

## **SAFEGUARDING and CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**February 2023**

<b>Date of Approval</b>	<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	<b>Safeguarding Trustee</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
01/02/2023	Andrew Quartermain, CEO	Priscilla Turner	01/01/2024

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This policy reflects Pro Corda's active commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children and young people who attend its courses. In all the work we do the rights, safety and welfare of children are paramount. This policy outlines Pro Corda's approach to the recognition, consultation and referral of suspected child abuse to the appropriate agencies. The CEO and Artistic Director, Andrew Quartermain, is responsible for child protection and welfare matters for all Pro Corda courses. His role is to co-ordinate the Child Protection processes within Pro Corda, organise effective training of all Pro Corda employees and take the lead in referral to outside agencies. All Pro Corda employees have a responsibility to protect course participants from abuse and Andrew Quartermain will ensure that all employees are conversant with Pro Corda's Child Protection Procedures and know how to access and implement them, independently if necessary. Pro Corda will keep Child Protection records confidential on a need-to-know basis and these will be kept separately from any other records. This policy is publicly available on Pro Corda's website, [www.procorda.com](http://www.procorda.com) for parents and anyone associated with Pro Corda in order to facilitate open and effective communication between parents, course participants, teachers and outside agencies responsible for the wellbeing of course participants.

## **2.0 Confidentiality**

The management of confidentiality is an essential factor in all issues relating to child protection if Pro Corda is to maintain the trust of its course participants and staff. All members of staff will know how to respond to a course participant who discloses abuse. It is vital that our actions do not abuse the child further or prejudice further enquiries.

## **3.0 Overview**

3.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of course participants is:

- protecting course participants from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of course participant's mental or physical health or development
- ensuring that course participants grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all course participants to have the best outcomes

3.2 The purpose of this document is to assist all staff

- to safeguard and protect course participants who are at risk of abuse or neglect
- to promote the well-being of all course participants.

3.3 At Pro Corda we are committed to safeguarding course participants and young people and we expect everyone who works on our site or on our outreach courses to share this commitment. Adults in Pro Corda take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage course participants and

young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies in our charity operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. Pro Corda must be a safe place for all course participants attending.

3.4 This policy and procedures should be read in conjunction with

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (with Dec 2020 update)
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- DfE Teaching Online Safety 2019
- Pro Corda e-Safety policy
- Pro Corda Anti Online Safety policy
- Pro Corda Professional Conduct policy

3.5 The safeguarding of children is everyone's business and Pro Corda has a responsibility under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes:

- Preventing the impairment of children's mental or physical health or development
- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

**Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2022** states that

'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child on child abuse; the systems in place for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously (and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible); how allegations of child on child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with; clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child on child abuse will be supported; a recognition that even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.'

It also emphasises that the voice of the child must be heard and they will be given feedback.

3.6 This policy and the following procedures apply to all paid staff, supply staff, volunteers and trustees working with or in Pro Corda.

## 4.0 Legal framework

- 4.1 This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document is Working Together, 2018, highlighting that every assessment of a child, 'must be informed by the views of the child'. (Working Together, 2018:21) This is echoed by **Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022** through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.
- 4.2 The Children Act 1989 defines a child as being up to the age of 18 years; it also defines significant harm and the roles and responsibilities of Children's Social Care and the Police.
- 4.3 Legislation related to safeguarding in schools
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)**
- 4.4 Education
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
  - Education Act 2002
  - The Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003
  - The Further Education (Providers of Education) (England) Regulations 2006
  - The Children and Families Act 2014
  - The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

## 5.0 Significant harm

- 5.1 There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the maltreatment. Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm (e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning). More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any maltreatment alongside the family's strengths and support.
- 5.2 This policy outlines the action to be taken if it is suspected that a child may be being abused, harmed or neglected.

There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

- 5.3 It is acknowledged that a child can be abused, harmed or neglected in a family, institution or community setting or online by someone known to them or, less commonly, by a stranger. This includes someone in a position of trust such as a staff member or professionals in other services around the child.
- 5.4 All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Where course participants have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these course participant's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- 5.5 Safeguarding and the promotion of a child's welfare covers all aspects of the child's life, and Pro Corda is committed to ensuring that all its actions in respect of a child are compatible with this aim. If there are concerns about a child's welfare that do not meet the thresholds of child abuse Pro Corda will consider whether the Early Help approach should be considered. Early identification of concerns and the use of Early Help to develop a multi-agency plan for the child can reduce the risk of subsequent abuse.

## **6.0 Context**

- 6.1 The content of this policy is applicable to all paid staff, supply staff, volunteers and trustees.
- 6.2 All adults at Pro Corda have a full and active part to play in protecting our course participants from harm.
- 6.3 All adults at Pro Corda believe that Pro Corda should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
- 6.4 The aims of this policy are:
- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
  - To raise the awareness of both teaching and support staff for the need to safeguard course participants and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.

6.5 Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff, course staff and volunteers:

- To provide a systematic means of monitoring course participants known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of appropriate communication between all members of staff.
- By strictly following safer recruitment requirements, ensuring that all adults within Pro Corda who have access to course participants have been checked as to their suitability.
- To set out a structured procedure within the Pro Corda community in cases of suspected abuse.
- By sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff, supply staff and volunteers.
- To promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police, Social Care and Health. Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and course participants appropriately.
- To ensure all staff are aware of Pro Corda's Professional Conduct policy.
- By providing effective management for staff, supply staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.

6.6 Equality

Some course participant's circumstances mean they are more vulnerable to abuse and/or less able to easily access services. These course participants often require a high degree of awareness and cooperation between professionals in different agencies, both in recognising and identifying their needs and in acting to meet those needs.

Please refer to the Pro Corda Equality policy.

## 7.0 In house safeguarding and child protection procedures

7.1 We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has responsibility for Child Protection and who undertakes regular training for this role.

We have two Designated Safeguarding deputies who will act in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's absence.

(Throughout this policy 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' refers to the DSL or any team members. All team members can act equally. They work as a team.)

The Safeguarding and Child Protection team are:

**Andrew Quartermain** DSL Lead

**Annabel Thwaite** Deputy DSL 1

**Laura Feeney** Deputy DSL 2

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies are members of the Senior Leadership Team of Pro Corda.

Those named above have received appropriate training. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputies will attend all staff training sessions and undertake additional formal training at least every two years. The Safeguarding Team will keep themselves up to date throughout the year.

All Pro Corda staff will receive training at least every year, with ongoing updates through the year.

Topics will include:

- Signs and symptoms of abuse
- Safeguarding and online safety

We have a designated Trustee for Child Protection/Safeguarding. This person is:

**Priscilla Turner**, Safeguarding Trustee

- 7.2 All staff will have access to and understand the process for communicating a concern about a child.
- 7.3 In the event that there are concerns about a child, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will access the Suffolk Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) indicators to inform their decision-making process with regard to the presenting safeguarding concerns.
- 7.4 The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the children and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.
  - 7.4.1 All members of staff will develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and of their responsibility for referring any concerns. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside Pro Corda and/or can occur between course participants outside of these environments.
  - 7.4.2 Induction for all new members of staff, trustees, supply staff and volunteers will include:
    - safeguarding and child protection policy, which includes child on child abuse
    - staff code of conduct.
    - behaviour policy and anti bullying policies, which include measures to prevent bullying, including cyber bullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying.



- procedures for monitoring all staff, trustees, volunteers, and supply staff training.

7.4.3 All members of staff will know how to respond to a course participant who discloses abuse. It is vital that our actions do not abuse the course participant further or prejudice further enquiries, for example:

- Recognise that a course participant is likely to disclose to someone they trust: this could be anyone on the Pro Corda staff. It is important that the person receiving the disclosure recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the course participant.
- Recognise that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory and so course participants may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse.
- Stay calm, listen to the course participant and if you are shocked by what is being said try not to show it.
- Do not promise confidentiality; you can however promise privacy, reassure the course participant they have done the right thing. Explain who you will have to tell and why.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Keep in mind that certain course participants may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- If a course participant is making a disclosure the pace should be dictated by the child. Listen carefully to the child, reflect back, use the course participant's language, be non-judgmental, be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, do not ask leading questions and only prompt the course participant where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should be avoided, staff can ask course participants if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was.
- Accept what they are telling you; do not make judgements.
- Reassure the course participant that they have done the right thing in telling you. Do acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you.

- Do not criticise the perpetrator; this may be someone they love.
  - Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
  - Pass this information on immediately to your Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 7.5 All staff, in the absence of a member of the safeguarding team, may raise concerns directly with MASH (MASH includes Children’s Social Care and Police).
- 7.6 After a course participant has disclosed abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should take immediate action to contact MASH.
- 7.6.1 All staff must report all information immediately, on the same working day, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 7.6.2 The conduct of staff when in a 1:1 situation with a child should be managed in a way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their motives or intentions. All staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place course participants or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to course participants. All staff must be aware of Pro Corda’s Whistleblowing and Managing Allegations Policy and how to access it.
- 7.6.3 All parents/carers will be made aware of the possibilities of staff members’ actions with regard to child protection procedures.
- 7.6.4 All parents/carers, as part of the child induction process, will be made aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which is on the Pro Corda website.
- 7.7 We will review our Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures at least annually.

## **8.0 Additional safeguarding responsibilities**

Contact details for parents and carers and additional emergency contact numbers should be kept up to date. There is a recognition that there may be changes in family circumstances – Pro Corda will do everything possible to update contact and welfare information for children and their families.

### **8.1 Reporting concerns about course participants (face to face or via phone, video or similar)**

All Pro Corda staff, on site or working from home must understand how to raise a concern. This should be immediate reporting to the DSL / Team using existing Pro Corda processes. Staff could (face to face or digitally):

- Talk to a DSL/Team member if they are in Pro Corda
- If DSL/Team are not on site go to a senior leadership team member in Pro Corda; alternatively contact the DSL or team member by phone, video or similar

- Use counselling / pastoral practitioners to support a disclosure if the DSL/team are not on site.

## 8.2 Mental Health

Appropriate support for course participant's mental health and well-being should be in place. It may be delivered by Pro Corda, or from specialist staff or multi agency support services.

## 8.3 Learning online

Pro Corda will continue to provide learning opportunities. This will be a blend of activities to undertake at home, online activities and live virtual opportunities. There will be protocols for participation, for Pro Corda staff and for the course participants at home. Pro Corda staff should be aware that if they observe anything of concern, or if a disclosure is made in a virtual environment, the usual procedures apply and the concern will be taken straight to the DSL. Refer to ...

- Anti Bullying and Anti Online Bullying Policies
- e-Safety policy
- Behaviour Policy

## 9.0 Types of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns

These definitions are from 'Working Together' (2018) and '**Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022)**:

**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. Course participants may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children; course participants can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

9.1 **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.

9.2 **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 course participants. 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 online bullying), causing course participants frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of course participants. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

9.3 **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 course participants in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging course participants 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 course participants. The sexual abuse of course participants by other course participants is a specific safeguarding issue in education

9.4 **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 mental or physical 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.

9.5 **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and course participants or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of

incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. Course participants are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and course participants can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to), sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines. Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Course participants are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

#### **9.5.1 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or threatening/committing serious violence to others. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

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

#### **9.5.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex; CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving course participants in the production of sexual images, forcing course participants to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging course participants to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some course participants may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

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

- course participants who have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- course participants who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant

### 9.5.3 County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with course participants and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Course participants can be targeted and recruited into county lines criminal activity in a number of locations including schools, colleges, course participant referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, (both from home and school).

Staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have concerns about a child.

- 9.6 **Prevent, Radicalisation and Extremism:** Where staff are concerned that course participants and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Preventing radicalisation: Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet). As with other safeguarding risks all staff should be alert to changes in course participant's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying course participants who might be at risk of radicalisation taking their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 9.7 **Sharing nudes and semi nudes (formerly Sexting):** The guidance relates to the taking, sending or sharing indecent, sexually explicit images or videos of course participants (under the age of 18). This may be via social networking sites and instant messaging apps and services. Behaviours linked to consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos can be signs that course participants are at risk. Pro Corda is clear that nude images or videos of children are illegal. It may have extremely damaging and long-lasting consequences. Pro Corda understands that not all incidents are as a result of grooming by a perpetrator, and that some incidents are initiated by the child, as a demonstration of body confidence, body positivity, or maybe as part of an age appropriate relationship. We have a responsibility to work with course participants, their parents and carers in ensuring that all course participants are fully aware of the risks, dangers and possible repercussions of sharing nude images and videos.
- 9.8 **Upskirting:** typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.
- 9.9 **Missing:** A child going missing from Pro Corda is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow Pro Corda's procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with course participants that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. All staff should be aware that course participants going missing can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of FGM or risk of forced marriage. Staff should be aware of Pro Corda's Missing Child procedures.
- 9.10 **Children and the court system:** All staff should be aware that any child involved in legal proceedings should be made known to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Children are

sometime required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. Where there is a family break up making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families.

- 9.11 **Children with family members in prison:** Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. Staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they know a child has a family member in prison.
- 9.12 **Serious Violence:** All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved in serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from Pro Corda, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self harm or a significant change in well-being or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that course participants have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.
- 9.13 **Domestic abuse:** Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional. All course participants can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children. Exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life. Staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have concerns about a child.
- 9.14 **Online Safety:** The detail of online harm and abuse is in Pro Corda's e-Safety policy. The online world develops and changes at great speed. New opportunities, challenges and risks are appearing all the time. The DSL supported by the DSL team and specific staff who have expertise in Online Safety will stay up to date with the latest devices, platforms, apps, trends and related threats. Pro Corda will make every attempt to keep course participants safe online when they are in Pro Corda and when they are learning online at home. This includes ensuring course participants know how to recognise risk and ask for help.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:



- **Content** - being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.

- **Contact** - being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: child to child pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.

- **Conduct** - personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

- **Commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel course participants or staff are at risk, please report it to the DSL, who may report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Online safety concerns will be taken to the DSL in the same way as any other form of harm, or risk of harm. As part of their induction Pro Corda will brief course participants how to stay safe online, helping them to recognise that:

- Some online content tries to make people believe something false is true and/or mislead (misinformation and disinformation)

- Companies use techniques to persuade people to buy something

- Some games and social media companies use techniques to try to keep users online longer (persuasive/sticky design)

- There are grooming risks online, such as grooming into criminal activities. Pro Corda will help course participants recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by:

- looking at why people behave differently online, for example how anonymity (you do not know me) and invisibility (you cannot see me) affect what people do,

- looking at how online emotions can be intensified resulting in mob mentality,

- teaching techniques (relevant on and offline) to defuse or calm arguments, for example a disagreement with friends, and disengage from unwanted contact or content online; and

- considering unacceptable online behaviours often passed off as so-called social norms or just banter. For example, negative language that can be used, and in some cases is often expected, as part of online gaming and the acceptance of misogynistic, homophobic and racist language that should never be tolerated online or offline.

## 10.0 Child on Child abuse:

Children can abuse other children. This may include physically, sexually or emotionally hurting others. All staff should recognise that course participants are capable of abusing their peers. This abuse may take place at Pro Corda or online. Pro Corda has a 'zero tolerance' approach to all forms of child on child abuse.

There is a clear recognition that even when there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, such abuse is likely to be taking place, and not reported. Pro Corda has a clear attitude of 'it could happen here'. Pro Corda recognises that failing to understand the scale of harassment and abuse, or downplaying some behaviours would lead to an unsafe environment, and a culture that could normalise abuse, meaning that course participants would accept it as normal, and not report. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Pro Corda has a system in place, well promoted, accessible and understood for course participants to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including:

- bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice based bullying and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate relationships
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Pro Corda recognises the different forms of child on child abuse and is clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Course participants or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

Stopping harm and ensuring immediate safety is the first priority of any education setting. Pro Corda staff, alongside their Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy, will make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

### 10.1 **Abuse and harmful behaviour**

It is necessary to consider

- what abuse is and what it looks like
- how it can be managed
- what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual
- what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.
- Course participants are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.
- Children can abuse other children. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. (KCSIE 2022)

- Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
- Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.
- Staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of course participants and young people who have been the victims of violent crime (for example mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker course participants.

The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other course participants. Evidence suggests that such course participants may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

## 10.2 **Types of abuse**

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

### 10.2.1 **Physical abuse**

This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

### 10.2.2 **Sexual violence and sexual harassment**

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL will follow the DfE Guidance: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2021, with consideration of:

- Managing internally
- MASH referral
- Reporting to the police.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two course participants of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of course participants sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young

person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as to the young person it is intended towards.

Sexually harmful behaviour may include:

- inappropriate sexual language
- inappropriate role play
- sexual touching
- sexual assault/abuse.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

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

Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them and can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for course participants.

### 10.2.3 **Bullying**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Young people who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

### 10.2.4 **Online Bullying**

Online Bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, e-mail, chat rooms etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. Online bullying can take many forms:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- Stealing someone's online identity
- Spreading rumours online
- Trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chatrooms or games
- Developing hate sites about another person
- Prank calls or messages
- Group bullying or exclusion online
- Anonymous messaging
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm
- Pressuring course participants to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

#### **10.2.5 Sharing nude or indecent imagery (aka Sexting)**

See 9.7, 9.8 and 10.1

#### **10.2.6 Initiation/Hazing**

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

#### **10.2.7 Prejudiced Behaviour**

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – for example disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

#### **10.2.8 Teenage relationship abuse**

Teenage relationship abuse is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation.

### 10.3 **Expected staff action**

Staff should consider the seriousness of the case and make a quick decision whether to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately before taking any further in-house actions.

### 10.4 **Recognising child on child abuse**

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

Not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying some behaviours related to abuse as it can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to course participants accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the course participants and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. Staff will talk to the course participants in a calm and consistent manner. Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

#### 10.4.1 Taking Action

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the course participant (s)
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator

The DSL will

- consider referral to Police or Social Care
  - Contribute to multi-agency assessments
  - Convene a risk management meeting
  - Record all incidents and all action taken
- Record as soon as possible within 24 hours, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail.

#### 10.4.2 Recording sexualised behaviour

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Follow the prompts on your safeguarding and child protection recording form
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.

#### 10.4.3 Gather the Facts

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

#### 10.4.4 Consider the Intent

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

#### 10.4.5 Decide on your next course of action

If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow Pro Corda's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If MASH and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people at Pro Corda or they may be put in touch with parents. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.



#### 10.4.6 Informing parents/guardians/carers

The best way to inform parents/guardians/carers is face to face, but this may not be practical immediately. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another. Is the course participant 13+ and does not want to share with parents? Use the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines>

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the Pro Corda staff should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/guardian/carer (they may be scared to tell parents/guardians/carers that they are being harmed in any way).

#### 10.5 Points to consider

##### 10.5.1 What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved?

##### 10.5.2 Where did the incident or incidents take place?

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?

##### 10.5.3 What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

##### 10.5.4 What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

##### 10.5.5 Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual

after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

## 10.6 Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

### 10.6.1 For the young person who has been harmed

Victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst at Pro Corda so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support. Any support offered to the child, or safety arrangements made for the child, should also be shared with them in writing (or by email).

It is important the victim feels in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that Pro Corda is a safe space for them.

### 10.6.2 For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary, but this must be discussed with parents.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an Early Help referral and the young person may require additional support from family

members. Any support offered to the child, or safety arrangements made for the child, should also be shared with them in writing (or by email).

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that the young person receives a consequence for their behaviour (following Pro Corda behaviour policy). Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.

This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.

It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required.

This should be completed via a multi- agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

Pro Corda may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it is important that the DSL works closely with the police (and other agencies as required) to ensure the actions of Pro Corda do not jeopardise the police investigation.

### **10.6.3 After care**

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this

reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

#### **10.6.4 Review**

Pro Corda will monitor and review potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, Pro Corda will decide on a course of action. Consideration will be given as to whether there are wider cultural issues within Pro Corda that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur.

#### **10.7 Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports**

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, are recorded in writing. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified, and addressed. If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care maybe appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, Pro Corda, should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it (following Pro Corda's Behaviour policy).

#### **10.8 Preventative Strategies**

Child on child abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most robust policies and support processes. It is important to develop appropriate strategies to proactively prevent child on child abuse.

Pro Corda has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.

Staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Staff will consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action.

Young people are part of changing their circumstances and we encourage young people to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour'. We involve course participants in the positive ethos in Pro Corda; one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

### **11.0 Possible signs and symptoms of abuse**

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. This is not an exclusive list and many of the signs and symptoms could fall into more than one category. Guidance on recognising signs and symptoms of abuse can be

found in **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2022**. Also course participants with learning difficulties often exhibit some of these signs (e.g. reluctance to get undressed for PE, constant tiredness) which are not necessarily signs of abuse but symptoms of their condition; however, it must also be remembered that disabled children are 4 times more likely to experience abuse or neglect than non-disabled peers.

Course participants with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other course participants;
- the potential for course participants with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

### 11.1 Physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries, bites, bruises or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss the causes of injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive
- Withdrawal from physical contact/aggressive behaviour
- Arms & legs kept covered in hot weather (excluding for reasons of cultural dress)
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendency
- Running away

### 11.2 Emotional abuse

- Physical, mental, emotional or developmental lag
- Domestic violence
- Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to making mistakes or fear of punishment
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviours
- Self-harm
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or solvent abuse
- Running away

- Compulsive stealing, scavenging

### 11.3 **Sexual abuse**

- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Displays of affection which are inappropriate
- Alleged promiscuity or sexualised behaviour
- Fear of undressing
- Regression to younger behaviour
- Inappropriate internet use and possible 'grooming' concerns
- Genital itching or other genital/anal pain/injury
- Distrust of familiar adult
- Unexplained gifts of money, mobile phones etc.
- Depression and withdrawal
- Apparent secrecy about social activities or the identity of "special friends"
- Wetting or soiling, day and night
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Chronic illness, especially throat infections and sexually transmitted disease

### 11.4 **Neglect**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems or unmet special needs
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- Poor social relationships
- Deterioration in performance
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

### 11.5 **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing sessions or not taking part
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infection
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour

Staff should also be aware that many course participants and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.

## 11.6 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The World Health Organisation identify girls between 4 and 10 as being the most at risk. FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- prolonged or repeated absences, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

## 11.7 Prevent, Radicalisation and Extremism:

11.7.1 **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

11.7.2 **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

11.7.3 **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures

- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside Pro Corda
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online, so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

#### 11.8 **Handling a nude or semi-nude image or video incident:**

UK Council of Internet Safety (UKCIS) “Sharing nudes and semi-nudes” will always be used to triage concerns. It is important that staff actions do not blame, shame or criminalise the child.

There should always be an initial review meeting, led by the DSL. This should consider the initial evidence and aim to establish:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to a young person or young people
- When assessing the risks the following should be considered:
  - Why was the imagery shared?
  - Was the young person coerced or put under pressure to produce the imagery?
  - Who has shared the imagery?
  - Where has the imagery been shared?
  - Are there any adults involved in the sharing of imagery?
  - Does the child involved have additional vulnerabilities?
  - Does the young person understand consent?
  - Has the young person taken part in this kind of activity before?
  - If a referral should be made to the police and/or children’s social care.

Do not refer automatically, unless there are additional concerns about the pressure applied on the child to take/share the image, or unless there are sexual aspects involved which are not in line with the child’s age/stage. A MASH referral would always be made when there is a report to police.

- Imagery should not be viewed under any circumstances as it is a criminal act in itself.
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms.

This may be unknown.



- Immediate action should not be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services if reporting to the police.
- Any relevant facts about the young person involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the course participants involved - in most cases parents/carers should be involved

An immediate referral to police and/or children's social care should be made if at this initial stage. (A MASH referral would always be made when there is a report to police):

1. The incident involves an adult
2. There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
3. What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
4. The imagery involves sexual acts and any course participant in the imagery is under 13
5. You have reason to believe a course participant is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming).

If none of the above apply, then Pro Corda may decide not to involve police or children's social care (Pro Corda can choose to escalate the incident at any time if further information/concerns come to light).

The decision to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care would be made in cases when the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to course participants involved and the risks can be managed within Pro Corda's pastoral support and disciplinary framework and if appropriate local network of support. Image taking and sharing includes Upskirting: where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

- 11.9 **Private fostering:** A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

- 11.9.1 Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.
- 11.9.2 Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or are involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

## **12.0 What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred**

- 12.1 You must report the concerns immediately, on the same working day, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputies. You may report verbally, but this must be followed up by a written account, on the same working day.
- 12.2 The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and team members is to:
  - 12.2.1 Obtain information from staff, supply staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and to record this information.  
  
DSL and team members will be supported by matron and pastoral staff.
  - 12.2.2 Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.
  - 12.2.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead should make a referral to the MASH (social care / police) or the police without delay if it is agreed during the consultation or if there is an immediate risk to the child. A MASH referral would always be made when there is a report to police.
  - 12.2.4 The referral should be made to the MASH team in which the child lives, e.g. if a child lives in another borough, the referral needs to be made to the MASH team in that borough / authority.
  - 12.2.5 A telephone referral should be made and confirmed in writing using MARF online on the same working day if requested. The MASH team should acknowledge the referral within one working day and should be contacted if no acknowledgement has been received within 3 working days.
  - 12.2.6 Following referral, the MASH team should consider the next course of action, record their decision in writing and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead that they have made a decision.
  - 12.2.7 Concerns will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
  - 12.2.8 It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the Designated Safeguarding Lead

has not responded appropriately to your concerns, it is then your responsibility to contact the MASH team immediately and inform the Safeguarding Trustee.

### **12.3 Responsibilities**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and team are responsible for:

- 12.3.1 Adhering to Pro Corda procedures with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse.
- 12.3.2 Keeping full written chronological records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- 12.3.3 Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from course participant records.
- 12.3.4 Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the course participants records.

### **13.0 Supporting children**

- 13.1 We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence and/or abuse may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth. We recognise that a child in these circumstances may feel helpless and humiliated. We recognise that a child may feel self blame.
- 13.2 We recognise that Pro Corda may provide the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of course participants who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- 13.3 We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 13.4 Pro Corda will support all course participants through:
  - Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
  - Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within Pro Corda, giving course participants a sense of being valued.
  - Ensuring course participants know there are adults in Pro Corda whom they can approach if they are worried.
  - Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of course participants.
  - Notifying MASH (Social Care) as soon as there is a significant concern.

### **14.0 Supporting staff**

We recognise that staff working at Pro Corda who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to discuss the situation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to seek further support as appropriate.

## 15.0 Safer Recruitment and allegations

At Pro Corda we will ensure we practise Safe Recruitment by undertaking 3 yearly enhanced DBS checks of staff and volunteers who work with children. Recruitment will highlight the priority that the Pro Corda places on this and its commitment to safeguarding. All staff will have references on file.

Pro Corda will follow the guidance set out in:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022**
- Local Safeguarding Partnership procedures

### 15.1 Allegations against staff

15.1.1 At Pro Corda we recognise the possibility that adults working in Pro Corda may harm course participants. Any concerns about the conduct of adults at Pro Corda should be taken to the CEO without delay or where that is not possible, to their deputy or safeguarding trustee; any concerns about the CEO should go to the Chair of Trustees.

15.1.2 We understand that a child or 3rd party may make an allegation against a member of staff.

15.1.3 We understand that an allegation is wider than just those where it is considered that there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm. Some allegations may indicate that a staff member is unsuitable to work with course participants.

15.1.4 We will be guided by **Working together to safeguard children 2022** which defines an allegation as when an adult has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they are unsuitable to work with children.

15.1.5 If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation, or having the concern, will immediately inform the CEO; this must be done on the same working day.

15.1.6 The CEO on all such occasions will discuss immediately, on the same working day, the content of the allegation with LADO, before taking any further action.

15.1.7 If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the CEO, the member of staff will immediately inform the Chair of Trustees, this must be done on the same working day. If the Chair of Trustees is not available, the member of staff must make direct contact with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

15.1.8 Pro Corda will not internally investigate until instructed by the Chair of Trustees.

## 15.2 **Whistleblowing**

All staff must be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

Further information is available in our Whistleblowing and Managing Allegations Policy.

## 16.0 **Safeguarding and the Pro Corda culture**

### 16.1 **Reasonable force**

Our policy on reasonable force by staff is set out in Pro Corda's Restraint policy and acknowledges that staff must only ever use reasonable force as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Pro Corda will, where appropriate, create individual plans to minimise the likelihood of challenging behaviour, and when it occurs there will be less use of physical restraint and other restrictive methods. We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures. Staff need to be aware that if a child sustains an injury as a result of physical intervention Safeguarding and Child Protection processes must be followed.

### 16.2 **Bullying**

Our policy on bullying, and online bullying, is set out in separate policies and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

### 16.3 **Incidents motivated by perceived differences**

Bullying and abuse can be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other difference. We acknowledge that repeated incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

### 16.4 **Health & Safety**

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our course participants both within the Pro Corda environment and when away from Pro Corda when undertaking trips and visits.

### 16.5 **Prevention**

We recognise that Pro Corda plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our course participants by providing course participants with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The Pro Corda community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where course participants feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Ensure that all course participants know there is an adult in Pro Corda whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.

#### 16.6 **Other relevant Pro Corda policies and guidance**

- Whistleblowing and Managing Allegations Policy
- Behaviour Policy, including online behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Anti Online Bullying Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- e-Safety Policy
- Equality Policy

#### 16.7 **Support and training**

We are committed to the provision of safeguarding training for all Pro Corda staff, supply staff, paid and voluntary, including agency staff, and we recognise that staff must be regularly updated. In addition to the annual basic safeguarding training, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Team undertake training in inter-agency working at least once every two years to keep their knowledge and skill up to date throughout the year. All other staff undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date by annual refresher training – this training cycles round a range of key topics. This will be additionally supported every year with training and updates provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead through staff meetings, training days, written updates and briefings. All Staff will be required to sign annually that they have read Part One of **‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (2022)**.

### 17.0 **Managing Child Protection Cases**

#### 17.1 **Record keeping**

17.1.1 DfE guidance says that the Designated Safeguarding Lead will keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of referrals and concerns. These should be kept separately from academic records, in a confidential file stored in a secure cabinet, accessible only by appropriate senior staff members. Current cases are exempt from examination by parents or course participants unless subject to a

court order. Subject Access Requests may be made for records of historic, closed issues.

17.1.2 Pro Corda promotes high quality record keeping in respect of all concerns about course participant's welfare. The records should be completed in a timely manner and include all relevant information such as dates, times, others involved, witnesses etc. All records should be signed and dated. The child's confidential record should include a front sheet chronology of concerns to support the understanding of the impact of past concerns, patterns and escalation of concerns.

17.1.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead should retain a digital copy of the child protection file, which should be stored in a secure area accessible only by appropriate senior staff members. Child Protection records about a course participant who has ceased to become of compulsory school age should be archived and catalogued. Records must be kept until a child reaches 25 years of age; child protection records must be kept for 35 years after the child leaves Pro Corda.

17.1.4 When making a referral, the referrer should keep a written record of:

- Discussions with child
- Discussions with parent/s or guardian/s
- Discussions with staff
- Information provided to the MASH
- Advice given and decisions taken (clearly times, dated and signed)

17.1.5 The referrer should confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing within 48 hours, using the inter-agency referral form.

17.1.6 Pro Corda will ensure that we keep up-to-date personal data records of all the course participants by regularly reminding parents to inform us of any change in family circumstances and requesting an annual update.

## 17.2 **Confidentiality and information sharing**

17.2.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

17.2.2 The CEO or Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose personal information about a course participant to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

17.2.3 However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard course participants.

17.2.4 When considering sharing information the staff will:

- 17.2.4.1 Remember that GDPR is not a barrier to sharing information, it provides the framework
- 17.2.4.2 Be open & honest with the person from the outset about how information may be shared
- 17.2.4.3 Seek advice, do not fail to share information because you are unsure what to do
- 17.2.4.4 Share with consent where appropriate & respect the wishes of those who refuse consent unless you believe that there is a risk of harm to child if the information is not shared
- 17.2.4.5 Consider safety and well-being of the child and base information sharing decisions on this
- 17.2.4.6 Ensure all information shared is Necessary, Proportionate, Relevant, Accurate, Timely & Secure. Ensure any third party or hearsay information is identified and that you have consent to share it
- 17.2.4.7 Keep a record of your decision and reasons for it. Record what you have shared, with whom and the purpose.

## 18.0 Key contacts

### 18.1 NSPCC whistleblowing helpline

0800 028 0285 and [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk/Helpline](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Helpline)

### 18.2 UK Safer Internet Centre

POSH Professionals Online Safety Helpline for schools

0344 381 4772

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline>

### 18.3 NSPCC

Online Safety Advice

0808 8005002

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>



18.4 Safeguarding Trustee Priscilla Turner

[priscilla@procorda.com](mailto:priscilla@procorda.com)

18.5 Designated Safeguarding Lead and team

[andrew@procorda.com](mailto:andrew@procorda.com)

[laura@procorda.com](mailto:laura@procorda.com)

[annabel@procorda.com](mailto:annabel@procorda.com)

[priscilla@procorda.com](mailto:priscilla@procorda.com)

18.6 Chair of Trustees Pro Corda Trust Graham Bowler

[chair@procorda.com](mailto:chair@procorda.com)

18.7 Suffolk Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/protecting-people-at-risk-of-abuse/mash/>

## **19.0 Where to go for further information:**

19.1 DfE: Statutory guidance: Keeping children safe in education 2022

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1101454/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101454/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf)

19.2 DfE: Statutory guidance: Working together to safeguard children 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2>

19.3 DfE: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

- 19.4 DfE: Children Missing Education, September 2016  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>
- 19.5 DfE: Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff, November 2014  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying Advice for Headteachers and School Staff 121114.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf)
- 19.6 DfE Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes>
- 19.7 DfE: Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- 19.8 DfE summary - Gov.UK: Safeguarding children, latest documents  
<https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/safeguarding-children/latest>
- 19.9 UKCIS: Sharing nudes and semi nudes  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>
- 19.10 UKCIS: Tackling race and faith targeted bullying face to face and online  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-race-and-faith-targeted-bullying-face-to-face-and-online-a-guide-for-schools>
- 19.11 NPCC- When to call the police  
<https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/2020/when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf>

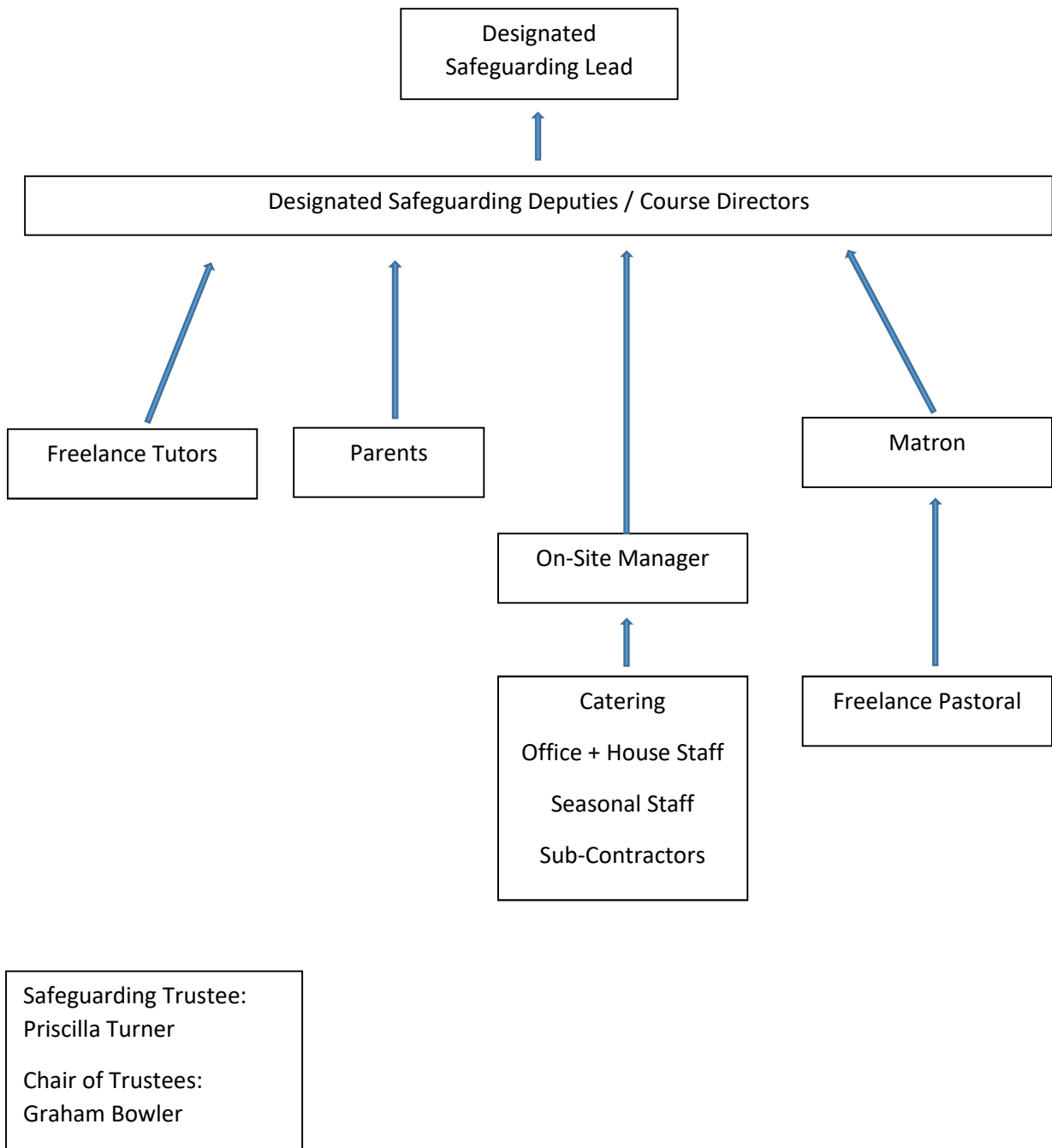
19.12 Brook Traffic Light Tool

<https://www.brook.org.uk/training/wider-professional-training/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool/>

19.13 Key messages from research on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour (PDF)

<https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/key-messages/harmful-sexual-behaviour/>

**Appendix 1: Reporting a Concern**



**Appendix 2: Raising a Concern**

