

## The Students Exploring Marriage Trust (Explore) Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy

To be read in conjunction with:

- Explore code of behaviour for staff and volunteers
- Safer recruitment policy
- Whistle blowing policy
- Working Together to Safeguard Children in education – March 2015
- Keeping children safe in education – 2019
- The Children Act 1989 (2004)
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2015, sections 57-76

### Policy Statement

This policy and procedures document provides the basis for good practice with regards to Child Protection and Safeguarding within Explore. Failure to adhere to this document when dealing with a Child Protection or Safeguarding procedure could result in disciplinary action.

Explore recognises the pervasiveness of abuse within our society, and the very damaging consequences it has for all involved. Protection of children and young adults from abuse is a shared responsibility for all Explore staff and volunteers.

Explore is committed to protecting children from harm and Explore recognises our responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

This policy outlines basic staff code of conduct that effects all staff, volunteers and Trustees working for Explore.

The Whistleblowing policy should be used in conjunction with the safeguarding policy and staff of conduct.

### Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Explore seeks to have a child-centred approach to its schools' work. We recognise the need to:

- Maintain high standards in staff and volunteer attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils, parents, colleagues and others with dignity and respect
- Set an example to pupils by endeavouring to speak about others in a professional manner at all times, and refraining from using comments that could be construed as unkind, defamatory or insulting
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others (see Equalities Policy for details)
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Ensure that staff and volunteer online activity and profile will not bring Explore into disrepute

Explore staff and volunteers will NEVER:

- Have physical contact with a child
- Be alone with a child
- Exchange personal contact details with a child (telephone numbers, social media contact details)
- Contact a child via the internet, text or telephone
- Discuss topics of a sexual nature outside of the Explore session (away from the LDO)
- Promise to keep a secret or fail to disclosure safeguarding information

### Safeguarding Policy

Aims

Explore will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Regularly sharing information about child protection and good practice with staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring that this document, and any other child protection documents, are up-to-date and in line with current legislation.
- Following the agreed procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.

- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Ensuring all staff has current DBS.
- Co-operating with other agencies in dealing with actual or likely abuse.

#### Explore Staff:

- Explore staff and volunteers will adhere to the safeguarding procedures and policies of the school they are in.
- All Staff should be aware of who the school DSLO (Designated Safeguard Lead Officer) is and how to contact them in an emergency within a school setting: If the Explore setting is different then the LDO should be aware of who the most senior member of staff is.
- All Explore staff should sign that they have both received and understood the safeguarding and child protection policy (and the whistle blowing policy)
- The child's interests are paramount, and their safety and welfare will always be given priority.
- Staff and volunteers will be given training into correct procedures, recognising abuse and taking appropriate action.
- LDOs should receive Level 1 Safeguard Training on a bi-annual basis.
- At least one member of the Board of Trustees should have Level 3 safeguard training.
- Any school safeguarding/child protection policy overrides this policy and if there is a conflict of information and/or procedure then Explore staff and volunteers should seek advice from the DSLO at the school.

#### Child Protection on Recruitment and Selection

##### Volunteers:

- All applicants that volunteer for working with Explore by going into schools will be given a job specification.
- All applicants will be asked for documentation to confirm their identity. References, where appropriate, will be sought.
- The Local Development Officer will meet applicants to check out attitudes/suitability.
- All volunteers will receive this policy and sign that they have received and understood its content.

##### Staff:

- Safer recruitment will be considered when recruiting staff.
- The LDO will take responsibility for ensuring the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) enhanced check is undertaken. All Facilitator will require an enhanced DBS disclosure.
- All staff and volunteers will receive this policy and sign that they have received and understood its content.
- The CEO will ensure that the Child Protection Policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed by the Trustees of Explore.

#### Definitions

If any of the abuses defined below are suspected then staff and/or volunteers must inform the school's DSLO and the Explore CEO immediately.

These concerns may include:

##### Physical abuse:

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, Female Genital mutilation (FGM) 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. If a member of staff/volunteer is informed that a child has suffered FGM or would possibly be a victim of an honour killing, the DSLO (and the police) must be informed immediately. Fabricated or induced illness can also be considered physical (and emotional) abuse.

##### Emotional abuse:

This is the persistent, emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including Cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the

exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### Neglect:

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Ensure their child is attending school regularly. (CME)

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. (See Southampton LSCB's 'Really useful guide to recognising NEGLECT'.) Neglect of a child is often a consequence if a parent is associated with substance misuse or a significant mental health issue (Toxic Trio).

#### Sexual abuse

This 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 (e.g. rape, or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

#### Other forms of abuse

Staff will be aware, and look for warning signs of teenage relationship abuse, Peer to Peer abuse, Mate Crime, Pressure to join a gang or to participate in gang violence, forced marriage, gender-based violence, honour-based violence, female mutilation (including FGM and breast ironing), upskirting, serious violence (including knife crime) and trafficked children. The warning signs for many of these may not be obvious but a change in behaviour, isolation, depression or mental health issues could be linked to any of these issues.

#### Radicalisation

The Government defines extremism as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty & mutual respect, and tolerance of other faiths and beliefs. The Prevent Guidance also includes 'calls for the death of members of our armed forces'.

#### Raising a concern about a child's welfare

It is not the responsibility of Explore or its staff to undertake investigation of any potential abuse.

1. The role of the volunteer and/or staff member would be to listen carefully; note what is said. Write this down straight afterwards using as close as possible the exact words the child/young person used. You may be asked to fill in the school's disclosure form and sign/date this.
2. NEVER ask questions: Simply write down what has been said.
3. NEVER promise to keep a secret: Your responsibility is to share this information in a safe and appropriate manner with the school's DSLO and the Explore CEO. You must inform the child that you will pass their information to a teacher who will help and support them.
4. Report to the relevant member of staff at the school immediately.
5. Report to the CEO that there has been a safeguarding disclosure/concern raised with the school.
6. If a member of staff/volunteer suspects abuse/potential abuse but has no proof then this information should also be shared (see point 4 and 5)

7. If the Explore session is not in a school then the most senior staff member in the setting should be considered to be the safeguarding lead e.g. a Priest with a Church setting.

#### Allegations against volunteers and staff of EXPLORE:

Please read this section in conjunction with the Whistleblowing Policy (embedded within this policy)

It should be noted that there is a difference between raising a concern, making a complaint and making an allegation.

These must be treated in the same way as with any other allegation. The school or setting where Explore is working will put its procedures into place. Explore will:

- Co-operate with any investigation undertaken by the police or local authority.
- Consider the impact of any allegations upon other children/schools/ churches/settings receiving a service from us.
- Consider and address the impact of any such allegations upon staff and volunteers of EXPLORE. Support for victims may be necessary.
- Review the safe working and child protection on procedures.
- If the allegation is against the CEO or a Trustee then the Whistle Blowing policy should be followed.
- Any allegations made against volunteers and/or staff should be reported to the Board of Trustees.

#### Whistleblowing Policy

1. Whistleblowing is defined as an employee passing on information concerning wrongdoing. Within this policy, we term whistleblowing as “making a disclosure”. This could be linked to safeguarding, health and safety or financial misconduct.
2. Explore aims to create an environment that is open, transparent and safe for our employees, and encourages our employees to speak up. We have put in place a whistleblowing policy to ensure our employees understand that Explore is committed to listening to any concerns they may have.
3. There may be occasions when an employee is unsure of whether a concern they have is something they should make a disclosure against under the whistleblowing policy or is a personal grievance. If an employee is unsure of whether making a disclosure is within the remit of whistleblowing law, they can refer to the UK Government’s online guide to whistleblowing for verification. If the employee finds their concern is actually a grievance rather than a concern they should disclose as a whistleblower, they should write to Explore’s CEO or the Chair of Trustees.
4. An employee who makes a disclosure should reasonably believe that;
  1. They are acting in the public interest by making the disclosure
  2. The disclosure tends to show past, present or future wrongdoing falling into one of these categories:
    - a. Criminal offence
    - b. Failure to comply with a legal obligation
    - c. Miscarriages of justice
    - d. Health & safety concern
    - e. Damage to the environment
    - f. A child’s safeguarding is breached
    - g. Covering up wrongdoing in categories a-f above
5. All disclosures raised will be treated seriously and consistently under this policy.
6. If an employee feels able to, they should in the first instance raise a disclosure with their immediate Line Manager. Your Line Manager will decide whether the disclosure is something they are able to deal with or whether to escalate to Explore’s CEO. Whether the disclosure is being handled by your Line Manager or the CEO, they will want to meet with you to gather all the information to understand the situation and your concern. In some cases, your Line Manager or the CEO will be able to reach a suitable conclusion in the first instance. However, for more serious cases, the disclosure may need to be escalated to the Board of Trustees and / or Explore’s Chairperson and / or a formal investigation may need to be conducted.



- a. If the allegation is against the CEO then the employee should raise their allegation with the Chair of Trustees without informing the CEO
  - b. If the allegation is against the Chair of Trustees, then the employee should contact the appropriate authority – see point 10 for details and additional information at the end of this policy
7. Any decision taken as a result of an informal or formal investigation will be documented and a conclusion will be shared with the employee who made the disclosure.
8. The Explore leadership team acknowledges that if an investigation concludes that the disclosure was untrue or not of concern, the employee is unlikely to have made the disclosure maliciously.
- Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations
- a. Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
  - b. Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been deliberate act to deceive
  - c. False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
  - d. Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
  - e. Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegations being made
9. Any disclosure made by an Explore employee will not affect their position in the organisation.
10. If an employee feels unable to make a disclosure about their concern to Explore (either their Line Manager, CEO or Board of Trustees), under UK whistleblowing laws, they can raise their concern with a prescribed body or prescribed person such as an appropriate regulator or professional body. Information on this can be found on the UK Government online service. The employee should refer to section 4 of this policy prior to making a disclosure.  
<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

**ADDENDUM - COVID-19 Temporary addition to this policy**

Explore will be using new technology to deliver its sessions during the Covid-19 pandemic. To ensure that Explores’ staff and volunteers are working within the constraints of Safeguarding Best Practice the LDOs and/or CEO will ensure that they:

- Have read a schools Covid risk assessment and understand how the use of technology might affect Explore staff and volunteers working with a school
- Ensure that no member of staff or volunteer records images of students
- Ensure that a school does not record the volunteer sessions without their knowledge

Who to contact:

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 Chair of Trustees – Angus Somerville / [angus@explorerelationships.org.uk](mailto:angus@explorerelationships.org.uk) / 07929 867472

Additional information can be found at:

NSPCC Child Protection helpline: 0808 800 5000  
 NSPCC Whistle-blowing helpline: 0800 028 0285 Text 88868 help@nspcc.org.uk  
 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) PO Box 181 Darlington DL1 9FA / Email: customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk  
 Tel: 0870 900 0811 / Telephone for referrals: 01325 953 795

Academic Year	Review Completed	
	Date/Name	Date/Name
2019-20	Katie Thom, Explore Trustee October 2019	Amanda Edwards, CEO October 2019
2020-21	Katie Thom, Explore Trustee October 2020	Amanda Edwards, CEO October 2020