



## Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

### OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

acet UK's Esteem project enables young people to grow in self-esteem, helping them to understand their worth and make responsible, informed choices about relationships and sex.

We deliver interactive and dynamic workshops to young people in schools and other youth settings.

We also provide high quality training, resources and support to individuals, teams, organisations, schools and communities which will enable them to deliver our relationships and sexual health programme to the young people they work with.

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT: OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING

- 1.1 **acet UK** is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people whom we work with and come into contact with. We recognise and embrace our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children and young people from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- 1.2 **acet UK** believes that every child should be valued, safe and happy and treated with respect and dignity. We are committed to promoting a climate where the children and young people we have contact with know this and where anyone can feel confident about sharing any concerns they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.
- 1.3 We undertake to ensure that:
  - 1.3.1 children who have contact with our organisation enjoy what we have to offer in safety.
  - 1.3.2 children are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
  - 1.3.3 all participants who receive training from us understand the importance of having safeguarding policies and procedures in place at the organisations they work for.
  - 1.3.4 parents/carers who receive training from us are supported to care for their children in a way that promotes their child's health, well-being and safety.
  - 1.3.5 we demonstrate best practice in relation to the recruitment and training of all staff and volunteers.
  - 1.3.6 all staff and volunteers follow our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures along with all national and local safeguarding legislation.
  - 1.3.7 we operate within the safeguarding systems of the schools and organisations that we work with. This policy, therefore, will be used in conjunction with the safeguarding policies of schools and organisations that we provide services to.
  - 1.3.8 we have two identified Safeguarding Leads (the **acet UK** Chief Executive in London, and the Esteem Project Director in Chester) to whom any concerns will be reported and who will undertake regular training in Safeguarding, and review the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures at least every two years.
  - 1.3.9 all staff and volunteers understand their obligations to report care or protection concerns about a child, or a worker's conduct towards a child to either of the organisation's designated Safeguarding Leads, depending on which office they are based.
  - 1.3.10 We will learn from safeguarding case reviews to develop our work and engage with guidance for best practice from relevant authorities.

## 2. WHAT IS 'SAFEGUARDING'?

- 2.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully ([Working Together to Safeguard Children, DCSF, 2018](#)).
- 2.2 This is not just about preventing and acting on the worst case scenarios, such as abuse happening to a child, but it is about educating guardians, as well as those working with children to deal with them in the most appropriate ways. It is about making sure that the right people are recruited as employees and volunteers to work with children in all settings, and creating a culture of openness and honesty, and protecting children from harm and danger without smothering their potential and need for challenge and excitement.
- 2.3 Child Protection legislation places a statutory duty on all organisations and professionals to work together in the interest of protecting children and vulnerable adults. All staff and volunteers who work for acet UK have a duty to safeguard and support the welfare of children and we are committed to this principle. We will work in collaboration with other relevant agencies to ensure this.
- 2.4 We will provide training and induction programmes to include safeguarding to all relevant existing and new staff and volunteers to promote these aims and raise awareness of the duties and responsibilities it places on our staff.

## 3. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

- 3.1 In this document, as in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 respectively, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.
- 3.2 Every child has the right to grow up and develop to their full potential in a secure, safe, environment, free from harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation and to be involved in any decision which may directly affect them.
- 3.3 We will do what we can to safeguard children's health, development and welfare and any actions we take will represent the best interests of the child. The rights of children to confidentiality will be maintained unless we consider that they could be at risk of abuse and/or harm.
- 3.4 All relevant staff and volunteers will know what to do and who to go to if they have any concerns regarding a child's safety.

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child”

We agree that “Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. It should be recognised that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities. In schools, relevant topics will be included within Relationships Education (for all primary pupils), and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all primary and secondary pupils). In teaching these subjects schools must have regard to the statutory guidance,<sup>36</sup> which can be found here. Colleges may cover relevant issues through tutorials.”

From the Department for Education’s document ‘Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges’ (2022)

#### 4. RECOGNISING ABUSE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTION

4.1 It is now widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse. acet UK staff and volunteers may become an important link in identifying a case where a child or young person needs safeguarding. Abuse may come to light in a number of ways:

- 4.1.1 A person may tell you what has happened to them.
- 4.1.2 From a third person (for example, another young person).
- 4.1.3 Through their behaviour.
- 4.1.4 A suspicious, unexplained injury to the person.
- 4.1.5 A person may tell you what they intend to do or have already done to a child.

4.2 If abuse is suspected or disclosed, the member of staff or volunteer has a duty to act on the information or suspicion. Although confidentiality is obviously an important aspect of our work, this cannot be the case where the well-being of a child or young person is at stake.

These notes are intended to provide a guide to help you identify signs of possible abuse and know what action to take in such cases.

- 4.3 Safeguarding concerns are not subject to GDPR data protection laws around consent and therefore where a concern exists relevant data can be shared.

## 5. DEFINITION OF ABUSE

- 5.1 Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. With our work around adolescent relationships, we are specifically aware that harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or intimate partner violence by adolescent peers may be disclosed or revealed during our work.

- 5.2 A child may suffer more than one category of abuse. The following definitions are as stated in the joint government departments' document, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010):

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

5.2.2 **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may 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 the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

5.2.3 **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.

5.2.4 **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.

## 6. IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

6.1 Recognising abuse is not easy, even for individuals who have experience of working in this area. Most children will receive cuts, grazes and bruises from time to time and their behaviour may give reason for concern. There may well be other reasons for these factors other than abuse. But any concern should be immediately discussed with a senior colleague to assess the situation.

6.2 Warning signs, which may alert you to the possibility of abuse, can include:

6.2.1 Unexplained bruising, cuts or burns on the person, particularly if these are parts of the body not normally injured in accidents.

6.2.2 An unwillingness to discuss injuries, improbable explanations or a deliberate attempt to hide injuries.

6.2.3 An injury, which a parent or carer tries to hide, or for which they might have given different explanations.

- 6.2.4 Changes in behaviour such as the person suddenly becoming very quiet, tearful, withdrawn, aggressive, or displaying severe tantrums.
  - 6.2.5 Loss of weight without a medical explanation.
  - 6.2.6 An inappropriately dressed or ill kept child/vulnerable person who may also be dirty.
  - 6.2.7 Constant hunger or an unusually large appetite.
  - 6.2.8 Sexually explicit behaviour, for instance playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for a child's age/ inconsistent with the person's level of understanding, promiscuity in older teenagers.
  - 6.2.9 Continual masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play.
  - 6.2.10 Running away from home, attempted suicides, self-inflicted injuries.
  - 6.2.11 A lack of trust in adults, particularly those who would normally be close to the person.
  - 6.2.12 Disturbed sleep, nightmares and enuresis.
  - 6.2.13 Eating problems, including over-eating or loss of appetite.
  - 6.2.14 Self-deprecating remarks, an inability to accept praise.
- 6.3 Remember, the above signs do not necessarily mean that a child has been abused. If you are concerned about the welfare of a child, however, you must act. Do not assume that someone else will help them: they might not.

## 7 WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WHEN A DISCLOSURE IS TAKING PLACE

- 7.1 Make a record of what has been said
  - 7.1.1 Listen actively to what the child is saying without interrupting them
  - 7.1.2 Stay calm and approachable
  - 7.1.3 Show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems
  - 7.1.4 Make it clear that you are taking them seriously and acknowledge how difficult this must be for them
  - 7.1.5 Don't make a judgement. Your role is to receive what they've said and then report it to the relevant person.
  - 7.1.6 Be honest. Let them know as early on as possible that you may need to tell someone else – don't promise confidentiality
  - 7.1.7 Never push for information. Ask open questions rather than closed questions so the child can use their own words.

- 7.1.8 Reflect back what you are hearing in their own words
  - 7.1.9 Reassure them that they've done the right thing by telling you
  - 7.1.10 If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let the child know that you are always ready to listen
- 7.2 Helpful things you might say or convey would be: "Thank you for telling me", "You did the right thing in telling me", and "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?"
- 7.3 Be discreet. Do not alert the abuser and only share your concerns or information with those named below.

## 8. RESPONSIBILITIES AND IMMEDIATE ACTION

- 8.1 All staff and volunteers working for **acet UK** are required to report instances of actual or suspected abuse or neglect of children to the Safeguarding Lead of the school or organisation to which the service is being provided. If the Safeguarding Lead is not present, ask to speak to another suitable member of staff. The school/organisation will then be responsible for contacting Children Services or the Police if necessary. If there is no suitable person at the school/organisation to speak to about the concern, staff and volunteers should contact either the Safeguarding Lead in London (the Chief Executive) or the Safeguarding Lead in Chester (the Esteem Network Director).
- 8.2 After reporting the concern to the school/organisation, staff and volunteers should then report it to the Safeguarding Lead in London or Chester (depending on where the concern has been raised), ensuring that only vital information is passed on and that confidentiality is maintained.
- 8.3 If it is not possible to speak to a member of staff at the school/organisation or one of **acet UK's** Safeguarding Leads and the child is at immediate risk of serious harm, the staff member or volunteer should contact their local Children's Services Duty Social Worker direct, or where necessary the Police. If any of these routes are taken, either one of **acet UK's** Safeguarding Leads should be contacted as soon as possible.
- 8.4 **acet UK** is a member of Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS - Churches Protection Advisory Service). They can be contacted for advice on their 24-hour helpline: 0845 120 45 50 or on 0303 003 1111
- 8.5 **acet UK** is committed to supporting staff and volunteers through the process of discovering cases of abuse or neglect through supervision and other mechanisms.

## 9. PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOS

- 9.1 Working with children and young people may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the



privacy, dignity, safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Informed written consent from schools or other youth settings, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose.

- 9.2 Careful consideration should be given as to how activities involving the taking of images are organised and undertaken. Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media, or on the Internet.
- 9.3 It is not appropriate for acet UK staff and volunteers to take photographs of children or young people for their personal use.

## 10. THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- 10.1 It is understood that this is a developing area of work, changes in technology can happen very quickly and this could impact the way we work very suddenly. acet UK currently does not use social media to engage directly with young people. If this changes, a policy will need to be put in place to outline boundaries and accountability around this.
- 10.2 Please refer to our online safeguarding policy for how we safeguard children and young people when engaging in online learning situations using video conferencing tools.

## 11. NOTES ON SELF HARM, SUICIDE AND EATING DISORDERS

- 11.1 The role of safeguarding is to protect people from “risks of significant harm” in some cases the source of this potential harm may be the person themselves. The source of harm does not affect our initial response. Signs or disclosures of self-harm, eating disorders or suicidal thoughts or attempts must be recorded as a safeguarding incident and reported through the standard procedures. The response from acet UK staff, volunteers and Safeguarding Leads will be tailored to the sources of risk. Below are some examples of potential warning signs, this is not an exhaustive list and if you have any concerns always speak to your line manager.

### Self-harm

- Visible scars and fresh injuries
- Wearing clothes that cover all skin even in very hot environments
- Signs they have been pulling out their hair

### Eating disorders

- Unusually high focus on body image
- Diet/exercise obsession
- Refusal to join in any activity involving food

- Extreme weight loss

### Suicide

- Giving away possessions
- Loss of interest in hobbies and general life
- Reckless behaviour
- Extreme behaviour changes
- Impulsivity
- Suicidal thoughts such as “I just can’t take it any more” “I wish I were dead” “Everyone will be better off without me” “no one can do anything to help me now”

## 12. CHILD EXPLOITATION

12.1 Included within safeguarding is the duty to protect children and young people who may be vulnerable to exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

12.2 Children who are exploited are often vulnerable because of chaotic or traumatic experiences in their lives, making them targets for perpetrators, gangs and networks. Suspicion of child exploitation of any type will be responded to fully, following our safeguarding procedure.

Some indicators of child exploitation include:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out of area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones;
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls;
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups;
- Leaving home / care without explanation;
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries;
- Carrying weapons;
- Significant decline in school results / performance;
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.

## 13. NOTES ON HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

13.1 The following practices have been listed more fully as they are less well known and in order to protect young people, **acet UK** staff need to be aware of all forms of abuse, what they are and what to look for.

### Honour based abuse

The **definition** of “honour” based abuse to be used is:

“an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/ or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community’s code of behaviour.”

For young victims it is a form of child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

There are strong links between HBA, Forced Marriage (FM) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The perceived immoral behaviour which could precipitate an incident could include:

- Inappropriate make-up or dress
- The existence of a romantic friend
- Kissing or intimacy in a public place
- Rejecting a forced marriage
- Pregnancy outside of marriage
- Being a victim of rape
- Inter-faith relationships
- Being part of an LGBT+ community
- Conversion therapy

It may manifest as:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse, including
- House arrest and excessive restrictions;
- Denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends
- Threats or violence
- Pressure to go abroad. Victims are sometimes persuaded to return to their country of origin under false pretenses, when in fact the intention could be to cause fatal harm

<https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/forms-of-violence-and-abuse/honour-based-violence/>

[https://www.londoncp.co.uk/honour\\_base\\_viol.html](https://www.londoncp.co.uk/honour_base_viol.html)

<https://karmanirvana.org.uk/>

### Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning difficulties or who are under-age, cannot) consent to the marriage and where duress / abuse is used to enforce the marriage. ‘Duress’ includes psychological, sexual, financial or emotional

pressure and physical violence. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on a person to marry can take different forms:

- Physical pressure might take the form of threats or violence (including sexual violence)
- Emotional or psychological pressure might take the form of making someone feel they are bringing shame on their family, denying them freedom, education, money etc. unless they agree to the marriage
- If a person consents to marry, but later changes their mind, but still feel required to go ahead with the marriage, it is also regarded as a forced marriage

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/879929/What\\_Is\\_Forced\\_Marriage\\_leaflet.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879929/What_Is_Forced_Marriage_leaflet.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage#recognise-a-forced-marriage>

## FGM

FGM is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. FGM is child abuse and is illegal in the UK and in most countries.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It may also be known as female circumcision or cutting. It has no health benefits to women.

FGM is typically performed by an elder female from the community who may be known as an 'exciser' or 'cutter' and often have no medical training.

FGM is generally carried out with no anesthetic utilizing a variety of instruments e.g. a knife, scalpel, razor blade etc.

The age at which FGM is carried out at any age from birth onwards, but the average age is between 5-8 years old. 200 million women and girls are affected by FGM

FGM has been classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) into 4 main types:

- Type 1 (clitoridectomy) – removing part or all of the clitoris.
- Type 2 (excision) – removing part or all of the clitoris and cutting the inner and/or outer labia.
- Type 3 (infibulation) Partial or total removal of the clitoris and inner and outer lips, and the sewing together of the outer lips to leave a smooth layer of scar tissue covering the genitals.

- Type 4 – all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area.

It can be extremely dangerous and can cause immediate and /or long-lasting health problems, which can include:

- blood loss and infections
- Severe pain, immediate and chronic pain
- Increased risk of HIV and AIDS
- gynecological and urinary complications
- complications in pregnancy and childbirth
- Emotional and psychological trauma
- In some cases – death

Labia elongation (also referred to as labia stretching or labia pulling) involves stretching the labia minora, sometimes using sticks, harnesses or weights. Not officially recognized as FGM.

Religious reasons are given to justify FGM, but there are no references to support FGM in any religious script. Social and cultural reasons are often given to justify FGM, however it is a harmful practice, illegal and a violation of human rights.

For advice and support:

FORWARD [www.forwarduk.org.uk](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk)

Tel: 0208 960 4000

NSPCC FGM Helpline (24/7) 0800 028 3550

### Breast ironing

The process during which young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged, flattened and/or pounded down over a period of time (sometimes years) in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. Sometimes, an elastic belt, or binder, is used to stop them from growing.

A girl's family does this with the hope this will protect the girl from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage, and help them stay in education.

<https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/caa/child-abuse/breast-ironing-flattening/>

Although there is no specific law within the UK around breast flattening or breast ironing, it is a form of physical abuse.

If there are concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of, or is suffering, significant harm, safeguarding procedures should be followed.

<http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/breast-flattening/>

### Radicalisation and extremism

Islamist extremism remains the dominant UK terror threat, however the fastest-growing UK terrorist threat is from the Far Right.

This can include justifying political, religious, sexist, or racist violence, or to steer individuals towards an ideology of extremism and intolerance. A young person might be groomed and radicalised into carrying out acts of violence and cause significant harm to others.

Children and young people can be at risk of radicalization in many ways:

- Online grooming
- via peer networks or online chat platforms.
- Grooming by others by those who hold harmful, extremist beliefs, including parents/carers and siblings and even wider family members who have an influence over the young person's life.
- Exposure to violent, anti-social, extremist imagery and narratives which can lead to normalising intolerance of others and extremist ideology.

<https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/report-your-concerns/report-safety-and-welfare-concerns/reporting-radicalisation-concerns/>

## 14 CURRICULUM

- 14.1 Many areas of acet UK's work can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied, ie drama
- 14.2 The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children and young people's questions can require careful judgement and acet UK staff and volunteers may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from their line manager or project leader.
- 14.3 Care should also be taken to abide by the governing body's required policy on relationships and sex education and the wishes of parents. Parents have the right to withdraw their

children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the science curriculum)

- 14.4 We agree with the Department for Education that, “Good practice allows children an open forum to talk things through. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children should be made aware of the processes to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer. All staff should be aware of how to support children and how to manage a safeguarding report from a child” (*Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges – Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads, May 2018*).

## 15. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 15.1 **acet UK** will ensure all staff and volunteers are carefully selected and vetted (including securing two references) to try and ensure they do not pose a risk to children. For relevant staff, it will be a condition of engagement either as an employee or volunteer to receive a cleared Enhanced DBS disclosure. All staff and volunteers will be informed of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures as part of the induction process.

## 16. TRAINING

- 16.1 All staff and volunteers will be trained in the implementation of this policy as part of their induction programme. Further training will also be available locally and through Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS)

## 17. STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

- 17.1 All staff and volunteers are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)

## 18. COMPLAINTS / ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST ACET STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- 18.1 **acet UK** will take seriously any complaints made by children, clients or members of staff against a staff member or volunteer. All such concerns will be brought to the attention of the **acet UK Chief Executive**. **acet UK** has a responsibility to suspend a member of staff or volunteer (which should be seen as a neutral act) from working until a complaint/allegation has been investigated by the statutory authorities.

## POLICY REVIEW

This policy was reviewed in July 2024, July 2023, January 2022, January 2021, October 2019, July 2018, October 2016, July 2014, January 2014 (ERN) and December 2012 (ERN). The next review is due in July 2025.



## APPENDIX 1: CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct sets out acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour for our staff and volunteers. The Code of Conduct also enables staff and volunteers to ensure that their working practices are protective of themselves and other staff as well as the children they work with.

Our work with children and young people is primarily in schools and other youth settings. Staff and volunteers should ensure that a member of teaching staff or a member of staff from the youth setting is present when sessions are being delivered. Less experienced **acet UK** staff should work with a fellow staff member. Whilst it would be unrealistic to preclude all physical contact, workers are expected to exercise extreme caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation.

Our Code of Conduct is as follows:

- play your part in helping to develop an ethos where all people matter and are treated equally, and with respect and dignity
- promote values such as respect, inclusion and empowerment through your speech, actions and behaviour and, in so doing, offer yourself to children and young people as a positive role model
- always put the care, welfare and safety needs of a child first
- listen attentively to any ideas and views a child wants to share with you
- respect a child's right to privacy and personal space
- respond sensitively to children who seem anxious about participating in certain activities
- speak to a member of staff immediately if you suspect that a child is experiencing bullying or harassment
- be aware of the vulnerability of some groups of children to being isolated and hurt (for example, children with disabilities and learning difficulties; children from Gypsy & Traveller communities; Black & Minority Ethnic children).
- ensure that when you are working with children you are at least within sight or hearing of other adults
- report immediately any suspicion that a child could be at risk of harm or abuse
- respect a child's right to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them
- never dismiss what a child tells you as 'lies' or exaggeration
- do not make any suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun
- do not encourage favouritism
- do not discriminate, harass or intimidate a child or worker because of their age, 'race', gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, socio-economic class or disability.
- do not play physical contact games with children. Shaking hands is permitted, but all other physical touch should be sensibly avoided
- do not form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with children
- never underestimate the contribution that you can make to the development of safe communities for children