

EXPLORE AT HOME

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Explore at Home was founded to bring educational opportunities and benefits to as many children as possible. It is important to us that we serve a diverse mix of children and in particular:

- a balance of both sexes
- a diversity of racial and cultural backgrounds
- children of all abilities
- disabled children, and those with special additional or special educational needs

We are uniquely able to achieve these goals because our method of working treats every child as an individual, and we operate with a high staff ratio.

It is the job of our staff to ensure that the children feel welcomed, and that they all benefit from the service we offer. This includes a high level of individual attention, recognition, celebration of their successes and positive social interactions with staff.

Explore at Home is committed to offering equal opportunities to both full-time and part-time employees irrespective of gender, race, social group, religion and disability, providing they meet our recruitment selection criteria. This is detailed in more depth in our Centre Manager and Tutor Recruitment Policy.

Explore at Home staff promote the fundamental British values of R.I.D.E:

- Rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Democracy
- Equality - mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Actively promoting these values means challenging opinions or behaviours that are contrary to fundamental British values. Staff and children are encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance. It is expected that they should understand that while different people may hold different views about what is 'right' and 'wrong', all people living in the United Kingdom are subject to its law.

Explore at Home will:

- enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of the United Kingdom;
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in their locality and to society more widely;
- encourage students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in the United Kingdom;
- encourage tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- encourage respect for other people; and
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE AT HOME

DISABILITIES, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Explore at Home was founded to bring educational opportunities and benefits to as many children as possible, including disabled children, children with special additional and special educational needs.

Explore at Home aims to treat all children with equal concern, as individuals, with diverse needs, likes and dislikes. Our service has a lot to offer all children, irrespective of ability.

We ensure that:

- We take time to discuss a child's needs with the parent/guardian and child at the time of registration.
- We will take all reasonable steps to ensure all children have access to the provision.
- We regularly review children's progress and adapt their programmes as necessary.
- We make the best possible use of parent/guardian conferences and other opportunities for dialogue and feedback.
- Staff are encouraged to be aware of disability issues, special educational and additional needs, and complete development training on developing inclusive practice.
- We are always open to guidance from parents/guardians and professionals on the type of training that may be beneficial or necessary for working with a specific child.
- Staff will respect the privacy and dignity of all members and staff and ensure this is maintained whilst in our care.
- All information provided by a parent/guardian will remain confidential, and only shared with the minimum necessary members of staff.
- All information provided will be stored securely in the child's personal file and on their individual record on our membership database.
- We work within the guidelines of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland and Equality Act 2010 across the rest of the company.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Purpose of regulation: To inform parents/guardians of Explore at Home's policies and responsibilities concerning safeguarding and to stress the importance of communication.
2. Purpose of regulation: To inform staff of their responsibilities when working with children.

Explore at Home recognises that owing to their day to day contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The setting will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults whom they can approach if they are worried.

Explore at Home recognises that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The interaction with staff may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. During a session their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may be withdrawn. The setting will endeavour to support the member through:

- an ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment, giving members a sense of being valued.
- a behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable members attending sessions. The staff will ensure that the member knows that some behaviour is unacceptable, but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the member such as Children's Social Care, Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology Service.

INTRODUCTION

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). For the purpose of this policy document:

- The term 'child' will be used to describe all children and young people under the age of 18 years old participating as a member at Explore at Home.
- The term 'staff' will be used to describe those employed on a contract of employment at Explore Learning/ Explore at Home, including those working on a voluntary or temporary basis.
- Staff should implement this policy using the following guidelines when conducting work that involves children. This will protect the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with Explore at Home and that of our own staff.
- For all activity and events involving children at Explore at Home, at least one member of staff should lead on safeguarding, raising awareness of this policy and its guidelines among other staff and, where appropriate children and parents/guardians.
- Where staff are likely to engage with a child on a one-to-one basis, it is imperative that he/she is appropriately trained in safeguarding.

Children's Rights

All children have needs and rights:

- The need for physical care and attention
- The need for intellectual stimulation
- The need for emotional love and security
- The need for social contact and relationships
- The right to have their needs met and satisfied
- The right to be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- The right to be protected from discrimination
- The right to be treated as an individual

How children's concerns and expressions of need are perceived and responded to

Staff need to appreciate that children communicate their worries and concerns in a multitude of ways. In fact, direct verbal expression is less likely than; e.g. behaviour changes or activity giving cause for concern - perhaps a piece of writing which gives rise to some thought of "inappropriate" activity or knowledge beyond a child's years, flinching when a hand or arm is raised innocently as if scared of being struck, unusual depression, unexplained bruising, burns, cyst, injuries etc.

Above all, children and young people who are in need or trouble always deserve and need someone:

- Who will listen
- Who will not make judgements
- Who will not make false promises about keeping a secret when that is not possible
- Who will not reject what they are saying as untrue

A troubled child or young person will need to be reassured that their needs are being put first, not being put second fiddle to other concerns.

Explore at Home Safeguarding Policy

In our provision for children, Explore at Home will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, socio-economic background, ability, language, religious beliefs, racial origins, disability, gender and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate safeguarding lead member of staff asap.

Policy Statement

Explore at Home staff have a professional duty to take such steps that are reasonable to see that the child is safe from harm whilst involved in Explore at Home activities. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be considered. Explore at Home will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities through adherence to the safeguarding guidelines it has adopted.

Policy Aims

The aim of the Explore at Home Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in our care.
- Allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

Policy Implementation

The Explore at Home Safeguarding Policy will be implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines within this document. All staff who work with children must adhere to this policy.

The guidelines cover three main areas:

- Staff recruitment, support and training
- Staff conduct
- Safeguarding procedures

Staff Recruitment, Support and Training

For staff working with children at Explore at Home, safe recruitment will be ensured by checking their suitability to work with children including:

1. Suitability questions at interview.
2. All staff complete a suitability self-declaration.
3. A suitable Enhanced DBS/PVG check every five years.
4. Two dated references requesting details of their previous experience and suitability to work with children. Where available, one must be from their most recent employer.
5. A record of staff's current and history of physical and mental health.

Staff Training covers:

1. Induction training in Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Safeguarding, Behaviour Management, and the 'Common Core Skills and Knowledge of the Children's Workforce'.
2. Completing Explore at Home training module.
3. All staff to read the Explore Learning & Explore at Home Safeguarding Policy & Procedures annually, available on the company intranet 'the Bubble'.
4. Safeguarding training module refreshed annually and recorded on staff training records.
5. A radicalisation module on the signs and symptoms of radicalisation, how to protect children from terrorism or extremism, and The Prevent Duty.
6. Awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to cover an understanding of key issues, risk factors, high risk absences, symptoms, long term health problems, legislation and how to share information to ensure a person at risk of FGM is referred to the appropriate support.
7. Awareness of safeguarding issues will continue to be addressed through on-going training, guides and workshops.

The company Senior Designated Safeguarding Officer has undertaken training in Advanced Safeguarding, Role of DSL, the Prevent Duty, and Children's mental Health First Aid; and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of abuse or radicalisation.

Staff Conduct

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in accordance with the Code of Conduct and in order that they can protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. Staff should maintain their standards of behaviour, therefore acting as a role model. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate for learning:

Good practice means always:

- Treat all children equally, and with respect and dignity. Explore at Home will take positive action to eliminate discrimination against any person or group of people. Staff should ensure that children are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability and challenge discriminating comments and behaviour. Staff should promote positive attitudes towards differences.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process. Conducting yourself in a manner that sets a good example to the participants. Be an excellent role model.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Always refer any problems or concerns to the safeguarding lead member of staff on duty.
- Set Social Media settings to private so children and families can not look staff up/contact them.
- Dress appropriately according to Company Dress Code.

- When Tutoring online:
 - blur your background on Microsoft Teams/Compass so nothing unsuitable/potentially offensive to children may be seen.
 - ensure no personal information about yourself is visible.
 - remain vigilant, ensure no one else is present/visible in your own or the child's background that shouldn't be.
 - request children are dressed appropriately for their session.
 - Only contact families on Microsoft Teams/Compass through manager pre authorised sessions.
 - Follow all safeguarding instructions provided and end a session immediately if a child behaves inappropriately.

Practices never to be sanctioned:

- Children's inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour. This should always be challenged.¹
- Making sexually suggestive comments towards a child or parent/guardian.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- The threat of corporal punishment.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst responsible for children or smoking in front of a child.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Discuss personal matters about staff or the child.
- Discussing inappropriate topics including subjects such as race, religion, relationships, sex or illegal activities. Conversation should be solely about their session or welfare.
- Sharing of personal contact details including: contact numbers, address or social media links.
- Arranging to contact or meet a child outside of an authorised session in person or online whether professionally or personally.
- Committing any act that brings the reputation of the company into disrepute.
- Taking a personal phone call while working with a child.
- Taking or sharing a photo or screenshot of children/their families.
- Taking voice or video recordings for any purpose without written permission from parent/guardian before recording commences, using Explore's online permission form.
- Storing photos, videos or recordings on a personal device.

¹Challenging behaviour: 'Bad' behaviour is often a response to a situation, or a way to seek attention. If children are occupied, there will be less of a need to seek attention and less of a chance for boredom to set in. The following guidelines can be used to deal with challenging behaviour constructively:

- Be aware of what unacceptable behaviour is. Ask your lead member of staff if you are unsure.
- Explain to children why certain behaviour is unacceptable. This makes children feel responsible for their behaviour and they are less likely to repeat it.
- Make sure it is the behaviour that is punished and not the person. Always avoid labelling someone as 'bad'.
- If appropriate, ignore the bad behaviour for a while – a child may only be attention seeking. Give extra attention and praise for positive behaviour to discourage 'bad' behaviour.

Use of photos/images/video/recordings

If Explore Learning/Explore at Home wishes to use an image or recording of a member, written consent will be obtained in advance from parents/guardians via an online form. Parents/guardians will be made aware of when, where and how the images may be used in order to give their informed consent. This includes information regarding use of images e.g. in print, multimedia, broadcast; for what purpose e.g. promotion, publicity, evaluation, audit, review; and where possible an indication of who the audience will be e.g. the general public, the participating children and their families, other organisations and institutions. Explore Learning/Explore at Home will never disclose the full name or other personal details of the child without the parent/guardian's separate written consent. Parents/guardians are not permitted to take photographs or videos unless it is of their own child, and no other children feature in the background.

Observations/Recording of Explore at Home Sessions

Centre/Regional Managers can watch Explore at Home sessions without being required to request permission for monitoring and training purposes, but it is advisable to let the staff member know as a courtesy.

All recordings (including voice and video) for any internal (i.e. training, development, safeguarding) or external (i.e. marketing) purpose, must have pre requested written permission before recording commences from the parent/guardian using our online permission forms.

Recordings will be deleted from Microsoft Teams and sent to the department requesting it, to be stored on the departments secure files server. Permission forms agree records can be kept for up to five years.

Use of Mobile Phones

Staff are not permitted to use personal mobile phones whilst working with a child. These should be switched off or silent during working hours. Personal mobile phones must never be used to take or store images or recordings of any children.

E-security

If staff are using a personal device for company purposes we recommend to ensure that they are using a Windows 10/Mac OSX and apply the security updates when made available for these systems. In addition to the built in endpoint protection present with Windows Defender and MAC OSX we can also recommend using third party antivirus tools as an added safety net.

If a member of staff leaves the organisation, all company linked tools must be removed from the personal device prior to leaving their role.

No sensitive company data should ever be stored locally on personal devices, this includes any data stored in cloud locations required for use in the employees role.

No images or recordings of children should be taken and stored on any personal device.

Advice for Parents/Guardians

- Only communicate via your email address, not your child's, and responding to official Explore email accounts.
- Personal devices: add appropriate child locks/filters, and check/clear your internet browser history as required.
- Consider where your child's session is being held, is there personal information about the family or photos in the background that you may not want others to see; avoid holding sessions in bedrooms.
- Ensure your child is dressed appropriately, especially as summer/warmer weather approaches.
- As a parent you may be present for your child's session if you prefer, we advise this for younger members.
- Teach your child about keeping themselves and others safe online, comments posted will be seen by others and cannot be edited/deleted, which can become part of their digital footprint. Recordings or images of sessions must not be taken or shared. Children should not have their phone during their sessions.
- Specialist Course chats will be moderated by staff; members using inappropriate language or behaviour may be asked to leave.
- If you have a concern, please alert the Tutor or contact a Centre Manager immediately on their normal centre number or email.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Explore at Home follows the procedures set out by Local Safeguarding Children Boards and takes account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to ensure:

1. Children's date and time of session attendance is recorded on the membership database.
2. Staff with a criminal conviction or pending criminal investigation, in relation to children or sexual assault, will not be allowed to work.
3. The Centre Director of each setting has received appropriate training and support to take on the role as Designated Safeguarding Officer for their members, family and staff team.
4. The Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding is the nominated Senior Designated Safeguarding Officer.
5. Every member of staff (including temporary) know the names and roles of the staff responsible for safeguarding.
6. All staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse, and for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding.
7. That parents/guardians understand the responsibility placed on the setting and staff for safeguarding, by setting out its obligations in the settings Policies & Procedures.
8. Staff develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters, including attendance at case conferences.
9. Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
10. Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff.
11. Ensure all safeguarding incidents are reported centrally to the Senior Designated Safeguarding Officer (Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding) to be recorded on the Company's Central Incident Record file.
12. Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

SAFEGUARDING DISCLOSURES

What is abuse?

CHILD ABUSE: A term to describe a range of ways in which people, usually adults, harm children. Often the adult is a person who is known and trusted by the child.

CHILD ABUSE IS PHYSICAL INJURY, EMOTIONAL, NEGLECT OR SEXUAL ABUSE (PENS) inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which cause significant harm or death.

NSPCC (1999)

Awareness of actual or likely occurrence of abuse

There are several ways in which abuse can become apparent:

- A child discloses abuse.
- Someone else discloses that a child has told him/her or that he/she strongly believes a child has been or is being abused.
- A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely he/she is being abused.
- A member of staff's behaviour or in the way in which he/she relates to a child causes concern.

Issues of Disclosure

Becoming aware of abuse can cause a multitude of emotional reactions, which are personal to each individual. Whatever the reaction and however the abuse has become apparent, actual or suspected, it must be reported in the correct manner according to the procedure outlined in this document. Even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain – an appropriate response must be made.

A response in accordance with the procedure outlined here will be supported by the lead member of staff and ultimately Explore Learning/Explore at Home.

Responsibility

Staff made aware of suspicions, allegations or actual abuse, are responsible to take the appropriate action according to this procedure.

- The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or who is told of abuse is to report it to the lead member of staff, and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously whilst adhering to the dos and don'ts below.
- It is not for staff to decide whether a suspicion or allegation is true.
- Staff should never try to deal with a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse by him/herself.
- The safeguarding lead will take responsibility for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse, and liaising with appropriate authorities.

What to do upon suspicion or disclosure of abuse

There are some basic principles in reacting to suspicions, allegations, and/or disclosures. Follow our CHAIRS principle:

WHAT TO DO:	WHAT NOT TO DO:
COMMUNICATE:	Ignore the situation.
Stay calm, provide a safe, private environment. Take the time to give your full attention; listen, hear, be supportive and show you believe them.	Panic or over-react. It is unlikely that the child is in immediate danger.
Encourage the child to tell you as much as they feel comfortable to. Give time to the person to say what they want in their own words, try not to interrupt.	Make assumptions. Don't paraphrase or offer alternative explanations.
Use Open Questions i.e. "Can you tell me more about what happened?" Describe, Explain	Ask leading questions, or put words in their mouth, this could influence what they say and lead to a false statement.
Establish the facts and clarify: who, when, where, what, why, how, how frequent? etc Try to distinguish if this was behaviour management or potential abuse.	Push the child if they do not wish to discuss it. Heavily questioning the child may affect how the child's disclosure is received at a later date.
Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling someone. Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed.	Accuse the child of doing anything wrong, or deserving what happened.
HISTORY	Make a child repeat a story unnecessarily. This can cause further distress.
Any previous concerns or disclosures? - check records and with management team	Promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be ok, you cannot guarantee this.
ASSESS THE RISK	Try to deal with it by yourself, it is not your role to counsel the child or investigate their claims. Always contact a senior staff member for support.
Consider is the child in immediate danger?	Make negative comments about the alleged abuser. Always remain impartial.
INFORM	Gossip with colleagues about what has been said to you. Only discuss with senior staff that need to be informed.
Act immediately in accordance with our policies. Report to the lead member of staff in your team.	
RECORD	
Record in writing in verbatim what they said asap. Complete an Incident Report.	
SUPPORT	
Care for all those involved: yourself, staff, child, parent.	
<u>Reporting suspected, alleged, or actual incidents of abuse</u>	

It may sometimes be difficult to accept that something has been disclosed in confidence by a child or anyone else. But the welfare of a child must be paramount, and you therefore have a duty to report suspicions, allegations or actual incidents to the designated member of staff. Information should be reported if you have concerns that a child may be suffering harm or at risk from abuse, even if you are unsure about your suspicions.

Once this initial report has been made, the lead member of staff will consult with the relevant statutory agencies within 24 hours, or immediately if the child is in immediate danger. You may or may not be required to discuss your concern/disclosure with the parent/guardian if they are the alleged abuser, according to your local Children's Social Care procedures. If the parent/guardian is not the named abuser, then ensure they are informed straight away.

Your local contacts are displayed on the Emergency Numbers Poster, and can be found online. These include:

Local Children's Social Care Safeguarding Team & Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team
Safeguarding Children's Board/ MASH - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
NSPCC Child Protection Help Line

The following information may be required:

- Staff name, address, telephone number, position/role within the setting.
- As many details about the child as possible, e.g. name, DOB, address, home telephone number, school, home environment.
- What the reasons are for making a referral, e.g. suspicion, allegations, disclosure - what has been said, giving details of times and dates and the child's emotional state, or what the child has said in response to the suspicions/concerns. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion and hearsay.
- What action has been taken so far.
- Where possible, a referral to Children's Social Care should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Ensure you obtain the name of the services worker, and a case number to be recorded on the Incident Report.

The relevant statutory agency will then give instructions as to what to do next and take the responsibility for further action.

Statutory safeguarding procedures

What happens next is entirely up to the relevant statutory agency, usually Children's Social Care.

Enough information passed onto the agency may lead to the suspicion, allegation or actual incident, being dealt with quickly with few complications, or it may lead to thorough checks with several other organisations and possibly a safeguarding conference, or contact from an Ofsted Inspector (in England).

A safeguarding conference involves as many people as possible, (including the parents/guardian and sometimes the child as well), who discuss the issues that have been raised in the suspicions, allegation or actual abuse that has been reported and investigated. Decisions about what will happen next are made at the conference.

Quite often, the initial person who has made the report may not be contacted again unless further information is required. It is not usual practice for the relevant statutory agency to inform of developments in an investigation. However, if you feel not enough action has been taken, and the child is still at risk, concerns should be reported again, or the NSPCC Child Protection Help Line contacted for advice. If staff have not heard back, they should follow up within 7 days to ensure it has been actioned.

Recording suspected or actual incidents

No matter what happens to a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse, (regardless of whether it is processed through a statutory agency or not), all details must be recorded on a company Incident Record Form.

Important information to record includes:

- The date and time of disclosure, suspicion, allegation or actual abuse incident.
- Details given to you about the above, e.g. date and time of when things occurred.
- Any indication of the parties involved.

- Details of the action that you and the setting have taken.
- Details of reporting on, e.g. who to (statutory agency) and when.
- Signature of staff reporting
- Signature of witnesses (if applicable)
- Signature of parent/guardian if permitted to inform – we would not seek a signature from a parent/guardian if a disclosure was made directly about them.

If for any reason it is decided not to consult with a relevant statutory agency, a full explanation of why must be documented.

Recording must be factual, that is no reference made to subjective opinions.

Records should always be made in pen, or typed so they cannot be edited or erased.

Records should be kept completely confidential and secure and only shared with those who need to know about the suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse.

Incidents should be reported to the Head Office Designated Safeguarding Officer (Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding) to be recorded on the company's Central Incident Records.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Emergency Safeguarding Contact Numbers

These numbers are displayed in the office notice board and the Company Intranet Safeguarding page.

The Centre Director is the person responsible for safeguarding for their membership - Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

Explore Learning/Explore at Home Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding (Senior Designated Safeguarding Officer) (SDSO)

Emergency Services:	999
Local Police:	101
NSPCC Contact Point 24/7:	0808 800500
Childline:	0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
Radicalisation Concern Helpline:	020 7340 7264
Anti Terrorist Hotline:	0800 789 321

Children's Social Care Referral /MASH (Normal Hours) within 24 hours or immediately if child at risk:

Children's Social Care (Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team):

Safeguarding Allegations against staff - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours:

Ofsted (England) within 14 days:	0300 123 1231
----------------------------------	---------------

EXPLORE AT HOME

MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

Policy Introduction

Explore at Home is committed to providing the highest level of care for members and staff. Any allegations of abuse against a member of staff are investigated as a priority to avoid any delay, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. Our policy is in line with statutory guidance from the Department of Education, and is designed to ensure that all staff, children and parents/guardians are aware of the procedure for the investigation of allegations of abuse in order that all complaints are dealt with consistently, and as efficiently as possible.

Allegations and complaints against staff are minimised by having:

- Safer Recruitment strategies in place
- Appropriate induction and regular safeguarding training
- Open and transparent safeguarding ethos including the discussion of common issues
- Professional code of conduct

Allegation Definition

In accordance with Working Together (2015), an allegation is any information which indicates that a volunteer or member of staff who works with children 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children

Immediate Action

If a member of staff is suspected, alleged or has actually abused a child, the staff member would be suspended from work immediately and the event fully investigated, as outlined below. If the concerns are about a member of the management team Explore Learning's Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding should be contacted.

Where there is an immediate threat to a child, the Police or the Emergency Children's Social Care Team (if outside office hours) must be contacted.

Procedure

When an allegation is received, management staff will:

- Stay calm and provide a safe, private environment to discuss the allegation
- Take the matter seriously
- Take the time to give their full attention; listen, hear, be supportive
- Establish the facts and clarify the situation/circumstances

- Make a written record of the allegation using the informant's words (including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present)

A report, detailing as much information as possible would be made within 24 hours to:

1. Explore Learning's Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding, who would also notify Ofsted within 14 days
2. Explore Learning's HR Team
3. Local Safeguarding Children's Board within 24 hours; in England - **specifically the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**. The LADO, or equivalent in Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland, will provide advice and guidance on how to manage the allegation and check staff have taken all appropriate steps

The Role of the LADO

The LADO is responsible for the oversight of allegations against adults working in the local authority, liaising with a range of agencies and ensuring such matters are dealt with consistently and in a timely fashion. The initial discussion with the LADO will consider the nature of allegation and the course of action.

Actions to be agreed with the LADO:

- What further information is required?
- Whether any immediate action needs to be taken to protect attending children
- When and what should the parents of attending members be told
- What should be said to the member of staff facing the allegation?
- Whether suspending the member of staff is required (if children are at risk of serious harm/where the concern is so serious that it would result in immediate dismissal)

Possible outcomes of the initial discussion:

- Strategy Meeting (sometimes called a 'Management Planning Meeting') and normally held within three days of an allegation being made
- Referral to Social Care
- Referral to Police for investigation
- No further action (NFA)

In the case of NFA, staff should then liaise with the HR team and Explore Learning's Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding to decide how to proceed further, which may include internal disciplinary action.

Supporting Those Involved

The person(s) who makes the allegation and their parents/guardians:

Parents/guardians will be notified if their child makes or is involved in an allegation against staff if they do not already know. However, if the police or Children's Social Care are to be involved, they will be contacted first and will advise as to what information may or may not be disclosed to the parents/guardians. Parents/guardians will be made aware of any progress in the investigation, and the outcome will be explained to them.

The employee:

After consulting the LADO, the accused person should be told about the allegation and the likely course of action. The amount of detail should be agreed with the LADO. An allocated Manager will keep the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and offer support to the affected person whilst an investigation is undertaken.

It is important that confidentiality is maintained. It is helpful to consider how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip.

Outcome of Allegations

The outcome of allegation investigations should be identified as one of the following:

Substantiated: There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.

False: There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

Unsubstantiated: This is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation.

Malicious: There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive.

- If the investigation results in the dismissal or resignation of a person, and that person has been charged with a criminal offence, a referral must be made immediately by the Head of Safeguarding to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, as advised by the police and/or Children's Social Care.
- If it is decided that the employee may return to work (after a suspension) then provisions will be put in place by staff to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.
- If the child who made the allegation is still attending sessions, staff will consider what needs to be done to manage the contact between employee and child.
- Where an allegation is proven to be false, management staff may refer to Children's Social Care to determine whether the child needs additional support or care, or to help to understand if they are being abused elsewhere.
- No matter what the outcome is of an allegation of abuse against staff, staff will review the case to see if any improvements can be made to prevent similar cases in the future.

Record Keeping

In all cases, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken, and decisions reached must be recorded. This should be kept in the confidential staff file of the accused, and a copy provided to the person concerned with the allegation. The record should be retained until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

EXPLORE AT HOME

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHILDREN

These guidelines are to be followed by ALL members of staff to ensure that children behave in an appropriate manner.

The Centre Director has specific Behaviour Management responsibility; by title this is part of their job description. In the absence of the Centre Director, Behaviour Management is the responsibility of the Assistant Director, or Manager on duty.

This policy works in conjunction with our Incident Policy.

If a child's behaviour has been problematic during their session, the Centre Director, Assistant Director or Session Supervisor will speak with the parent/guardian at the end of their session, notifying them of what happened, how the situation was handled and the outcome. It may be more appropriate to speak to them privately about the circumstances rather than in front of the child. If the parent/guardian is not immediately available, a manager will notify the parent/guardian by telephone. Details of the event will be recorded on a Incident Record Form or in the child's individual member file.

If a child's behaviour is such that they are deemed to be 'out of control' (i.e. causing excessive harm to other children, staff or property), the Centre Director, Assistant Director or Manager on duty reserves the right to telephone the parent/guardian and end the session.

Explore at Home staff will:

- Always remain positive when dealing with a child – praise and encourage them, make them feel good about what they're doing and help them to see achievement rather than failure.
- Take the time to listen to children and record any problems they are having.
- Speak quietly and calmly to the child, and speak with the child at their own level, even when encountering difficulties with that child.
- Where a child is being difficult, and must be reprimanded, ensure they understand their behaviour is not appropriate. Help them understand that by being disruptive they are spoiling their own or other children's experiences and that this is unfair. Help older children to see that they need to lead by example. Encourage them to take a mature attitude, deciding independently how to behave themselves, rather than having to be told by a member of staff.
- If a child uses inappropriate language, make it clear that this is not accepted as it can upset and offend staff and other children.
- Where a child is bullying, or being mean to another child, deal with the situation immediately making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable. Manage the situation so that the bully and the child being bullied are dealt with appropriately as two separate individuals; give support to both. Explain that Explore at Home is a place where children have the opportunity to come and have fun, make new friends and work together, not a place to be unpleasant to others.

- Where a child is getting stressed or upset with their learning, help them to see their achievement in terms of the long-term rather than the immediate.
- Where a child is destructive towards the equipment, make it clear that such behaviour is inappropriate and disrespectful.
- Staff are not permitted to use the threat of corporal punishment as a means of controlling behaviour.
- Staff may use behaviour agreement contracts and concentration charts with a member, alongside parents/guardians to monitor and improve their behaviour.
- In some instances where a child's behaviour is continually disruptive to others' membership and cannot be managed effectively using the above guidelines, they may be asked to leave sessions either temporarily or indefinitely.

EXPLORE AT HOME

INCIDENT POLICY

Explore at Home has a commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children under the care of Explore at Home staff. Our Incident Policy is designed to protect the children, staff, parents/guardians and to ensure that any incident is dealt with appropriately. This policy works in conjunction with our Behaviour Management Policy.

Explore at Home defines an 'incident' as any incident causing concern for the welfare of staff, child, parent/guardian that is not accidental. This may or may not have resulted in an injury, and includes any situation where:

- an individual abuses verbally or in writing another person
- any type of safeguarding incident or concern raised
- a behaviour management incident
- a breach of staff code of conduct

This above list is not exhaustive – refer to the Incident Folder guide on the Safeguarding intranet page for further examples of what should be recorded.

Where an incident takes place the situation will be recorded on an Incident Record Form. The following details will be recorded:

1. date, time and location the incident happened
2. child's full name, age and address
3. full name of the member(s) of staff or others involved and their role
4. an account of the incident by a member of staff, any children involved, and any witnesses
5. how the incident was handled
6. the outcome of the investigation
7. the signature of two members of staff (the member of staff involved and another as a witness)
8. the signature of the parent/guardian upon collection (as long as the allegation is not regarding them)
9. whether the incident required reporting to Children's Social Care/LADO or enforcing authorities such as Ofsted, and the Police.

Staff will notify the parents/guardians of the children involved in the incident or telephone them immediately after the session, depending on the severity of the incident. **If staff feel that a child may be at additional risk from harm, they may not share this information with the parent/guardian, and instead contact the relevant external authority for advice and guidance on how best to escalate a concern.** Explore at Home staff will review the child's behaviour with the parent/guardian and the child and agree the best course of action. Explore at Home reserves the right to exclude a child from sessions at any time.

If the child's parent/guardian is not immediately available, a manager will telephone the parent/guardian to notify them of the incident and that it has been recorded on an Incident Record Form.

Serious incidents must be written up in an Incident Report and reported centrally to Explore Learning's Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding. Records should always be made in pen or typed, so they cannot be edited or erased.

EXPLORE AT HOME

POLICY FOR THE NOTIFICATION OF INFORMATION TO ENFORCING AUTHORITIES

Explore at Home understands its requirements to comply with Ofsted's Voluntary Childcare Requirements In England.

Staff of registered centres must inform Ofsted of the following, no later than 14 days after the change occurs:

- A change to the address or registration details of the premises where childcare is provided.
- A change in the type of childcare we provide.
- Any change of the Managers or Nominated Person.
- Any change of the Managers or Nominated Person's name, address or telephone number.
- Any significant event which is likely to affect the Managers or Nominated Person's suitability or any person caring for children on the premises, such as any offences or orders that may disqualify them.
- Any incident of food poisoning affecting two or more children in the provider's care.
- Any serious accident or injury to, or the death of any child while receiving childcare.
- Any serious accident or injury to, or the death of, any other person on the premises on which childcare is provided.
- Any allegation of serious harm to, or abuse of, a child committed by any person looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or by any person, where the allegation relates to harm or abuse occurring on those premises.

Ofsted notification forms can be used along with guidance to inform them of such events as detailed above.

EXPLORE AT HOME

MODERN SLAVERY POLICY

Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy Statement

Explore at Home has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of mistreatment of people and is committed to operating and conducting its business in such a way that human rights are respected and protected. We will not permit or condone any form of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour or human trafficking. We recognise that our business has a role to play in managing this issue and we are firmly committed to working to identify and eradicate modern slavery practices from our operations and our supply chains, to the extent that they exist.

Recruitment

We operate a robust recruitment and employment process. We embrace principles supportive of equal treatment without discrimination and with the protection of employment law for all staff. We treat all staff equally, without discrimination and with respect for their human rights. All staff enjoy the protection of relevant UK law in respect of their employment. Whilst in the main Explore at Home runs its recruitment process internally, where we use external partners we select approved recruitment partners. Approved partners are reviewed on a regular basis. This policy can be read in line with our staff Recruitment processes.

Due diligence processes for slavery and human trafficking

We have in place a policy to protect whistle blowers who highlight to us any risk of slavery or human trafficking within our business.

EXPLORE AT HOME

MANAGER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Candidate Requirements

Managers are hired as Assistant Directors, who are trained and developed to become Centre Directors. We

look for all candidates to be strong in our 7 core competencies:

- **Passion** – a strong desire to grow the business, to make a meaningful impact, our people are inspirational, ambitious and goal-orientated.
- **Communication** – everyone here is energetic, warm, positive, articulate, adaptable, credible and empathetic with fantastic interpersonal skills.
- **Receptiveness** – always seeking feedback, strong self-reflection is crucial to recognise their own strengths and areas for development.
- **Leadership** – developing into strong people managers and taking responsibility means they should be confident, driven, assertive, decisive and demonstrate strong self-belief.
- **Resilience** – when juggling multiple responsibilities resilience is crucial to deal with setbacks and problem solve any pinch points that staff may encounter.
- **Initiative** – we love nothing more than a can do go get them attitude, we really look for gumption, in absolute bucket loads!
- **Teamwork** – one of our fundamental values is Family, this means embracing the collaborative elements of being in a team, taking shared ownership and a conscientious accountability for work.

The Key Responsibilities of the Centre Director role

Centre Directors effectively manage their setting whilst ensuring that the team reaches targets relating to membership growth, marketing, retention, and revenue .

As well as meeting all the requirements and responsibilities for the Tutor role, Managers also have overall responsibility for the quality of sessions that members receive and for building sustained relationships with parents/guardians.

Centre Managers carry out the following duties whilst constantly working towards, and with, the companies Vision and Values:

- Overall responsibility for their centres performance
- The sales process
- Retention of members
- Overall responsibility for operations
- Tutor recruitment, scheduling and training
- Finance and budget
- Ofsted and Safeguarding
- Incident Management
- Creating a vision for the team
- Setting targets for individuals and groups of staff
- Leading and motivating a team
- Analysing performance

- Managing priorities
- Ensure the delivery of excellent customer service
- Training Assistant Directors to become Centre Directors
- Effective time management
- Point of liaison between setting staff and Head Office

The Explore Learning/Explore at Home Training Personal Development Programme is dedicated to the development of each and every employee of Explore at Home. We recruit only the very best graduates and are committed to training each individual in a wide variety of child welfare, educational and business skills. The Assistant Director Induction Training is provided via an extensive centre-based programme; Training centre-based consolidation training and inter-centre exchanges. Ongoing training is provided throughout a Managers entire career with Explore Learning/Explore at Home.

All staff complete a Training Needs Questionnaire within their Self Declaration Form when they start and have regular appraisals with their Line Manager to review their performance and continually assess their training needs. Records of these reviews are held in their staff file and their training on the training platform Prodeceo. Staff are allowed time away from their daily duties to complete any training they may require.

Application Process

We will assess an individual's suitability through:

1. Vetting questions at their interview,
2. Reviewing qualifications, skills and experience,
3. Observation working with children,
4. A self-declaration of their suitability, including their current and history of physical and mental health.

Job offers are made with the contractual agreement that we must receive proof of qualifications, a suitable Enhanced DBS/PVG Disclosure/Certificate and 2 suitable references, ideally one from their most recent employer, and one that can testify to their suitability to work with children.

EXPLORE AT HOME

TUTOR RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Candidate requirements

We are looking for exceptional people, who fulfil our 7 competencies and:

- Have the ability to bring a child's learning to life
- Are passionate about helping children achieve their potential
- Can relate to, and build a good rapport with children
- Have a strong academic background in English & maths
- Are presentable, reliable and possess excellent communication skills
- Can work well in a team and help to generate a positive, fun and exciting atmosphere

Job Description: Explore Tutors

At Explore at Home, you will be working as part of a team and we encourage everyone to help in generating a positive, fun and exciting atmosphere where children will love to learn.

Specific duties include:

- Help children with maths and English using engaging teaching methods.
- Effectively tutor up to 6 children at a time, ensuring every child gets equal time, attention and quality of teaching.
- Inspire and motivate our members and pass on a genuine enthusiasm for learning, so that they become excited by learning, and adopt a have-a-go attitude to trickier tasks.
- Provide useful feedback to Centre Managers about notable successes or problems during a child's session; enabling us to give good quality feedback to their parents/guardians.
- Develop a thorough knowledge of the curriculum at Explore Learning/Explore at Home.
- Act as a positive role model to all our members.
- Support the management of children's behaviour in a calm and fair manner.
- Be vigilant regarding the welfare and safety of all children and adults.
- Assist with administrative and maintenance duties as requested by the Centre's Managerial team.
- Contribute to the centres aims to meet Ofsted requirements and standards.
- Treat any knowledge of customers' personal details and the internal affairs of Explore with total confidentiality.
- Publicly represent Explore Learning and Explore at Home in the best possible manner through your personal conduct.

Training and support are provided, through regular formalised group training sessions as well as on an impromptu basis during shifts. For staff to be able to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to perform the duties listed above to the best of their ability, we place an extremely heavy emphasis on teamwork, expecting all the staff to support one another in the daily running of the setting.

Application Process

We will assess an individual's suitability through:

1. Vetting questions at their interview,
2. Reviewing qualifications, skills and experience,
3. Observation working with children,
4. A self-declaration of their suitability, including their current and history of physical and mental health.

Job offers are made with the contractual agreement that we must receive proof of qualifications, a suitable Enhanced Disclosure/PVG certificate and 2 suitable references, ideally one from their most recent employer, and one that can testify to their suitability to work with children.

EXPLORE AT HOME

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Explore at Home actively encourages a very open culture within its workplace, which includes a high level of communication between all levels of staff and managers. They operate a bi-annual appraisal system that includes a 360-degree feedback for managers.

If any member of staff is concerned with the working practices of another member of staff, they must report this to their Line Manager as set out in the terms and conditions of their contract of employment. If they are concerned with the working practices of their Line Manager, they should report their concerns to their Regional Manager. They may do this by either telephone or email in the first instance, and at their request a confidential meeting will be arranged. Any member of staff may telephone or email the persons below setting out any concerns that they may have with the working practices of any other member of staff including their managers.

Head Office:	01483 447410
Head of Operations:	Lisa Haycox: lisa@explorellearning.co.uk, or
CEO:	Bill Mills: bill@explorellearning.co.uk
Performance Director:	Vanessa Gifford: vanessa.gifford@explorellearning.co.uk
Performance Director:	Richard Hubbert: richard@explorellearning.co.uk
Performance Director:	Louise Johnson: louise@explorellearning.co.uk
Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding	Kate Turner: kate@explorellearning.co.uk

If you have concerns in connection to safeguarding or regulation, and feel they are not being addressed appropriately you can contact:

Explore Learning’s Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding	01483 447410
Ofsted Complaints Line:	0300 123 1231

Scottish Social Services Council:	0345 60 30 891
--	-----------------------

Tutor/Assistant Director/Session Supervisor Procedure

Centre Director Procedure

Bring up concerns with the Centre Director	Bring up concerns with the Regional Manager
Bring up during bi-annual appraisal (if within a month of initial concerns)	If it is not suitable to speak to the Regional Manager, please speak to the Performance Director.
If the appraisal is scheduled more than a month away or if it is not suitable to wait or speak to the Centre Director, speak directly to the Regional Manager	If you still have concerns or it is not suitable to speak to any of the above staff, please speak directly to: Head of Operations C.E.O. Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding
If it is not suitable to speak to the Regional Manager, please speak to the Performance Director.	
If you still have concerns or it is not suitable to speak to any of the above staff, please speak directly to: Head of Operations C.E.O. Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding	If a member of staff is suspected, alleged or actually abused a child, the staff member would be suspended, and the event fully investigated following our Managing Allegations Against Members of Staff Policy and Procedures.

EXPLORE AT HOME

COMPLAINTS POLICY

If a Parents/guardian has reason for complaint or concern regarding the quality of service provision, in the first instance they should speak to a Centre Manager.

If they are still not satisfied, or if they would prefer not to discuss their concerns with the setting staff, we recommend that they contact the setting's Regional Manager.

1. Any complaint made in writing or made by e-mail that relates to the Requirements of the Voluntary Childcare Register (in England) will be fully investigated.
2. Any complaint will be dealt with in full within 28 days of receipt of the written complaint, including a written response which will include an account of the findings of the investigation and any action taken as a result.
3. Explore at Home keeps a written record of complaints which includes:
 - a. the nature of the complaint,
 - b. the Ofsted requirement it relates to,
 - c. how the complaint was dealt with,
 - d. the outcome of the investigation,
 - e. any action taken, and
 - f. whether the parent/guardian was given an account of the findings within 28 days of the date on which the complaint was received.
4. Complaint report summaries (data protected) are available to parents/guardians and Ofsted on request.
5. Complaints records are kept for three years, in line with Ofsted requirements.

If the complainant is not happy with the final decision made or wishes to contact Explore Learning's regulatory body before speaking to the management team, they can take their complaint directly to Ofsted / Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Complaints made to Ofsted about a provider may be referred to the provider for investigation.

Ofsted Complaints Line: 0300 123 1231
Scottish Social Services Council: 0345 60 30 891