



**THE BIG STEP**  
**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**  
**VERSION: 1.0**



THE BIG STEP Will review all policies annually to ensure they are relevant and are updated with the most up to date information.

<b>Reviewed Yearly by:</b>	
<b>The manager of THE BIG STEP</b>	<b>Dan Leverton</b>
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**Contents**



1. Introduction
2. About this guidance
3. Safeguarding principles
4. Legislation
5. Responsibilities and expectations
6. Recognising concerns, signs and indicators of abuse
7. Young people who may be particularly vulnerable
8. Bullying and Peer on Peer abuse
9. Children with special educational needs and disabilities
10. Looked after children
11. Indicators of abuse
12. Child protection procedures
13. Support for those involved in a child protection issue
14. Abuse of trust
15. Managing allegations
16. Complaints procedure
17. Current safeguarding issues
18. Confidentiality and information sharing

## **Introduction**

At The Big Step! the safety and welfare of our young people is paramount and at the forefront of our minds. This Safeguarding policy is to provide a secure framework in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those young people who attend our sessions.



The Big Step! has a duty to ensure that our young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded and their welfare is of paramount importance. The Big Step! will ensure that our young people are provided with positive experiences in a safe, supportive and creative environment.

All Staff who work at The Big Step! will have been inducted in our safeguarding policy and procedures and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Deputy (DpSO) Safeguarding officer will have undergone Level 3 Safeguarding training or above.

### **About this guidance**

Unless otherwise specified “Staff” means all workers employed by The Big Step! including: Teaching staff, Youth Workers and Volunteers.

### **Safeguarding principles**

1. The welfare of every young person is paramount and that they are safe and protected from harm.
2. Every member of staff is aware of their responsibility and The Big Step!’s legal responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of our young people and act on suspicion or disclosures as appropriate.
3. Young people, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual orientation, have equal rights to protection.
4. That all staff members supporting young people will receive relevant guidance and support.
5. Our safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

### **Legislation**

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children’s Act 1989 and 2004; Equalities act 2010; Education Act 2002; and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, the Care Act 2014, Care Act statutory guidance on Safeguarding, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Mental Capacity Act 2005, and in line with government publications:

Working together to Safeguard Children 2015”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>



This details the legislative requirements and expectations of the local authority and other agencies with regards to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of young people.

## Responsibilities and expectations

### All staff:

- Follow the guidance laid out in this policy and other related policies: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, Working together to safeguard children (2016) and refer any welfare concerns using the required procedures.
- All serious safeguarding concerns should be referred to social care through the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). All safeguarding concerns which do not meet the threshold for referral to MASH should be appropriately and securely documented.
- Engage in continuous professional development to remain confident and capable to exercise their safeguarding duties.
- Promote good practice by being excellent role models who contribute to wider discussions about safeguarding
- Ensure that all Child Protection concerns are acted on immediately.
- All staff, including the SDL and DpSO, have a duty to refer all known or suspected cases of abuse to the relevant agencies.
- Where a disclosure is made to a visiting staff member from a different agency or school, e.g. CSW or School Nurse, it is the responsibility of that agency staff to formally report that disclosure to The Big Step!'s SDL or DpSO.

Key Personnel	
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Dan Leverton
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Laura Bush
Contact Number	
Email Address	

### The Senior Designated Lead (SDL) and Deputy (DpSO):



- It is the responsibility of the SDL to ensure that all safeguarding issues raised are effectively responded to, recorded and referred to the appropriate agency.
- It is the responsibility of the SDL to ensure all safeguarding certificates of staff members are seen, in date and photocopied for their personal file.
- It is the responsibility of the SDL to ensure all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection updates
- The SDL is required to attend all sessions or ensure that a senior member of staff who has the relevant training is in attendance on their behalf.
- It is the responsibility of the SDL to ensure staff signs to confirm that they have received and will comply with this policy.
- All suspected cases of abuse are referred to MASH
- They understand statutory safeguarding duties, local early help processes and issues updates to staff as necessary.
- Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are consistent with statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available on request.

In the absence of the designated lead the deputy will carry out all functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of young people.

### **Recognising concerns, signs and indicators of abuse**

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm.

For The Big Step! it includes such things as pupil safety, bullying, racist abuse and harassment, educational visits, intimate care, children missing from education,

internet safety, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Sexual Exploitation.

The witnessing of abuse can have a damaging effect on those who are party to it, as well as the child subjected to the actual abuse, and in itself will have a significant impact on the health and emotional well-being of the child. Abuse can take place in any family, institution or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. Abuse can often be difficult to recognise as children may behave differently or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their family circumstances change. However, it is important to know the indicators of abuse and to be alert to the need to consult further.



Staff are aware that safeguarding issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancy and sexting put children in danger.

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying, gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.

Our staff have been trained to recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

### Abuse:

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

### Physical Abuse

A form of 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

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

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

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.

## **Young People who may be particularly vulnerable:**

Some young people may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some people to accept that abuse can occur.

To ensure that all of the young people accessing our services receive equal protection, staff will take greater consideration of young people with multiple vulnerabilities such as this listed:

- Disabled or have specific educational needs
- Living in a domestic abuse situation
- Affected by parental substance misuse
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home



- Vulnerable to being bullied or are engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Live transient lifestyles
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation
- Involved directly or indirectly in sexual exploitation
- Do not have English as a first language
- At risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced into marriage
- At risk of extremism
- Have an imprisoned parent
- Have a parent with mental health issues.

This list provides examples of vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for young people with communication needs.

### **Bullying and Peer on Peer abuse**

While bullying between young people is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a young person's wellbeing and has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti bullying procedures. All young people attending our sessions will be made aware of our anti-bullying procedures.

### **Children with Special educational needs and disabilities**

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Staff are trained to understand potential signs of abuse and recognise that:

- (a) Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury



Are not automatically assumed to be the child's disability, without further exploration.

(b) The potential for children with SEND and disabilities being disproportionately

impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing signs

(c) Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

### **Looked after children**

The Big Step! are aware that the majority of our young people who have been placed into care is a result of neglect. Staff are informed about all looked after children and are given relevant information that will aid in our young person's learning.

The SDL/DpSO will ensure that they have all information regarding, legal status, contact arrangements and responsibility for parental responsibility.

### **Indicators of abuse**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a young person has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as young people may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated senior officer and their line manager in the first instance.

### **Child Protection procedures**

**Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:**

- Concern of abuse or harm - take immediate action to safeguard the young person and use the Threshold Tool to inform your actions. Report your concerns to the SDL/DpSO. They will then advise you on what action needs to be taken.
- Appropriately and securely record the incident / disclosure and pass to the SDL or DpSO.
- Do not start your own investigation



- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family.
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

#### If you are concerned that a pupil is at harm from a professional or an adult in a position of trust:

If you are concerned that a member of staff or adult in a position of trust poses a danger to a young person or that they might be abusing a young person you should report your concerns to the SDL/DpSO. Where those concerns relate to the SDO/DpSO, this should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

#### If you are concerned about a young person's welfare:

- There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a young person may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. For example, you may notice that the young person's behaviour has changed. In these circumstances staff will give the young person the opportunity to talk.
- This information should be recorded using the Safeguarding recording form

#### If a young person discloses to you:

- It takes a lot of courage for anyone to disclose that they are being abused, they may feel ashamed; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.
- If a young person talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will need to let the young person know that they must pass the information on – staff must adhere to confidentiality procedures.

During their conversations with the young person, staff will:

- Allow them to speak freely
- At an appropriate time tell the young person that you must pass this information on.
- Remain calm and not overreact – the young person may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'



- Not to be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the young person.
- Under no circumstances are staff to ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what their mother thinks about all this. If you need to clarify any statements made by the young person, you may use the TED questions – Tell me, Explain, Describe.

Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a young person who has been abused.

- Avoid admonishing the young person for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the young person that they have done something wrong.
- Tell the young person what will happen next. Report verbally to the SDL or DpSO.
- Write up the conversation as soon as possible and hand it to the SDL or DpSO.
- Ensure that all information is recorded in the safeguarding folder.
- Seek support if they feel distressed

Store all information in accordance with Data Protection Act.

#### Referral to MASH:

A referral will be made to MASH if it is believed that a young person is suffering or is at risk of suffering abuse. The young person will be aware that this is / has happened.

#### Notifying parents:

If appropriate, staff will encourage and support young people to discuss their situations with their parents/carers, or offer to advocate on their behalf. However, if staff believe that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from a line manager/ MASH.

#### Record Keeping:

The safeguarding/child protection file will contain the following:

- A record of the young persons core data – personal contact details



- Chronology: a log of your day-to-day contacts with social care and other agencies. Safeguarding record logs to include: Date (including year) and time of the event/concern; The nature of the concern raised; The action taken and by whom Outcome of any action Name and position of the person making the record
- Remember that your informal notes can be requested as evidence and whatever you write, you should be aware that at some point they might be viewed by another audience. Abbreviations are fine and handwriting and presentation will not be marked. However, objectivity and professionalism should always be kept in mind when recording.
- Minutes of meetings with parents/carers, professionals.
- Confidential minutes of meetings e.g. Case Conferences (these should be destroyed once the child is no longer the subject of CP concerns).
- Reports for meetings.
- A Genogram if appropriate.
- A log of contact with parents – this is particularly important when you are seeking permission from a parent for a referral to take place – failure to contact a parent should not preclude contacting social care where you have concerns.
- Correspondence including copies of all emails.
- In the case of disclosure, the record should also include: As full an account as possible of what the young person said in their own words; An account of questions put to the young person; Time and place of disclosure; Who was present at the time of disclosure; The demeanour of the young person;

### **Support for those involved in a child protection issue**

Abuse is distressing for the young person and can also result in anxiety for staff who become involved.

**We will support young people, their families, and staff by:**

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- The safeguarding lead and or deputy will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Making available additional supervision for staff who require/request it.
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a young person, this organisation will make a referral to the Local authority designated officer (LADO). The senior safeguarding lead will be guided and advised by the LADO.



- Responding sympathetically to any request from staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- Storing records securely
- Offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- Cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

### **Abuse of trust**

Inappropriate behaviour towards young people is unacceptable and that their conduct towards young people must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of staff and a young person under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that young person is over the age of consent.

Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a young person, this organisation will make a referral to the Local authority designated officer (LADO). The senior safeguarding lead will be guided and advised by the LADO.

If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust whether they be members of staff this should be brought to the immediate attention of the SDL.

Where concerns relate to the SDL, these should be reported to the LADO

### **Managing Allegations**

Allegations against staff who no longer work for this organisation or are historical, will be reported directly to the police.

Allegations against members of staff will be dealt with as a matter of paramount importance by the senior management team who seek advice from the LADO. Staff will not automatically be suspended pending the result of an investigation; rather the Senior Management team will decide which course of action will best safeguard the young person who has made the allegation. Where suspension is initiated the suspended has the right to remain informed at agreed intervals.



### Procedure (1)

In the first instance, and unless the worker reasonably believes his/her line manager to be involved in the wrongdoing, or if for any other reason the worker does not wish to approach his/her line manager, any concerns should be raised with the worker's line manager. If he/she believes the line manager to be involved, or for any reason does not wish to approach the line manager, then the worker should proceed straight to Procedure 3.

### Procedure (2)

The line manager will arrange an investigation into the matter (either by investigating the matter him/herself or immediately passing the issue to someone in a more senior position). The investigation may involve the worker and other individuals involved giving a written statement. The worker's statement will be taken into account, and he/she will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained. The line manager (or the person who carried out the investigation) will then report to the senior management team, which will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to any appropriate government department or regulatory agency. If disciplinary action is required, the line manager (or the person who carried out the investigation) will start the disciplinary procedure. On conclusion of any investigation, the worker will be told the outcome of the investigation and what the board has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

### Procedure (3)

If the worker is concerned that his/her line manager is involved in the wrongdoing, has failed to make a proper investigation or has failed to report the outcome of the

investigations to the board, he/she should inform a director of the organisation [Dan Leverton], who will arrange for another manager to review the investigation carried out, make any necessary enquiries and make his/her own report. If for any other reason the worker does not wish to approach his/her line manager he/she should also in the first instance contact [name of director as above]. Any approach to the director will be treated with the strictest confidence and the worker's identity will not be disclosed without his/her prior consent.

### Procedure (4)



If on conclusion of Procedure 1, 2 and 3 the worker reasonably believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, he/she should report the matter to the proper authority. The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made. These include:

- Local Authority
- HM Revenue & Customs;
- DfE/ OFSTED
- Financial Conduct Authority (formerly the Financial Services Authority);
- Competition and Markets Authority;
- Health and Safety Executive;
- Environment Agency;
- Independent Police Complaints Commission; and
- Serious Fraud Office.

### **Complaints procedure**

Our complaints procedure will be followed where anyone raises a concern about poor practice towards a young person that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a young person or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a young person or discriminating against them in some way. All members of staff can receive complaints and then forward them to the Senior management team for action. Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days and a response or update issued within 20 days.

### **Current Safeguarding Issues**

The following Safeguarding issues are all considered to be Child Protection issues and should be referred immediately to the most relevant agency. The issues featured below are linked to guidance and local procedures which can be found on the South West Child Protection Procedures at [www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk) (Direct links to the policies listed below are included where available). Some members of our communities hold beliefs that may be common within particular cultures but which are against the law of England.

**The Big Step! does not condone practices that are illegal and which are harmful to children.**

**Forced Marriage:**



Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical, emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. The Big Step! does not support the idea of forcing someone to marry without their consent.

#### Under-age Marriage:

In England, a young person cannot legally marry until they are 16 years old (without the consent of their parents or carers) nor have sexual relationships.

#### Genital mutilation/female circumcision:

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.

Under Section 5B of the 2003, Act 1 introduces a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police.

If a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, then the staff member must follow The Big Step!'s Safeguarding policy by informing the DSL, who will support the initial member of staff to report the incident to the police.

#### Ritualistic Abuse

Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children).

What should never be considered is the use of any physical or psychological violence to get rid of the possessing spirit. This is abusive and will result in the criminal conviction of those using this form of abuse even if the intention is to help the child.

#### Children Missing Education



“Basic to safeguarding children is to ensure their attendance at school.” (OFSTED 2002). Children are best protected by regularly attending school where they will be safe from harm and where there are professionals to monitor their well-being.

At The Big Step! we will encourage the full attendance of all of our young people at school. Where we have concerns that a child is missing education because of suspected abuse, we will liaise with the appropriate agency including the

Education Attendance Service to effectively manage the risks and to prevent abuse from taking place.

### Safeguarding Disabled Children

Disabled children have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, to be protected from harm.

Disabled children do however require additional action. This is because they experience greater risks and ‘created vulnerability’ as a result of negative attitudes about disabled children and unequal access to services and resources, and because they may have additional needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive and/ or communication impairment (Safeguarding Children, DCSF, July 2009) The Big Step! will ensure that our disabled children are listened to and responded to appropriately where they have concerns regarding abuse. In order to do this we will ensure that our staff and volunteers receive the relevant training to raise awareness and have access to specialist staff in the event they have concerns regarding abuse of a child.

### Safer Recruitment and Selection:

All staff will require advanced DBS checks, relevant references and 5 year checks when employed with The Big Step!.

At The Big Step! we will ensure that we have a member of staff on every recruitment panel who has received the appropriate recruitment and selection training. That all of our staff are appropriately qualified and have the relevant employment history and checks to ensure they are safe to work with children in compliance with the Key Safeguarding Employment Standards.

### Honour Based Violence

So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (HBV) encompasses 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. All forms of so called HBV are abuse



(regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. 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 HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

It is important that staff are alert to signs of distress and indications such as self-harm, absence from school and truancy, infections resulting from female genital mutilation, isolation from peers, being monitored by family, not participating in school activities, unreasonable restrictions at home. Where it is suspected that a child/young person is at risk from Honour based violence The Big Step! will report those concerns to the appropriate agency in order to prevent this form of abuse taking place.

### Trafficked Children

Child trafficking involves moving children across or within national or international borders for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation includes children being used for sex work, domestic work, restaurant/ sweatshop, drug dealing, shoplifting and benefit fraud. Where The Big Step! is made aware of a child is suspected of or actually being trafficked/exploited we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency, this will include a referral to the MACSE panel.

### Domestic Abuse

The Government defines domestic abuse as “Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”. Staff need to understand what is required of them if children are members of the household where domestic abuse is known or suspected to be taking place. Our policy includes action to be taken regarding referrals to the Police and Children and Young People’s Services and any action to be taken where a member of staff is the alleged perpetrator or victim of domestic abuse.

At The Big Step we will follow our safeguarding policy and report any suspected concerns regarding Domestic Abuse to the relevant agency.

### Private Fostering



Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

A privately fostered child means a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- A parent
- A person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility
- A close relative
- A Local Authority

It is a statutory duty for us at The Big Step! to inform the Local Authority where we are made aware of a child or young person who may be subject to private fostering arrangements.

### Child Exploitation and E-Safety

Children and young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites.

In order to minimize the risks to our children and young people The Big Step! will ensure that we have in place appropriate measures such as security filtering, and an acceptable use policy linked to our E-Safety policy. We will ensure that staff are aware of how not to compromise their position of trust in or outside of the school and are aware of the dangers associated with social networking sites.

Our E-safety policy will clearly state that mobile phone or electronic communications with a student in our sessions is not acceptable other than for approved school business e.g. coursework, mentoring. Where it is suspected that a child is at risk from internet abuse or cyber bullying we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

### Child Sexual Exploitation

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen



online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- 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; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

### Radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately, which may include making a referral to the Channel programme.

### Confidentiality and information sharing

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the young person and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with their line manager or members of the senior management team, (depending on who is the subject of the concern).



That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 principles. Information is:

- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Kept no longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Secure

Records of safeguarding record logs and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals. Any electronic management information systems are compliant with data protection requirements.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be kept in locked storage.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that young people and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a young person or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the senior safeguarding lead.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. All information will be shared in line with the guidance issued by the local LSCB