

SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

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BACKGROUND

Education providers of post-16 learning and skills have responsibilities to ensure the safety of young people. Fortunately, cases of abuse in education and training provision are rare. Reporting, however, to trusted staff, of abuse that occurs outside of the training and learning environment, is not uncommon. Skills4Stem needs to be prepared to deal with all aspects of creating a safer environment.

Those supervising young people in any capacity are expected to show a duty of care in all aspects of the activity, whether it is an aspect they are directly involved with or in charge of.

GENERAL

Staff within Skills4Stem may have contact with children and young people through work programmes, however all staff may at some time be involved in working closely with children and young people, some of whom may be marginalised, disaffected and vulnerable. Working near children and young people means that Skills4Stem staff may be in a position whereby they may become aware of a situation of possible abuse.

Skills4Stem considers that there is a moral and professional need to engage fully with these practices for both the protection of children and young people and the staff working with them. Consequently, all staff need to be aware that:

They have a direct responsibility to protect children and young people

They have a duty to act quickly

They should never assume that if they do not act someone else will

Working with children and young people in an unstructured/unsupported way can put them at risk

DESIGNATED PERSON (DP)

Sarah Davis will take the role of DP; the DP has overall responsibility and governance for safeguarding within Skills4Stem. Mary Farrelly will hold the position of second DP.

The duties of the DP's will include:

Inducting staff on safeguarding issues

Ensuring that staff have read and understood this policy

Organising training for staff on safeguarding issues

Referring incidents of alleged incidents to social services

Establish protocols with the local safeguarding children board where necessary

DEFINITIONS

A child: the protection of children and young people according to the term of the Children Act 1989 defines a young person as someone under the age of 18.

Staff: These guidelines apply to all company employees, part-time and full time staff, contracted and associates.

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent.

Abuse can happen in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

TYPES AND SIGNS OF 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as “fictitious illness by proxy” or “Munchausen’s Syndrome by proxy”.

Some of the recognised signs of physical abuse are:

- Unexplained burns
- Scratches
- Bruising and abrasions
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Bald patches
- Aggression towards others
- Drowsiness from misuse of medication
- Anxiety in the presence of an abuser

Sexual abuse – this may include ‘rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the young person has not consented, or was pressured into consenting’. Sexual abuse also includes forcing a person to look at pornographic materials.

Some of the recognised signs of sexual abuse are:

- Changes in behaviour
- Inability to concentrate

Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
Being isolated or withdrawn
Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism
Sexualised behaviour

Psychological/emotional abuse – most definitions of abuse generally include either psychological or emotional abuse. There is a strong similarity between the descriptions of these. Emotional abuse is generally described as an element of psychological abuse. This would also include cyber bullying.

Psychological abuse may include emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Some of the recognised signs of psychological or emotional abuse are:

Physical, mental and emotional development lags
Sudden speech disorders
Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless')
Overreaction to mistakes
Lack of eye contact
Low self esteem
Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
Reluctance to talk openly

Financial or material abuse – this may include 'theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure about wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits'

Some of the recognised signs of financial or material abuse are:

Loss of jewellery and personal property
Lack of money to purchase basic items
A bill not being paid when money is entrusted to a third party
Inadequate clothing
Unexplained withdrawal of cash
Loss of money from a wallet or purse

Neglect and acts of omission – this may include 'ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate heating and nutrition'.

Some of the recognised signs of neglect and acts of omission are:

Dehydration
Infections
Malnutrition
Hypothermia

Discriminatory abuse – this may include abuse, bullying and harassment based on the individual's age, sex, disability, religion, race or ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Some of the recognised signs of discriminatory abuse might be very like psychological and emotional abuse.

Who is vulnerable to abuse?

Any young person could potentially be the victim of abuse. It is the duty of Skills4Stem to ensure that proper steps have been taken to safeguard learners.

Who are the abusers?

Abusers can be parents, carers, siblings, members of the extended family, neighbours, teachers, strangers, other learners; in short anyone.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

The following should be applied by all staff.

When any person has knowledge or suspicion that a child or young person is either being abused, or is at risk of abuse, or that a carer has seriously neglected or failed to protect a young person, he/she has a personal duty to report this to one the DP's. If this is not possible, it should be reported to a member of Skills4Stem management team.

If a disclosure is made, the pace of the conversation should be dictated by the young person without them being pressed for detail by being asked questions such as 'What did they do next?' or "Where did they touch you?"

The staff role is to listen, record and report; not to investigate.

Staff must use open questions such as "is there anything else you want to tell me?" or encourage them further with a "yes?" or "and?"

Accept what the young person says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking questions such as "why didn't you tell me before?"

Do acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you this

Don't criticise the perpetrator, this may be someone they love

Don't promise confidentiality. Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the DP) and why. It is important that you don't make promises that you cannot keep such as "I'll stay with you all the time" or "it will be alright now".

Concerns may be because of information other than direct observation or evidence of abuse to a young person, such as evidence of domestic violence or substance abuse within the family.

Recording information – staff should (Appendix 1): make some brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards; record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, recording what has been said to you and not your assumption and interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated.

Record observed injuries and bruises on a body map, note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the young person (do not translate into 'proper terms') keep the original notes and pass them to the DP.

The DP will follow up all referrals to social services within 24 hours. If a phone call is made, this must be put in writing within a further 24 hours.

REPORTING PROCESS

Information from **Skills4Stem Ltd.** 38 Mill Street, Bedford MK40 3HD, United Kingdom

www.skills4stem.com Tel: +44 (0)1234 245534



Disclosure /Alleged incident is reported to a member of



Member of staff to complete the 'Disclosure Form'



Member of staff to make one of the Designated People



Designated Person makes the decision if the incident needs to



In an emergency, the

Designated Person to complete the 'Disclosure Form' (Appendix 1) and file copies in a safe place immediately

NOTES ON YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE SEXUALLY ACTIVE

Under most circumstances where a member of staff has knowledge of a young person's sexual relationships this should be considered a normal part of a young person's development.

The age of the young person involved should only be an issue where there is concern about a young person's ability to give genuine consent or where there appears to be an imbalance of power within the relationship. However, where a member of staff becomes aware of a young person under the age of 13 is or has been pregnant, the Designated Person should be informed and a referral should be made to Social Services.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE INVOLVING MEMBERS OF STAFF

Where a young person alleges that an employee from within the organisation has perpetrated the abuse, these concerns should be shared immediately with the DP and the member of staff's line manager, both to protect the young person and the staff member.

The young person who makes the allegations should be told that this is a serious matter and that the staff member will need to discuss it with the DP to decide how it will be investigated. They should also be told that they will be kept informed as to what is happening.

The DP will make a referral directly to the Police Child Protection Officer who will advise on the most appropriate course of action.

Where the allegations or concerns are regarding another professional, who is not an employee, they should be shared with the DP who will refer it to the Police Child Protection Officer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Staff have the professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of young people with other professionals, particularly investigating agencies. If a young person confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the young person sensitively that he/she has a responsibility to refer the matter to the DP for the young person's own sake. At the same time, the young person should be reassured that the matter will be only be disclosed to the DP, who will then decide on appropriate action.

Staff who receive information about children and families during their work should hold the information only within their professional context. Child protection records should be kept securely locked. Personal information about a young person is regarded by those who work in Skills4Stem as confidential. All staff will maintain this confidentiality. All records relating to safeguarding incidents will be maintained by the DP and only shared as is consistent with the protection of children.

THIRD PARTY CONFIDENTIALITY

Situations may arise where staff are told about concerns regarding the safety and welfare of a young person but the referrer does not wish to be identified. Such wishes should be respected where appropriate. There will, however, be situations where action is necessary to protect the young person and this action is likely to reveal the identity of the referrer. This must not be used as a reason to refrain from whatever action is necessary to protect the young person who is the subject of concern. In such cases, it should be explained to the referrer that action will need to be taken and the likely

consequences of this in terms of the referrer being identified. There will need to be a discussion with the referrer as to whether there are ways of addressing their concern about being identified.

HISTORICAL ABUSE

A young person may disclose abuse that happened some time ago and the young person is no longer in contact with the abuser. It may be that the young person is now 18 or over. However other children may still be in contact with the abuser and therefore it is still necessary to discuss the situation with the DP to consider any action that may be necessary.

Undertake to keep the young person fully informed about any action that will be taken and support them through this subsequent action.

CHILD ABUSE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Child abuse occurs in all types and structures of families regardless of gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, religion or class. In situations where a member of staff is concerned about the care or treatment of a young person, it is important to be mindful that there are many different ideas and attitudes about how children should be brought up. It should not be assumed that a way of caring for children is harmful just because it is different to that of the dominant culture. This does not mean, however, that we can ignore situations where children are clearly at risk because the family concerned has a different set of beliefs.

For young people with learning difficulties there can be additional issues in relation to child abuse. Children and young people with learning difficulties may have greater difficulty in being heard when trying to disclose situations of abuse. It is important to be mindful of assumptions as to what is appropriate in terms of caring for children with learning difficulties. Sometimes practices which would clearly be unacceptable in general terms are not challenged when the child has learning difficulties.

These are difficult and complex issues and advice should be sought from the DP and Social Services where necessary.

THE INVESTIGATION

Whilst there is no legal requirement for Skills4Stem to assist in a Safeguarding investigation, there is a strong expectation and moral obligation that agencies will co-operate fully during this process. There may be circumstances in which it is necessary in the interest of the young person to divulge otherwise confidential information. 'Promoting young people's well-being and safe-guarding them from significant harm depends crucially upon effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between agencies and professionals.

LODGINGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

When Skills4Stem arranges lodgings for young people as part of the service to its customers. These lodgings are assessed every six months by a member of Skills4Stem team to ensure all young people are kept safe whilst staying away from home.

Procedure - Assessment of Lodgings for Young People sets out the responsibilities of Skills4Stem and lodgings.

APPENDIX 1

DISCLOSURE FORM (PAGE 1) – STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Name of young person

Address and contact number (if known)

Date of birth

Name of alleged person (if known)

Date(s) and time(s) of alleged incident (if known)

Details of Incident/Disclosure/Injuries giving rise to concern (remember, do not lead the young person, and use his /her words where possible). (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and date and sign)

(Remember: do not promise confidentiality)

Name of staff member

Date and time of Incident/Disclosure Place/event where Incident/Disclosure occurred any action taken by the staff member

Signed.....

Date.....

Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those that need to know.

DISCLOSURE FORM (PAGE 2) – STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

External Agencies contacted:

Police: YES / NO Date and Time: Name and Contact Number:
Details of advice received:

Social Services: YES / NO Date and Time: Name and Contact Number:
Details of advice received:

Signature: Print Name: Date:

N.B a copy of this form should be sent to Social Services following a telephone report.

APPENDIX 2: **Designated Person Details & External Agencies in Bedfordshire**

Designated Person (DP) – Sarah Davis
Designated Person 2 (DP) – Mary Farrelly

Bedfordshire Child protection - safeguarding children and young people

- Call **0300 300 8585** immediately Monday –Friday 8.45am – 5.20pm
- **Out of hours: 0300 300 8123**
- Email: cs.accessandreferral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

If you think a child you know is being harmed or at risk of being harmed, please contact the Access and Referral Hub on 0300 300 8585, who you can talk to about your concerns. They will give you advice or may investigate the circumstances. All child protection calls are treated in confidence and you don't need to give your details.

Everyone has a responsibility to protect children from harm.

Some children can be at risk of neglect, emotional harm, including bullying, physical abuse and sexual abuse in any environment and can include close family members as well as strangers.

Bedfordshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO (also known in Central Bedfordshire as the Allegations Manager) oversees investigations into allegations and concerns against adults who work with children and young people in both a paid and voluntary capacity.

The criteria for LADO intervention is where the behaviour of an adult has resulted in a child being harmed or at risk of harm; a criminal offence may have been committed or the behaviour of the adult may indicate unsuitability to work with children.

If you have concerns about the conduct and behaviour of someone working with children and young people you can contact Central Bedfordshire's LADO as follows:

LADO - 0300 300 4833

LADO Administrator – 0300 300 4491 or by contacting the Conference and Review Service on 0300 300 8142.

APPENDIX 3

Bedfordshire Safeguarding adults - report abuse or neglect

If you are worried that you or someone you know is in immediate danger, you should call the police on 999.

If the person you are worried about is not in immediate danger then you can report suspected abuse of an adult using our online form (link opens in new window)

If you would rather speak to us, or if you need any help completing the form, you can contact us:

- **0300 300 8122** (Monday to Friday, 8:45am to 5:20pm)
- **0300 300 8123** (outside of these hours)
- email at adult.protection@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Reporting abuse of a child

If you want to report abuse of a child, please call the Children's Team on 0300 300 8149.

What is abuse?

Abuse is when someone does something which is wrong that hurts you, makes you feel frightened or unhappy. The abuse can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.

Abuse can be one of the following or a combination:

Physical - when someone hurts you, this could be kicking, slapping, biting, scratching or shaking you.

Sexual - this is when someone touches you on your private parts and you do not want them to. They may try to kiss you or make you have sex with them, or show you pictures of other people having sex.

Psychological or emotional - when people say things to you which are not nice, call you names, treat you like a child, laugh at you or ignore you.

Financial - this is when someone takes your money or things that belong to you, makes you pay for things or tells you how to spend your money.

Discriminatory - this is when somebody treats you unfairly because of the colour of your skin, your disability, your faith, because you speak a different language or because you are male or female or gay / lesbian / bisexual / transgender.

Neglect - this is when somebody who should help you doesn't – they may not give you food, keep you safe, give you your medication or get you medical help.

Domestic abuse – this is when someone who is a close partner or family member abuses someone, which includes controlling, bullying, threatening behaviour, as well as all the types of abuse listed

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above.

Institutional - this is when people who are paid to look after you do not respect you if you are living in a care home, in hospital, at a day centre or even in your own home. They may be unkind to you, ignore you or your wishes and not give you any choices. They may not have had the correct training or use the right equipment to look after you.

Modern slavery – this includes slavery, human trafficking and forced labour and domestic slavery. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to bully, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and cruel treatment.

Self-neglect – this is when someone neglects to care for their own personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Any of these forms of abuse can be either deliberate or be the result of ignorance, lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Often if a person is being abused in one way they are also being abused in other ways.

Abuse can happen anywhere – a person's home, a residential or nursing home, hospital, the workplace, a day centre or educational establishment, in supported housing or in the street.

People can be vulnerable to abuse because of an illness or disability, such as people with a learning, sensory or physical disability, older people who depend on or need help from others and people with mental health problems or dementia.

The person who is responsible for the abuse is very often well-known to the person being abused, for example, a paid carer or volunteer, health or social worker, relative or friend.