/or further investigation.

#### **APPENDIX D – Responding to disclosure by children and young people**

If a young person is suffering abuse, then the likelihood is that they will talk to someone they know and trust. False allegations of abuse do occur, but they are rare.

Any allegations of abuse, or suspicions of abuse, need to be taken seriously and handled in a sensitive manner.

No THAMES member of staff carries out investigations or decides whether a pupil has been abused. Our obligation is to notice and report.

Individual members of staff should never deal with child abuse disclosures in isolation and must always report them as outlined below.

Information will be kept confidential and only be shared with people where it is necessary for the protection of the child.

#### **Recognition**

If you notice changes in a pupil's behaviour or regular physical marks or have any reason to suspect a pupil is being abused notify a DSL or DDSL and complete the Child Protection Report form available on the THAMES Website <https://thames.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Home.aspx>

### Pre-Disclosure

If you think a pupil wants to talk to you about abuse you must make it clear that you cannot promise absolute confidentiality, because matters may develop in ways which mean that this promise cannot be honoured. If you believe a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, legally, you have to report the risk.

If, on hearing this, the pupil does not wish to continue or if you do not feel comfortable listening to the student you can take the following steps:

- Discuss the matter confidentially with the DSL or DDSL.
- Encourage them to call:
  - o Childline - 0800 11 11 (freephone 24hrs) [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) o
  - NSPCC - 0808 800 5000 (freephone 24hrs) 0800 056 0566
    - (minicom/deaf/hard of hearing)
- Always make a note of your concern and forward it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will investigate and follow up.

### Disclosure

It is likely to be extremely difficult for a pupil to disclose abuse and all staff have a role in supporting pupils through this process and ensuring we help them give as much information as possible.

Actions to take if a pupil makes a disclosure:

- React calmly so as not to make the pupil more anxious or discourage them from telling more.
- Listen carefully to what the pupil says without interruption.
- Use open questions to encourage further information, but do not probe.
- It is OK to have periods of silence
- Take what the pupil says seriously.
- Reassure the pupil that he/she was right to tell, and that he/she is not to blame.
- Reassure the pupil that there are many sources of help and that you will help and support them in seeking help.
- Explain to the pupil that you will need to discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or DDSL) – naming them – and state that you can be with them when they meet. It is often most

appropriate to take them to meet the DSL or DDSL straight away, providing they are comfortable with this.

- Make a full record of what was said, using their own words (don't assume or paraphrase). Note the time and location.
- Report the matter to the DSL or DDSL without delay.

If you have reason to believe that a children and young people is at immediate risk of harm, including self-harm or suicide, bring them to a member of the Welfare and guidance team immediately.

Actions to avoid during a disclosure:

- Panic – it may be difficult for you, however it is likely far more difficult for the pupil. If you are distressed by the disclosure inform the Welfare and Guidance Manager for advice and support.
- Allow your shock or distaste to show.
- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Approach the alleged abuser.
- Make promises that you will be unable to keep, e.g. to keep this secret.
- Discuss the matter with colleagues/friends.

## Recording

Make a brief signed note (using the pupil's words) of any allegations. Use the Reporting concerns form found on the website and include:

- the names of any people who are present during the disclosure
- the date and time of the conversation, and a brief outline of what may have happened, when, and to whom (remember other children or vulnerable adults may be involved and at risk too)
- a brief description of any injuries which are visible or alleged
- any non-verbal signs that you noticed
- the pupil's preferred action

## Reporting

Contact the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible. The designated staff then take responsibility for all further action, including referral to Social Services or the Police. If the pupil reveals past abuse or that there are other children under 18 who are currently at risk then the above guidelines must also be followed.

## APPENDIX E – Radicalisation and Extremism

THAMES recognises the positive contribution it can make towards protecting its pupils from radicalisation to violent extremism and is committed to fulfilling its duties under the Prevent Duty Guidance. We will empower our pupils to create communities that are resilient to extremism and to protect the well-being of particular pupils who may be vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism or crime. Staff receive training about radicalisation/the PREVENT strategy and the legal obligation for teachers to report FGM carried out on a girl under the age of 18 to the police.

Radicalisation is the process by which individuals come to support terrorism or violent extremism. It is recognised that radicalisation can occur to an individual from any section of society and is not particular to any racial, ethnic or social group. It is further recognised that in many instances the process of radicalisation is essentially one of grooming by others.

Possible behaviour indicators are below:

- Discriminatory language or actions towards specific groups or people with a particular protected characteristic
- Possession or sharing of violent extremist literature
- Showing or sharing online material of an extreme nature to others
- Behavioural changes (for example, becoming withdrawn)
- Expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

In respect of safeguarding individuals from radicalisation, THAMES works with others in the council to the Prevent element of the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy and follows the Prevent Duty

Guidance including referrals to the Channel Programme. This programme aims to work with the individual to address their specific vulnerabilities, prevent them becoming further radicalised and possibly entering the criminal justice system because of their actions.

If you have concerns about a pupil, child or young person, contact the DSL or DDSL

THAMES September 2023