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**Safeguarding Procedure**

**Purpose**

Axia Solutions has a statutory and moral responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the young people and vulnerable adults receiving education and training with Axia. This document sets out the procedure relating to the protection of students. This is produced in accordance with Axias’ policy on Safeguarding and which shall be implemented in all instances where concerns that abuse may be occurring and/or preventative action is required to ensure students who are at risk of being exploited or radicalised are provided with appropriate support and referral.

**Introduction**

Axia Solutions recognises its legal duty under s175 Education Act 2002 and the 1989 Children Act and takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all students. This organisation recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good interagency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations.

These procedures aim to provide a framework which ensures that all practice in the area of child protection consistent with stated values and procedures that underpin all work with children and young people. Statutory guidance defines a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This procedure must be followed in respect of those over 18, who are considered to be vulnerable due to al earning difficulty or disability.

This document has regard to the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education April 2104'. The Procedure is in keeping with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board's (SSCB) Policies, Procedures and Training Strategy and reflects what Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board considers to be safe and professional practice in this context. Child Protection has to be considered within professionals' wider "safeguarding" responsibilities that include a duty to co-operate under the Children Act 2004 and takes account of the need for children to 'be healthy' and 'stay safe'.

This document also seeks to make the professional responsibilities clear to all staff (teaching and non-teaching) to ensure that statutory and other duties are met in accordance with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board requirements and procedures.

This safeguarding Policy and Procedure will be reviewed annually by the Director.

**Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children**

The definition for Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 is:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing impairment of children's health or development
* ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Underpinning values**

Where there is a safeguarding issue, Axia will work in accordance with the principles outlines in the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection procedures.

Thresholds for Intervention:

**Early Help Assessment (EHA) formally Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**

Practitioners should complete an EHA when:

* a practitioner is worried about how well a child or young person is progressing (e.g. concerns about their health, development, welfare, behaviour, progress in learning or any other aspect of wellbeing)
* a child or young person, or their parent/carer, raises a concern with a practitioner
* a child's or young person's needs are unclear, or broader than the practitioner's service can address.

The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Person and completing EHA documentation.

* The process is entirely voluntary and informed consent is mandatory, so families do not have to engage and if they do they can choose what information they want to share. Children and families should not feel stigmatised by the EHA; indeed they can ask for an EHA to be initiated.
* The EHA process is not a 'referral' process but a 'request for services'.
* The EHA should be offered to children who have additional needs to those being met by universal services. The practitioner assesses needs using the EHA.. The EHA is not a risk assessment.
* If a child or young person reveals they are at risk of suffering actual or likely significant harm, the practitioner should follow the local safeguarding process immediately.

**Child in Need - S17 of the Children Act 1989:**

A 'Child in Need' referral should be considered where the needs of the child are unlikey to be met under and EHA, such as a child with complex disabilities, when a social work led assessment is required.

Section 17 of the Children Act says that an assessment for services should be undertaken by the Local Authority in the following circumstances:

* Child(ren) are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority.
* The health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired without the provision of such services.
* They are disabled.

If a member of the Safeguarding Officer considers that the welfare concerns indicate that a 'Child in Need' referral is appropriate, he / she will speak with parents / young person and obtain their consent for referral to the First response Team (FRT - see below) to request an assessment. If parents refuse to give consent, but the child's needs are not being met, the Safeguarding Officer will discuss the issues with FRT.

Appropriate Axia staff should be invited to participate in Child in Need (CIN) meetings convened by Children's Social Care when children are deemed to require section 17 services.

Some children in 'acute need' may require Child in Need Section 17 support. This could include children who self-harm or disclose an intent to commit suicide.

**Child Protection**

S47 of the Children Act 1989 says the Local Authority has a statutory duty to investigate when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm due to the actions or inactions of others. Staff from this organisation do not investigate whether a child has been abused. This is the duty of Social Workers from the Safeguarding team and the police. Staff refer reasonable concerns which indicate that a child may be at risk or significant harm.

It is the 'significant harm' threshold that justifies statutory intervention into family life. A professional making a child protection referral under S47 must therefore provide information which clearly outlines that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. It is not possible to rely on one absolute criterion when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the extent of the harm suffered, the context within which it occurred and its duration. Significant harm may also arise from a combination of significant events which are both acute and long standing and which may impair the child's physical, psychological and social development.

In order to both understand and evidence 'significant harm', it is necessary to consider the family context, together with the child's development within their wider social and cultural environment. It is also necessary to consider any special needs, e.g. medical condition, communication difficulties or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family. The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care also needs consideration alongside the impact on the child's health and development and the adequacy of care provided.

If staff have significant concerns about their child they must make them know to the Safeguarding Officer without delay in accordance with reporting and recording procedures. These concerns may include:

Physical abuse

Emotional Abuse

Neglect

Sexual abuse

Identifying cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage

**Prevention of Violent Extremism - The 'Prevent' Agenda**

In March 2015 the Government published the Prevent Duty Guidance; for further education institutes in England and Wales which were informed by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The duty imposes organisations to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn to terrorism” *(2015 Prevent Duty Guidance)*.

**Axia Solutions will:**

* ensure all staff are aware of Prevent and are able to recognise signs of radicalisation and have the confidence to report their concerns to the Safeguarding Officer who will liaise with the appropriate agency.
* promote the ethos of 'Prevent' agenda by encouraging free and open debate but challenging extreme views. This will be achieved through induction and student reviews. We will embed Axias' Core Values which are:

Democracy

Rule of Law

Individual Liberty

Mutual respect

(Fundamental British Values - Prevent Duty Guidance March 2015).

* ensure compliance with the Prevent Duty Guidance March 2015 by working with other stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment and developing an action plan which will be approved and monitored by the Safeguarding Officer.

**Referrals**

**Making referrals**

Where a concern has been raised about a young person or vulnerable adult the Safeguarding Officer will make the decision to whether a referral is necessary and to which agency. A written record of concerns will be made using Axia’s internal safeguarding recording system.

As per statutory government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in education', anybody can make a referral. However, where possible this should be referred to a Safeguarding Officer.

Dependant on the young person's address the referral telephone numbers are:

Staffordshire - First response – 08001313126 (MASH)

Police 101 (MASH)

Emergency Duty Service (out of hours) 03456042886

Stoke - The Regent Centre - 01782 235100

Prevent team - 01785 238239 / 01785 233109

For concerns about a young person who is in immediate danger call 999

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. This is a complex area and involves consideration if a number of pieces of legislation.

You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child as some kinds of information may need to be shared with others. A suggested form of words that may help when talking to children are as follows:

"I will keep our conversation confidential and agree with you what information I can share, unless you tell me something that will affect your personal safety or that is illegal, but I will tell you if I am going to pass information on and who to."

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. However, any disclosure of personal information to others, including children's social care departments, must always have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (data Protection Act 1998 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, however, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of the child dictate that the information should be shared.

The law requires the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 statutory agencies have a duty to co-operate. Therefore, if the Police or Social Care/ Services are conduction a Section 47 investigation under the 1989 Children Act, staff must share requested information relevant to the investigation. Legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

When children transfer to a new training provider or college, it may be necessary ti inform other partners.

**Links to other policies**

This policy should also be considered within the context of other policies and documents relating to our work with children and young people.

**The Designated Safeguarding Officer at Axia Solutions is Paula Rowland – Managing Director**